National Disability Employment Awareness Month events highlight equity in workforce

(Salem) – The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) is hosting a series of virtual weekly lunch and learn events for the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in October. These events are an opportunity to learn about employment experiences from people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Governor Brown proclaimed October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The NDEAM 2022 theme is “Disability: Part of the Equity Equation.” This recognizes the important role people with disabilities have in making the nation’s workforce diverse and inclusive.

“NDEAM observance and these events give us an opportunity to celebrate the successes that Oregonians with I/DD have had in the workforce,” Statewide Employment First Coordinator Acacia McGuire Anderson said. “Each year, more Oregonians with I/DD are finding employment in our communities, which is benefitting both individuals and employers.”

The NDEAM lunch and learn events will take place on Tuesdays at noon throughout October.

- **October 4 – Celebrating Employment Champions (hybrid event)**
  - Join the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services and Central Oregon Employment First to celebrate employment successes in the region. The celebration will include meeting Christian Brigham who used to work in sheltered workshop settings and now works at the Comfort Suites in Redmond, plus award presentations. The in-person portion of this event begins at noon at the Madras Performing Arts Center. Food is provided and resource tables are available. Please RSVP for the in-person event. The online portion of the event begins at 12:30.
• **October 11 – Continuing the Climb**
  o This session will involve stories of people that have continued to move forward in their employment journey after they started their first positions. The stories will be told by the people themselves, as well as some of the people that provided along the way.

• **October 18 – Past, Present and Future in Transition**
  o Please join us as we hear from three young people sharing about their employment journeys. They will share their goals, dreams and experiences in regard to employment. Each one of them is at a different point of their journey.

• **October 25 – Maintaining Supports While Employed**
  o One of the most significant barriers to employment can be the uncertainty around how benefits will be affected by earnings from work. This session will cut through some of the myths and misinformation about how employment affects benefits.

All four events are held online via Zoom with an exception being the October 4 event, which is hybrid. Registration and accessibility information is available on the [Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) website](http://www.ohs.gov). These events are hosted by the ODHS, the Oregon Commission for the Blind and the Oregon Department of Education.

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