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Mark Your Calendars!

The second Make a Difference with Your Future Workshop for deaf and hard of hearing students and their parents will be held September 22nd-24th, 2000. More information to follow .

Deaf Initiatives, Inc.
563 S. Dawson Ave.
Columbus, OH 43209
614-238-3323 (v/tty)
614-238-3322 fax
TheDEAFund@aol.com
www.t-shirtquilts.com

COME BY AND VISIT ANY TIME!

We are in Bexley, off of Main Street

Deaf Initiatives

Greetings Friends, Colleagues and Business Associates

Meredith Crane, Founder

For those of you not familiar with our non-profit organization, the mission of Deaf Initiatives is to support and encourage activities that strengthen the career potential of young adults who are deaf or hard of hearing. The way we accomplish such a goal is two-fold. First of all, we provide opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing young adults to produce a quality product and to feel proud about their work. This product is our Keepsake Theme Quilt.



Secondly, we have established a Work Experience Model for use with each student that comes through our doors. Darlene Zangara was instrumental in the development of this model. The model provides an accessible, innovative program that is designed for deaf and hard of hearing students to maximize their learning potential. It offers an opportunity for a young adult, at the completion of the program, to leave with a feeling of accomplishment, pride in producing a beautiful product, developed work skills, a knowledge of

the rewards of hard work, and improved communication/interpersonal skills. With the young adults we focus on the areas of work skills, communication skills, and self-esteem skills, all of which contribute to the development of a well-rounded career. §



Our First Employee!

Darlene Rowe exemplifies the traits we at Deaf Initiatives feel are important to maintaining a productive career. Darlene began at Deaf Initiatives, Inc. as a student from the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf. She not only showed a tremendous work ethic, but she also was punctual and showed a genuine interest in the work she was doing. Her work was so impressive that she was hired at Deaf Initiatives, Inc. part time.

Darlene is originally from Salinesville, Ohio near Lisbon. She has had previous experience in food service jobs but now serves as both a production assistant in the workroom and as a supervisor of new students who come for work experiences. She says that, "I like everything about my job, but the favorite parts of my responsibilities are being part of the team and motivating students." §

Highlights of the First Year's Journey

- The first year of Deaf Initiatives' existence has been packed with memories. We have had the opportunity to work with some wonderful customers and some dedicated workers and volunteers.
- To date, we have produced over 80 quilts! Orders have come in for a variety of occasions including Christmas, a 70th birthday, a 40th birthday, a celebration of a customer's world travels, various graduations and anniversaries, as well as a few "just because." Customers continue to be thrilled with our work. The latest comment cards report that our quilts "pulled the whole family together," and brought people "to tears." One customer wrote that her quilt was her "most memorable and special Christmas gift."
- Amidst the regular orders, we have had the opportunity to make quilts for a few out of the ordinary events. In August we attended the Solidarity convention for people with disabilities. There we raffled off a free quilt. The winner was the Columbus Speech and Hearing Center's Dr. Jeffery Bohrman! A few months later we attended the Ohio Association of the Deaf state conference held in Canton, Ohio. We raffled off an "I Love You" quilt. We were happy to see that Marjorie Thacker was the big winner! At the OAD we also had a line of pillows for sale that were quite popular.



- On November 13th the Deaf Kids Club from Deaf Services Center came to Deaf Initiatives, Inc. for the day. Previously, Meredith had gone to one of the Deaf Kids Club's meetings to talk about the organization, but this time the kids had the chance to see the quilt process first hand. Using donated Deaf Services Center T-shirts, the club members themselves along with the club's advisors, Greg Bucher and Vonnie Bashum, made a wall hanging for the Deaf Services Center building. Claudia Bergquist, board member of DI, added to the great time had by all! The Kids Club will be returning to Deaf Initiatives in February, this time to make Valentine's Day pillows to sell as a fundraiser for their other activities. §

Remember...

- Our Keepsake Theme Quilts make wonderful and personal gifts for high school and college graduations!
- Deaf Initiatives, Inc. can always use donations of old T-shirts and material for our students to practice their skills.
- Deaf Initiatives, Inc. is now on-line! Explore our web site at: www.t-shirtquilts.com

Other Members of Our Team

Meet Penny...

- Penny Dixon has been a vital link in the Deaf Initiatives quilt-making process. While deaf and hard of hearing young adults do the cutting and piecing of the quilt, Penny is our professional quilter. When all of a quilt's pieces have been put together, Penny takes them and stitches the layers and the middle "stuffing," or batting, together. She never misses a deadline!

Meet Debbie...

- In our last newsletter, we introduced you to Debbie Steinhour, our sewer. With her years of commercial sewing experience, Debbie is able to keep the flow of our workroom at a quick pace. Her sewing skills are impressive, but so are the patience and care she shows when working with the students.

Meet Caitlin, in her own words...

- Interning at Deaf Initiatives this summer was a wonderful experience for me. From the start, I was enamored with the philosophy of the organization: providing accessible opportunities for Deaf people to help themselves. My role in all of this was mostly one of organization. I worked on advertising leads so we would have business as well as researching grant applications so we would have funding. Over the summer we were also able to do some product development which resulted in the production of pillows we sold at the OAD. The best parts of all, however, were the people I got to interact with. Everyone from Meredith to the young adults to the customers to associate organizations was full of energy and helpful ideas. §



