



*Blazing Trails
Since 1953*

QUARTERLY

Spring Edition

March 2019

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EMBRACING CHANGE

From the beginning, nature has gently tried to expose us to change. Each season flows into the next: plant, sow, harvest. These natural changes help prepare us for the big and little insidious changes that happen the rest of our lives.

I was raised a military brat, so every 2-3 years our family of six picked up to another state or country. Every time we moved I was convinced I would never have close friends ever again, ever! Surprisingly it always seemed every military assignment was even better than the last and the new friends plentiful.

So, I grew to embrace change and never to fear it. In the summers, I would go to Malibu or Pennsylvania to work in camps for children with disabilities. I also went from OSU to Brooklyn, New York, to teach special education. I spent two years in Australia on my own to teach hearing impaired children and special education classes at University of New South Wales.

After about two years in Newcastle,



Connie Thrash McGoodwin, M.Ed.

I was called back to Dallas to be the executive director at a special education private school where I had previously taught. Four years later, I moved to OKC where I was helping my then-husband through law school. Four years of bi-weekly trips from OKC to Dallas was enough. And yes, I-35 was under construction then, too.

I arrived at DRTC in 1981 in the form of a 31-year-old who thought she knew all the answers. Both Boards of Directors allowed me to serve as executive director in both Dallas and OKC for a year working a split week schedule.

My DRTC salary was \$17,000 of the \$85,000 annual budget. It was right before the oil bust, and the agency went by the name of Oklahoma County Council for Mentally Retarded Citizens, Inc.

So now 39 years later, here I am galloping (or so it seems) through my 60s. If you think change is difficult at age 10, try age 69. After about 55 or so, you start receiving many "gifts" from Father Time and Mother Nature you never asked for. In fact, all kinds of change in your life seems to speed up. A major one: your kids grow up and insist you remove the bubble wrap you've taped around them.

Then there are all the changes that occur in your career. In my case, the field of rehabilitation and federal contracting, and supporting people with disabilities. I swear, it changes every day. New policies, pay rates, ADA, etc.

Trust me when I say Learn To Embrace Change early because the older you are, the harder it gets!

Look for the positives, be open, know that change can and usually is good. Change doesn't take things away from you; it switches out one thing for another. Things do usually turn out just fine and you can't control it anyway. Change is stress, and stress can be rough. Even in the happiest of events, there can be a little bitter sweet. That's where gratitude has to come in. Look at the many things you have to be grateful for.

While I don't disagree that things probably happen for a reason, I fell down laughing at a greeting card I recently received:

I Believe

Everything Happens

For A Stupid

Unfair Reason,

That's Stupid

Am I right? Embrace it anyway!

Dale Rogers Training Center

Tom Spencer

DRTC Board President

Connie Thrash McGoodwin,
M.Ed., Executive Director

Michael T. Jones
PR/Marketing Manager, Staff Writer

James Helm
PR Coordinator, Staff Writer

Brian Landreth
Senior Graphic Designer

Driving through the shutdown



While Rudolph and the rest of the reindeer are enjoying the offseason, DRTC drivers took the reins for employees at our FAA Work Projects location during the recent partial government shutdown.

DRTC's approximately 50 employees at FAA are responsible for cleaning 88 buildings at the federal contract site, but they found themselves without work and income during the debate over immigration reform.

"They live paycheck to paycheck and now we're asking them to take a reduction even in that," said Carolyn Thompson, DRTC Director of Custodial Services at the time of the shutdown. "Their bills still come in the mail just like everyone else."

DRTC's administration team realized the importance of keeping these dedicated and skilled workers gainfully employed, and offered to temporarily transfer those located

at FAA Work Projects to provide other areas that needed additional labor at Tinker Air Force Base, which never closed.

During the shutdown, DRTC also provided transportation for impacted employees to and from Tinker AFB.

The temporary transition was made easier due to employees already possessing the necessary paperwork and security clearances.

Now that the shutdown is over, workers have returned to FAA.

THANK YOU!

As Oklahoma's oldest and largest vocational training center for people with disabilities, we wouldn't be the agency we are today without the widespread support of community partners and customers throughout the state and nation.

DRTC says "Thank You" to those who have supported us along our 65 year ride, including United Way, which helps subsidize transportation costs as well as portions of our Special Needs Program, Camp Tumbleweed, and Extended Care.

Here's to a bright future with your continued support!



Thank you to all of our supporters!

Leadership OK Nomination



Helen Stakem

DRTC Board member and volunteer Helen Stakem is "Helping Oklahoma." We nominated Helen for Leadership Oklahoma's volunteer award!

Watch Helen's Helping Oklahoma nomination video on our YouTube channel.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

Seems like everyone looks forward to spring for various reasons: putting cold weather in the rearview mirror, flowers and trees budding, football season is that much closer, etc. March is a special time for DRTC.

March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, designed to raise awareness of the importance of including people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life.

President Ronald Reagan declared the national day in 1987, and every year the

message gets to more and more people. Chances are, you or someone you know either has, or know, someone with a disability. The U.S. Census Bureau found in 2010, nearly 20% of Americans had a disability; in Oklahoma, that number is about 15%.

Look for #ddawareness19 on social media for great stories of inclusion across the nation!

"DRTC formed in the late 1940s as a way for parents of children with disabilities to include them in every day life," said Connie Thrash

McGoodwin, DRTC Executive Director. "Inclusion is something still near and dear to our hearts all these years later."

Local events also highlight the importance of including those with developmental disabilities. You don't have to go far to find a good advocate for DRTC: just walk next door! Individuals at the main campus are excellent spokespeople during tours. You can't beat a good testimonial!

