

# DS COMMUNIQUE

L.A. Pittenger Student Center Rm. 116 • Ball State University • 2014-2015, #1

## ***Employment Initiatives for Students with Disabilities***

As you may recall, the Fall 2013 *DS Communique* featured the exploits of several successful Ball State graduates with disabilities. Employed as, for example, doctors, teachers, architects, and in the telecommunications industry – Ball State alums with disabilities are thriving and becoming leaders in their respective fields.

Unfortunately, though, many people with disabilities (including college graduates) are unemployed or grossly underemployed. As with any other college graduate, a critical component in finding meaning and sustainable employment is leaving college with experiences that prepare the student to be competitive in the work world. Internships are essential for all students, but especially so for students with disabilities. Internships give students with disabilities the confidence that they can do meaningful work, and show employers that individuals with disabilities can be just as productive as employees without disabilities.

One of Ball State's most notable alums, with or without a disability, is Greg Fehribach. Longtime readers of this newsletter are familiar with Greg – Indianapolis attorney, national leader on issues pertaining to the inclusion of people with disabilities, member of the Ball State Board of Trustees, Distinguished Fellow at Ball State's Bowen Center, and generous contributor of his time and resources to Ball State students. Greg has worked tirelessly to facilitate internships in the Indianapolis area for students with disabilities. This issue of the *DS Communique* highlights his efforts to create partnerships between the Bowen Center and Disability Services at Ball State, and eager collaborators such as Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis.

The partnership with Eskenazi is especially noteworthy. The staff at Eskenazi has enthusiastically embraced the project,



and last summer hired four Ball State students who are wheelchairs users for full-time, paid internships. And, as you will read, these students were expected to work and perform at the same level as Eskenazi colleagues without disabilities. I was thrilled to join Greg, Ray Scheele from the Bowen Center, Juli Pains from the City of Indianapolis, and the summer interns at lunch this past summer at Eskenazi (pictured on this page). The interns described, as they do in this newsletter, the ways in which this experience has changed their lives.

I hope you enjoy reading about the interns at Eskenazi, as well as the other internship and work experiences described in this newsletter. If you would like to join our efforts in fostering employment opportunities for Ball State students with disabilities, you are welcome to contribute to a new account created at the Ball State Foundation, the *Disability Services Career Enhancement Fund* (Fund # 8633).

Wishing you a happy and successful 2015,  
Larry Markle

# ***Eskenazi Health - Taking the Lead in Providing Employment Opportunities***

The summer of 2014 marked the third time that Eskenazi Health hosted internships for Ball State students with disabilities. Unlike the previous years when one intern was hired, Eskenazi welcomed four Ball State interns with disabilities this past summer to the brand new hospital in downtown Indianapolis. The collaboration between Eskenazi and Ball State's Disability Services office and the Bowen Center for Public Affairs was the recipient of the Mayor of Indianapolis' Access and Inclusion Award for Employers, as well as a recipient of a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

Prominent Indianapolis attorney and Distinguished Fellow of the Bowen Center Greg Fehribach facilitated the internships and identified specific outcomes for the internships. "We wanted students to have a real job that offered a real salary, and with that comes being a real part of the organization, with real goals and real tasks, not just filling a space." Furthermore, Fehribach, a Ball State alumnus with a disability said, "The goal of the internships was not to teach students that they want to work, but how to work better. We want employers such as the hospital to realize that students with disabilities are able to have an impact on the work that the organization does, not just get a good feeling when they hire someone with a disability."

The location of the internships was chosen based on the work that Fehribach did in helping the hospital become ADA compliant. Formerly Wishard Hospital, there were wings that were 50 to 100 years old and physically inaccessible. Now, Fehribach assures with the new hospital that there is no place in the hospital that is not accessible.

Students considered for the program are described by Fehribach as being "Ready, willing, and able to work," and do not have to have an interest in the medical field in order to apply. He wants the students to realize that it takes more than doctors to run a hospital and the different offices within the hospital have employees with various backgrounds.

