

SPRING 2011

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON  
**DISABILITY**

# Report to the Field



*It's ability, not disability, that counts.*

NOD is improving employment prospects for the 79% of Americans with disabilities who are not employed.

Dear Friends of NOD:

For several years, we at NOD have been finding better ways to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Our ambition is to be a source of practical knowledge, experience, and guidance in the field, drawing on demonstration programs that test new approaches, and research that bolsters experience with evidence.

Behind this letter is our summary of how we pursued these interrelated goals in the past year, and how we size up our challenges and opportunities in 2011 and beyond.

We find ourselves, like all nonprofit organizations, navigating a period of political and economic uncertainty unlike any in recent history. But the times are particularly challenging for nonprofits of our size, reliant as we are on a comparatively small base of funders committed to our issues — funders who are themselves struggling with the consequences of an unsteady economy and escalating need.

We are fortunate to be building on a solid foundation of accomplishment spanning nearly three decades, and a dedicated core of supporters who have come to rely on us for performance and integrity. That base of support has been gradually widening, even in difficult times, and for that we are especially grateful.

In the five years since NOD adopted our current employment agenda, our budget has nearly doubled, from \$2.1 million in 2005 to \$4 million last year. The growth has come from an increasingly diverse group of companies, foundations, individuals, university research centers, and public agencies.

People with disabilities are experts in finding a path through adverse circumstances, and that spirit of determination and inventiveness is what animates our work. We hope this report reflects the optimism and sense of possibility that the past year's experience has inspired in us.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ridge".

The Honorable Tom Ridge  
Chairman, NOD



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Glazer".

Carol Glazer  
President, NOD



# NOD TODAY

After nearly 30 years of working to achieve equal rights, the National Organization on Disability (NOD) today is focusing intensively on overcoming the social and economic barriers that keep a large percentage of people with disabilities out of the workforce.

We are making progress on two important new fronts:

- Opening paths to civilian employment for severely injured service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan; and
- Helping business hire and welcome more employees with disabilities.

With the adoption of our latest strategic plan in 2009, we sharpened our focus on workforce issues, which is yielding many new opportunities for NOD to demonstrate how the employment of people with disabilities is good for business and good for America.

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## WOUNDED WARRIOR CAREERS

In 2007 the US Army asked NOD to take on a three-year challenge to pilot a service delivery model for transitioning severely wounded soldiers into the civilian workforce. In North Carolina, Texas and Colorado, NOD is testing out this model which has as its hallmark prolonged and proactive career transition support for the veteran and family.

By the end of 2010, the Wounded Warrior Careers demonstration was serving more than 250 veterans and their families with remarkable success. Sixty-eight percent of the veterans in the program are in training, education, or work.

The current generation of veterans with significant disabilities has distinct characteristics from those of previous wars. These include more serious wounds (veterans of earlier wars would not have survived); an older demographic (70% are married, 65% have children under 18); and the fact that many veterans are returning mid-career with limited civilian work experience. This is a distinct generation of veterans with disabilities for whom few career service models exist.



*Ret. Spc. Scott Vycital (center) – one of the veterans we serve in Colorado – was invited to meet President and Mrs. Obama following the President's 2010 State of the Union address to Congress. Scott, who was injured in Iraq, now works at the Federal Highway Administration in Colorado.*

We have received recognition for our work from a variety of sources, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen. In December 2010, NOD was one of only three outside organizations to address the Department of Defense Task Force on the Care, Management and Transition of Recovering Wounded, Ill and Injured Members of the Armed Forces.

In short, we have become a leader in the field of veterans transitioning into civilian careers. As a result, the Institute for Economic Empowerment at AbilityOne selected NOD to execute a national qualitative study that will identify career aspirations and support needs of severely injured veterans. A final report will be issued in early 2012.

In the year ahead, we will continue to seek opportunities to expand the service model we have successfully tested out for veterans. We will also continue to share our findings with allies in business, government, and the military, so that our nation's ill and injured veterans have a better chance of success and economic self-sufficiency.

*Sixty-eight percent of the veterans in the NOD Wounded Warrior Careers program are in training, education, or work.*



## BRIDGES TO BUSINESS

Launched in early 2010 with seed funding from Sam's Club, The Coca-Cola Company and the Kessler and Milbank Foundations, Bridges to Business is now operating in five states with half a dozen corporate partners. This cluster of efforts – working with corporate America to improve recruitment and career advancement of employees with disabilities – forms the second pillar of our work.

In April, Lowe's joined as our first Bridges company. By the end of 2010, we were working with Lowe's at distribution centers in Illinois, Ohio, Florida and North Carolina and helping the company recruit more effectively and adjust its accommodations and onboarding of employees. Through Bridges, NOD has trained more than 325 managers and has helped local service providers hire close to 100 new workers – numbers that continue to grow each month as the project continues.



