

Award winners during the Quarterly meetings

This year, SRC has been working to stay in touch with VR staff and community partners through virtual meetings. The efforts the community put forth to help VR clients changed but they haven't gone away! The Outreach Committee looked for ways to receive nominations from more people. Also, for a way to make award winners feel more valued. SRC and VR want award winners to know that they have made a difference and show off their hard work.

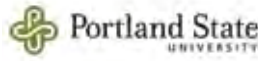
SRC changed the name of the award from Employer Partner Award to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access award in May 2021. We updated the description to reflect the new intent and name.

SRC invited winners of the awards to attend virtual quarterly meetings. The enthusiastic and helpful team at the Pearl Buck Center shipped awards to the work or home of each winner. Desiree Berry, a pre-employment transition services coordinator with VR, has been serving ad hoc on the Outreach Committee. Desiree coordinated the award nominations and presented them during the quarterly meetings. It's the highlight of the day to celebrate the great work of these partners and show appreciation for them. For detailed information about the award winners and why they were chosen, please visit <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/EMPLOYMENT/VR/SRC/Pages/Meetings.aspx>

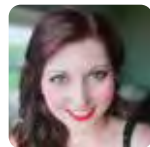
February 2021

[Portland State University \(PSU\) Career and Community Studies](#)

PSU's Career and Community Studies has given VR clients who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities a diverse and inclusive college experience in on-campus work, coursework and social gatherings with faculty and the general student population.



Tara Aas, Amie's Community Care, LLC



Tara goes above and beyond to provide excellent customer service. She delivers quick and extensive communication. Tara provides excellent reports and portfolios for the clients she serves.

Susan Mahony,

The Central Portland VR office had six VR counselors (VRC) come together to nominate Susan Mahony with 2nd Shift, LLC. Susan is winding down her business over the next year while still in high demand. She always leaves a powerfully positive impression on those she meets with VRCs, support staff and clients alike.

Susan Munoz, Employment Carving Services

Andrea Rogers from the Columbia River Gorge VR branch nominated Susan Munoz for this award. Her nomination was for the excellent, consistent and compassionate work she provides. Susan is an independent contractor of job placement services in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

May 2021

[Eagle Cap Grill](#)



VR counselor, Janie Radinovich-Brose, from the Baker City branch office nominated Julie Myers, manager of the Eagle Cap Grill. Janie says that Julie is a wonderful community partner. She passes no judgment and welcomes all to apply for employment with her restaurant. She is understanding, helpful and communicates well. Julie has provided several VR participants with employment.

Rob and Tyler Mode, North Portland Grocery Outlet



Kia Swain, Youth Transition Program coordinator, nominates "with my whole heart," Rob and Tyler Mode, owners and managers of the North Portland Grocery Outlet. They gave many young people with disabilities an opportunity to be a part of a team, learn new skills, make mistakes and grow. Rob and Tyler go above and beyond to be accommodating.

August 2021

Marc Nethercote, Advocates for Life Skills & Opportunity (ALSO), Inc.



Amy Valdez from the Central Portland VR office nominated Marc Nethercote from

ALSO, Inc. Marc excels in providing services to clients with autism. Not all vendors can effectively serve this population. Every client and client's family members who have worked with him praise his professionalism, communication and use of best practices when working with autistic people.

Beth Coleman, Horizon Project



Susie Calhoun from the Umatilla Tribal 121 VR program nominated Beth

Coleman from the Horizon Project. Beth's nomination was for going above and beyond as an employer. She creates custom positions and reduces barriers to employment.

Melissa Robinson, Renaissance Vocational Services



Melissa is timely and supportive of Track 1 VR clients. She quickly finds

the clients employment due to her unique background as a VRC and Return to Work specialist.

Ed and Travis Cortez, Trenditions



Ed and Travis work with local VR, Tribal VR (TVR) and Youth Transition Program (YTP) students. Ed and Travis provide services and assessments to help these students gain employment.

Lynn Jones, Sawyer's Ace Hardware and Rental



Lynn is an outstanding manager. Lynn has given her time, commitment and support to hire people with disabilities in the Columbia Gorge. Lynn has always gone above and beyond to support and teach her employees the job skills necessary to be successful.

Donna Jones, The Dalles High School

Donna is a YTP specialist at The Dalles High School. Donna goes above and beyond to serve all clients in job development, job coaching, training, Employment First and connect them to resources.

Susie Calhoun, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla

Andrea Rogers and Bambi Bevill nominated Susie Calhoun of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservations (CTUIR), Tribal 121 VR program manager. Susie is an outstanding employment partner, teaching through her actions and


words. She is kind, compassionate and extremely knowledgeable about her program. Susie approaches every human with respect, working towards the best outcomes for clients.

Assumption Village

Assumption Village has hired at least one YTP participant. They arranged to hire a young person unable to complete nursing assistant training. However, they gave her a host position. They promised to train her to become a certified caregiver at no cost while she is employed.

November 2021

Wesley Kramer-Jones, Green Zebra

Wesley and his  entire staff provided a work experience for two YTP youth during the summer of 2021. During the onboarding process Wesley showed patience, care, kindness and thoughtfulness. Therefore, both interns had a very successful seven-week internship. They both moved on to permanent job placements due to this experience.

Jeff Holson, Good-2-Go Oregon, West, Inc.

Susan Furnari nominated Jeff Holson, director of Good-2-Go Oregon, West, Inc. for taking on challenging cases. He makes it work for the client and the VRC. Jeff and his team have proven to be flexible, creative and focused on serving the needs of our clients.

November 2021

Glen Kenny, Electric Castle's Wunderland Arcade at the Avalon Cinema

Glen provided informational interviews and **WUNDERLAND** tours for a client working through Discovery in the summer of 2019. He later hired them in October 2019 for a created position. That employee has since been able to take on more and can now do all job tasks. Glen and his team have been welcoming and accommodating.



SRC new member profile: Elizabeth A. Jankowski, Ph.D.

Dr. Jankowski has over 30 years of experience working in education — most of those years in the area of special education. She currently (and very recently) is employed by the Oregon Department of Education as an IDEA program specialist for school-age children. In this capacity she works with assigned counties and districts in their implementation of federal and state laws, regulations and rules related to special education, including transition.

Although this current work falls into more of the compliance area of special education, her passion has always resided in improving the outcomes of students with disabilities through implementation of effective, evidence-based practices.