Fehribach and Larry Markle, Director of Disability Services, partnered to identify good candidates for internships at Eskenazi. The two provided information about the opportunity to students with disabilities and asked that students then work with Ball State's Career Center to update their resumes and improve their interviewing skills. The prospective interns then had to officially apply with Eskenazi and be interviewed for a position as any other job candidate would be.



Dustin Gilmer pictured with his service dog Carver and one of the therapeutic dogs at Eskenazi Hospital.

Multiple staff members at Eskenazi collaborated with Fehribach and Markle to make these internships a reality. "I can't say enough good things about the staff at Eskenazi, from the top down," Markle said. "They have really gone above and beyond in their commitment to making this program successful. Eskenazi truly serves as an example to other employers in how to welcome individuals with disabilities into the workforce, and how to hold them to the same standards and expectations as employees without disabilities."

When Colin McIntire, a senior Computer Science major, received his summer internship at Eskenazi Health, he did not know what to expect. Colin was excited about the position when receiving the offer, though he knew there would be certain challenges to address. Within the hospital, Colin worked in the IT department mainly converting hospital documents to Microsoft SharePoint and other formats. Having never used SharePoint and some of the other software used within the department, the experience was initially a little daunting, but Colin reported that it taught him to "learn programs he was unfamiliar with and pick them up quickly," a transferrable skill that Colin said will help him in future careers. Colin worked in a relatively small office with three other gentlemen, all of whom were very accommodating and friendly. The hospital was mostly accessible to Colin, though he did find it difficult to use the entrance door in the mornings as it was not automatic. To alleviate this issue, his supervisor had a doorbell installed that Colin could ring upon his arrival, prompting a fellow employee to come and open the door.

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Colin's advice to those with disabilities seeking internships is: "Don't let the fear of not being able to do something keep you from doing it. People are a lot more willing to help than you anticipate." Colin hopes to get a job in the computer programming field in the future.

Both Will Kuhn and Dustin Gilmer were unsure of how their skill sets would fit into a hospital setting, as neither of them had any interest in the medical field. Will, a senior Telecommunications major, and Dustin, a senior Telecommunications and Journalism major, soon realized that hospitals needed a voice, and that voice was the hospital's Communications department. Working as part of a team of 10 people, Will and Dustin helped to create press releases, organize events, and write and create distribution newsletters and pamphlets for the public, as well as helping to reconstruct the hospital's website. Dustin says that this internship was the best internship he could have asked for, and though he does not know exactly what he wants to do in the future, he says the work he did at Eskenazi helped confirm that he is pursuing the right degree. He is grateful for the feedback he received during the internship and knows it will be helpful to him as he grows professionally.

Will was under the impression that being a wheelchair user would hinder his job search but notes how friendly and accommodating the staff members at Eskenazi were to him, which really put him at ease. "There wasn't a day that went by where somebody didn't say good morning or ask how I was," Will said. "On my first day, I got lost as to where my office was, but a lady came right up to me and offered to show me right where I needed to go. When it came time to take pictures for publications, I was unable to lift the camera up to where I needed to get the shot, so my supervisor came up with a way to attach the camera to my chair so that all I had to do was push a button."

Dustin says the other staff members were great about taking time to get to know him and what accommodations he utilized before starting the job. He was pleasantly surprised that not much needed adjusted and things like his desk and copier were right to his height.

Will's advice to students with disabilities looking for internships is to get involved early. "These days it seems like your experience level is just as important, if not more important than your grades. Don't think that your disability is going to deter you from getting involved or getting work experience. The sooner you get involved on campus or with an internship, the better." Will says that this internship taught him to "speak up and make my ideas known, because people are willing to listen." Although he is not sure where he will end

up once he graduates, he says applying for a job at Eskenazi Health is certainly a possibility. Dustin advises students who are looking for internships to be vigilant: "Keep looking. It may take a while, but you never know when that right internship will come along." Dustin will graduate this December and is currently in the process of searching for a job.