*Matt and Dan have started successful careers at the Lowe's Distribution Center in Findlay, Ohio as a result of NOD's Bridges to Business program.*

A recent independent evaluation by Rutgers University reported: “NOD is meeting a need of businesses by acting as a recruitment coordinator and liaison between the business and the disability community... [and] allow[ing] businesses to maintain performance levels and meet employment needs.”

A new Bridges project was launched in New Jersey in partnership with Rutgers University’s John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, with a grant made available from the US Department of Health and Human Services. We are working with large New Jersey employers — including Sodexo, Aetna, and ADP — on expanded hiring and retention of employees with disabilities, with a focus on exempt positions.

In early 2011, NOD and Sam’s Club entered into a collaboration to identify and demonstrate the most effective ways of helping to increase the talent pool of people with disabilities entering and succeeding in the workforce. With support from Sam’s Club, we are convening a consortium of businesses in Bentonville, Arkansas, with similar goals, and helping members increase awareness and opportunities for people with disabilities.

NOD is positioned to expand its help to companies who are ready to commit to the employment of people with disabilities and to support the lifecycle of these employees.

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*Bridges to Business was launched in April 2010 and is now operating in five states with half a dozen corporate partners.*

## CAPTURING DATA ON DISABILITY

NOD's signature series of Harris Surveys documenting the views, circumstances, and needs of people with disabilities nationwide was bolstered in 2010 by the generous sponsorship of Kessler Foundation. In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Kessler and NOD released two new surveys: One addressed quality-of-life indicators and the gaps between Americans with and without disabilities; the other presented findings from 400 major employers. The results were sobering, but they provided the basis for a call to action. Results of both surveys are at [www.2010disabilitysurveys.org](http://www.2010disabilitysurveys.org).

In 2011, NOD is partnering with Sirota Survey Intelligence, Inc. to gather results from employee satisfaction and engagement surveys. The findings will enable NOD to gauge differences in the employment experiences of people with and without disabilities. This information will complement our existing research and contribute to a better understanding of the work-life of employees with disabilities. Sirota has agreed to partner with NOD in this effort on a pro-bono basis.



*Representative of NOD, Kessler Foundation, Sam's Club, and Lowe's were invited to ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange in October 2010 in honor of Disability Employment Awareness Month.*

# START ON SUCCESS

Youth with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of high school and four times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system than non-disabled youth.\* Many of these young people grow up in and around poverty, lack career-focused role models, and, because of their disabilities assume they will never be able to acquire a meaningful job or career.

NOD launched the Start on Success (SOS) program in 1994 to connect young people facing these obstacles with real-world job experience, and to build confidence in their ability to succeed. The program offers paid internships, tailored educational experiences, and involvement with caring adults as teachers, mentors, and supervisors. Since 1994, SOS has graduated over 4,000 young people with disabilities.

Start on Success is now operational in more than 30 schools nationally, and students who take part in the program go on to post-secondary education or employment at a rate of 75 to 85 percent.

\*From the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth.

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*“As a result of our collaboration with NOD’s Start on Success Program and its focus on employment for people with disabilities, many students who might otherwise have dropped out of school or defaulted to day-habilitation programs are now being provided with internships which lead directly to jobs in community work settings.”*

Bonnie Brown  
Superintendent  
New York City Department of Education

# BUILDING A STRONGER ORGANIZATION

## The NOD Board of Directors welcomed the following new members in 2010:

- Bonnie St. John, President, Courageous Spirit, Inc.
- Jeri Eckhart Queenan, Partner, The Bridgespan Group
- Steve Szilagyi, Senior Vice President of Distribution, Lowe's

## And NOD welcomes Directors who joined the Board in Spring 2011:

- Rohini Anand, Senior Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Sodexo
- Doug Conant, President & CEO, Campbell Soup Co.
- Lieutenant General (Ret.) Franklin L. Hagenbeck, Hagenbeck & Associates LLC

We are thankful to these new Directors and to our long-standing Board members for their energy and commitment.

We are also grateful to our funders – old and new – who sustain our work, believe in our mission, and join us in this journey to transform the employment of people with disabilities in America.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Governor Thomas J. Ridge**  
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**Humphrey Taylor**  
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**Frederick B. Whittemore**  
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**Robert J. Saner, II, Esq.**  
Counsel to NOD, Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville PC

# FUNDERS 2010 - SPRING 2011

**\$1,000,000+**

AbilityOne\*

**\$500,000+**

Kessler Foundation

**\$100,000 - \$4,999,999**

Argonne National Laboratories\*

The Dallas Foundation

Meadows Foundation

MetLife Foundation

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Pat & John Rosenwald

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University of Massachusetts\*

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Anonymous Foundation - San Francisco

The Coca-Cola Company

The Duke Endowment

El Pomar Foundation

Milbank Foundation for Rehabilitation

Northrop Grumman

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Janet & Steve Szilagyi

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The William Penn Foundation

Xerox

**\$1,000-\$4,999**

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David Roosevelt

Bonnie St. John

Nancy Starnes

Robert Sturgell

\* Contracted services



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