This year, as in years' past, we'll be loading up a bus (or two) full of these great advocates to take the six-mile journey

down Northwest 23rd Street to participate in People with Disabilities Awareness Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol set for March 12.

There, they'll visit with state lawmakers and talk about the importance of employment and services provided by Dale Rogers Training Center. Since senators and representatives will likely be in various committee meetings, oftentimes our advocates meet with their staff to pass along their important message.

Last year, DRTC sent around 15 enthusiastic individuals to

tell their story. They joined the crowd of more than 750 others who participated in People with Disabilities Awareness Day in 2018. This year, organizers aim to top that amount.

"We hope to raise awareness not only for the issues facing Oklahomans who have disabilities," said DRTC Deputy Director Deborah Copeland, "but most importantly, raise awareness of their amazing accomplishments."

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitative Services is sponsoring the event, with

the theme: "Oklahomans with Disabilities: Front and Center." EMBARK, the city's public transportation system, is offering a free shuttle service for people with disabilities to and from the Jim Thorpe Building parking lot.

**People with Disabilities
Awareness Day
Tuesday, March 12
State Capitol
11am - 4pm**

**Follow us for live tweets!
@drtcorg
#pwdad2019**



Greater Accessibility:

Renovations at MBS and VSB

For a 65-year-old agency, we gotta say: we're looking pretty good. But a nip here and a tuck there is helping us feel a bit more fresh these days.

Gone are the days of the old dairy farm on then Meek Road. DRTC has evolved over the years to include five buildings on our main campus at Northwest 23rd Street and Utah Avenue.

As the years pass, we recognize the need for a bit of a facelift. Our regulars have certainly seen all the demolition and construction in recent months. We thank you for your patience during our growth.



AMONG THE UPGRADES:

- New entry with ramp to our Vocational Services Building (VSB)
- Repaving concrete in the client drop-off and pickup area south of VSB
- Repairing warehouse floor
- Demolishing and replacing wheelchair ramp on the north side of VSB
- Extending a wheelchair-accessible paved path in Circle of Friends
- New walkway

Spring Cleaning

Enhancing the customer experience

Customers visiting DRTC also noticed a makeover at Prism Place. We recently remodeled our Gift Shop and Showroom areas, highlighting the products made by individuals on our main campus, while allowing room for future expansion.

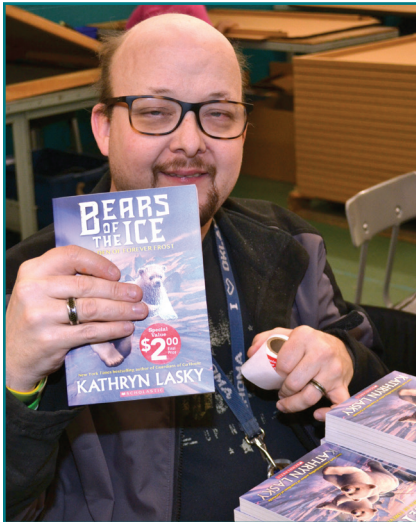
The Gift Shop area now includes all of our products featured in our recent Product Catalog, while the Showroom beautifully displays handmade acrylic awards, as well as our new lines of crystal and art glass recognition products. Moving the showroom allows space for a "clean room" where individuals can store newly made acrylic awards without fear of them getting dusty in the work room.



Around Town

There's no telling where you'll see our handiwork! DRTC's Vocational Services Program completes more than 180 sub-contracts for 40 companies every year. Many of them are for companies in Oklahoma, but others are nationwide, providing different work opportunities for individuals!

We can always use more work. Email dalerogers@drtc.org with your company's needs today!



Jason applies sale stickers for Scholastic Books



Kenique packages components for M-D Building Products

ICYMI



Larry with Carolyn Thompson,
Work Projects Director

Happy Trails to Larry!

(retiring after 36 years at Vanwey Dining Hall - DRTC's Food Service contract at TAFB)

Listen to Tyler Media stations to hear new ads mentioning Dale Rogers Training Center!



CAMP Tumbleweed

Get your sunscreen, shades and smiles ready for Camp Tumbleweed 2019!

Registration is underway for DRTC's summer day camp for youth with disabilities, ages 14-21.

We're planning another summer of fun activities and field trips, while developing personal, communication and self-advocacy skills.



Session 1: June 3- 27

Session 2: July 8-August 9

New this year: intercession camp July 1-3 at \$25/day. Camp will be closed July 4-5.

Full-time: \$145/week

Part-time: \$85/week

Funding options available.

Register today!

drtc.org/programs/#camp-tumbleweed

Email camptumbleweed@drtc.org for more details!





Dale Rogers Training Center
2501 N. Utah Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
405-946-4489
Video 405-445-7314
DRTC.org

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Blazing Trails Promoting Abilities

Find Us! Like Us! Follow Us!



Oklahoma nonprofit since 1953

Our Mission

To provide training and
employment opportunities
for people with disabilities.



United Way
Partner Agency



WORKER APPROVED PUZZLE PIECE STRESS RELIEVER

Item # 62 (Blue and Orange)
Item # 62 (Purple and Red)
Size: 3"x2-7/8"x1"
Price: \$5.00 per set of two



THUMBS UP POPPIN PAL

Item # 63 Blue
Item # 64 Green
Item # 65 Yellow
Item # 66 Red
Price: \$3.50 Each



THUMBS UP PEN

Item # 69
Price: \$3.00
Size: 6.75"



Inspired by our folks at DRTC! They love what they do, love coming to work each day, and often give a thumbs up for a job well done. Items feature quotes from workers on DRTC's main campus relatable to every working person.



THUMBS UP LED KEYRING AND STYLUS

Item # 67 (Lime)
Item # 68 (Black)
Price: \$2.50 Each
Size: 2.25"x3.125"x.5"