Matthew Marshall, a junior Pre-Med & Chemistry major, is no stranger to the Eskenazi internship program. He served as an intern for Eskenazi in 2013 and was asked back this past summer to continue his internship as a "tech" with the Physical Therapy department. Matthew assisted in a variety of tasks with this internship, including making appointments for the therapists, washing and cleaning equipment, taking inventory, and when there was time, assisting therapists with consultations and changing bandages.

Matthew has never been one to let his disability dictate the kind of work that he does. "As far as physical changes to the work environment, there were a lot of small changes that needed to be made," Marshall said. "The staff took a little bit to get used to me, but they were great in moving things and asking questions to make sure I could get around. I never really refused any work they gave me. If there was ever a job I could not do, I would work with my supervisor in coming up with a way to do at least part of the work, and if that wasn't an option, I would trade jobs with another tech. There were very few jobs I could not do." One time, he figured out a way to carry walkers on his lap to get them to patient rooms.

Matthew's supervisor, Susan Bass, noted how much Matthew has grown during the two years he has interned with the department. "Matthew is a self-confident young man," Susan said, "but as the internship went on I could see his confidence grow. He became a part of the therapy team and was respected by all of his teammates. He became increasingly comfortable pointing out barriers to myself and the staff and was an active part in finding solutions to help others in the future. His second year with us he didn't miss a beat and started where he left off. He was truly a member of our team."

Matthew says there was not a single thing at his internship that he will not be able to use in his future career path: "From patient interactions to working in a hospital office environment to the confidence I developed in myself in producing quality work, all of these aspects I can use in my future." He advises those with disabilities looking for internships to be patient because "sometimes it takes people a little bit to learn how to adapt. He also encourages those students looking for internships to consider the Eskenazi program. Matthew hopes to continue on to medical school and become a doctor.

## ***Internship with the Indianapolis Colts: Derrick Decker***

Senior Derrick Decker had what most sports fans would consider to be a dream internship. An Athletic Training major, Derrick had the opportunity to serve as a Student Athletic Trainer for the Indianapolis Colts. Under the direction of the Colts' Athletic Training staff, he assisted in providing medical support for players at practices and games, and he worked with players rehabilitating injuries. Neal Hazen, Head Athletic Trainer at Ball State and Shawn Comer, Associate Athletic Trainer at Ball State, helped Derrick to obtain the internship. In terms of skill sets that he improved upon or gained during the internship, Derrick says he not only gained knowledge about working with athletic populations and rehabilitative techniques, but also confidence in the work that he does. Derrick also learned the importance of writing things down and active listening, things that he has struggled with in the past because of his disability, but are a necessity because of the very particular nature of the way athletic trainers complete tasks at the professional level. He says that the other staff members were very patient with him, and after a little while, it all ran very smoothly.

Derrick's advice to those seeking future internships is to utilize those around them for help in connecting with employers. "The more time that you spend immersed in what you are



Derrick Decker pictured at his summer internship at the Colts' Practice Facility.

doing," Derrick said, "the more questions are going to come up and the more answers you are going to get. I really like the concept of taking pieces of information from those around you and combining it into your own experience." Derrick hopes to work in athletic training at the collegiate level, but would certainly be open to the professional level as well.

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## ***Allen Caldwell: Recently Hired at DFAS***

Allen Caldwell, a 2013 Telecommunications graduate of Ball State, has just recently started a job as a Human Resources Assistant for the Department of Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) in Indianapolis. He credits the human resources classes that he took at Ball State for his minor, Communications, as his inspiration for going into a human resources field. The majority of Allen's job is spent entering important documents into databases, a job he says is not glamorous but very important. "We have documents come in from all around the world and because it is the federal government, they trust that I am keeping things in a secure environment." The physical accessibility proves to

be the biggest challenge for Allen, who is a wheelchair user. However, he does have an accessible cubicle and says that his co-workers are very approachable, kind, and honest, so he is not afraid to ask when help is needed. Allen also makes use of Dragon: Naturally Speaking voice to text software.

Allen's advice to students who are seeking jobs or internships is: "Keep being positive and open minded. Don't think that a job is not for you just because it is not in a field that you majored in. Getting a job is about using your skill sets and connecting the dots. Keep on trying and putting your résumé out there."

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## ***Disability Services Awards Program: April 7, 2015***

Please save the date for the Disability Services awards program scheduled for April 7, 2015, at 3 pm in Cardinal Hall at the L.A. Pittenger Student Center. Join us as we recog-

nize outstanding students and an alumnus with a disability and express gratitude to faculty and staff for promoting accessibility.

## ***Internship at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville: Donelle Henderlong***

Donelle Henderlong, a graduate student in the Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education program and current graduate assistant in the Disability Services office, was able to spend her summer down south. Thanks to the ACUHO-I Summer Placement Program, Donelle obtained an internship as the Assistant Manager for Front Desk Operations for Summer Conferences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Her job included hiring, training, scheduling, and supervising front desk staffs for the six residence halls that were used during summer conferences. She also served as a 24-hr resource call person. Being a wheelchair user, Donelle's move was a big one and the first time she has ever lived out of state, so there was a lot to take into consideration. The physical accessibility of the campus was the biggest challenge: the hills of Tennessee took practice going up and down in her power wheelchair, and there were no automatic buttons on residence hall front doors, making them difficult to access independently. She had a door clicker to specifically get into her living space and also had an aide on hand during her on-call shifts to assist her in getting out of bed if she got a call in the middle of the night. Donelle notes the kindness and hospitality of everyone at the university and says they were as accommodating as they could be. "It was definitely a learning experience for me, but I'm sure for them as well as they do not have a high population of chair users. Hopefully I was able to provide a valuable perspective."



Donelle Henderlong with mom Kathy at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Donelle advises future students looking for internships to "work hard, maybe even harder than those without disabilities, because your disability does not entitle you to anything. Also, don't close a door before it opens. I originally wanted to intern in California, but now after my experience in Tennessee, I wouldn't have wanted anywhere else." Donelle will graduate in May with her Master's degree and is currently looking for open positions at universities.

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## ***Internship with Disability Affairs - City of Indianapolis: Andrew Seever***

Andrew Seever, a 2013 Ball State graduate with a Bachelor's degree in General Studies, completed an internship this summer with the City of Indianapolis' office of Disability Affairs. Throughout the internship, Andrew created web content for the office website as well as answering phone calls from the public about disability-related issues. Andrew received information about the internship from Larry Markle and Greg Fehribach and was given an offer by Juli Pains, former Director of Disability Affairs for the City of Indianapolis. Being a wheelchair user, a challenge presented itself when Andrew's office was on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor of the building built circa 1950. Andrew was able to ride the service elevator the entire way to the office and was given an evacuation chair in case of emergency. Andrew

also made use of Dragon: Naturally Speaking voice to text software and a track ball mouse to complete his work. An aide came to assist him at lunch - something that Andrew thought would initially be a problem, but reports that everyone he worked with was open and accommodating.

Andrew's advice to students seeking internships is: "Make sure to always be on the lookout and keep your name out there. Internships provide good networking experiences and let employers know that you can do the work." He plans on using the networking and professionalism skills he learned in his internship to help him find a job in human resources management.

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**Don't forget BSU's  
Disability Services in your  
giving plans.**

**Funds donated are used  
for resources and  
equipment to enhance  
campus accessibility.**

**All Indiana taxpayers'  
donations to BSU  
Foundation - 8603  
are a 50 percent tax credit  
(a \$100 gift costs only \$50)!**

The DS Communique is published once a semester by the Office of Disability Services for the students, faculty, alumni, staff, and friends of Ball State University.

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If you are a BSU/DS alumni and have news you would like to share with the readers of this newsletter, please drop us a line or two about anything you'd like us to know, such as accomplishments, events, or milestones. Please notify us about a change in address as well.

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