



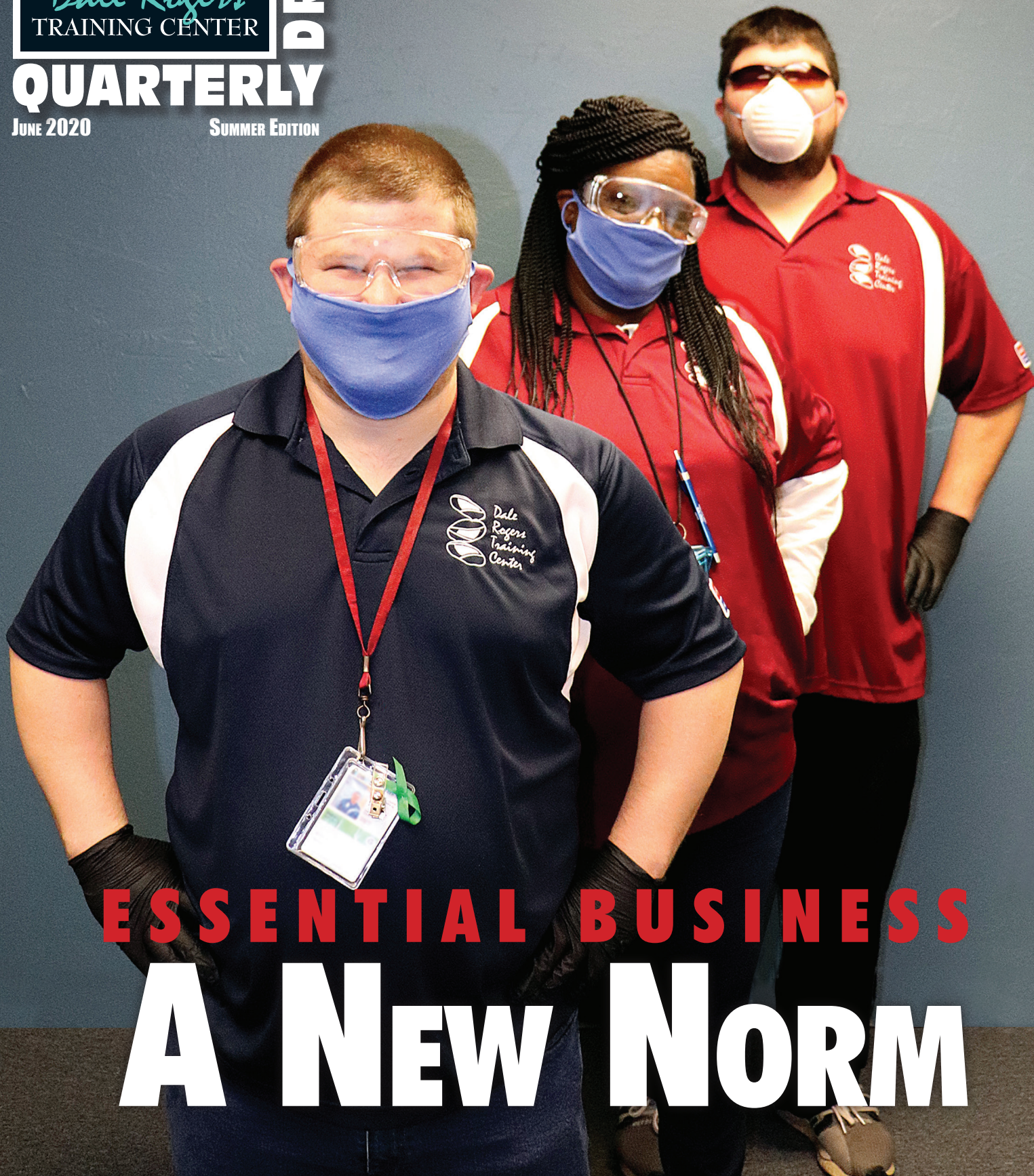
DRTC.ORG

QUARTERLY

JUNE 2020

SUMMER EDITION

CRITICAL AREAS
pg 3



ESSENTIAL BUSINESS

A NEW NORM



Deborah Copeland, M.Ed.
Executive Director

FROM THE DIRECTOR

In these unprecedented times, we hope this edition of the Quarterly finds you well.

Through our mission to provide training and employment for people who have a disability, DRTC has a long history of service to our community and nation. I realize not everyone may be aware we provide products and services as part of the state and federal 'critical infrastructure.'

In the following articles, I hope you will see the commitment of our custodial and food services professionals serving at Tinker AFB, FAA, the US Marshals, and in the downtown federal office buildings. You will also learn about our Employment Service clients employed in critical workforce areas of the state like healthcare and education.

Over the past few months, we also collaborated with area businesses to convert our production facility to provide necessary protective equipment like face masks and shields. Although our folks who were the most vulnerable and 'at risk' needed to shelter in-place, we have gained a deeper understanding of their contribution everyday as a vital workforce in our community.

They are all essential workers; which brings to light the critical role people with a disability hold in our community and nation. It continues to be our hope that we open the door wider to include people with a wide-range of abilities in the workforce overall. Our success moving forward will depend on recognizing the vital skills and talents they bring to the table not only at this time, but every day as we move into a 'new norm.'

DRTC implemented a Contingency of Operation Plan as soon as COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, which also activated a Critical Response Team. I want to recognize them and our Board of Directors for their unwavering leadership through this difficult chapter. 🍷

Deborah Copeland, M.Ed.

CRITICAL RESPONSE TEAM



1. Gayle McGuire, MHR
Human Resources Director
2. Deborah Copeland, M.Ed.
Executive Director
3. Angela Duckett, M.Ed.
DDS Program Director
4. Linda Sechrist, M.Ed.
Employment Services Manager
5. Carolyn Thompson, M.Ed.
Director of Custodial Services
6. Mark Claunch
Sales/Business Manager
7. Michael T. Jones
Marketing/Public Relations Manager
8. Lillian Hobbs, CPA
Chief Financial Officer
9. Mark Woods
Chief Operating Officer

Cover photo: Dylan, Ntokei, Cody



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DRTC Board President

Deborah Copeland, M.Ed.
Executive Director

Michael T. Jones
PR/Marketing Manager

James Helm
Comm. Engagement Coord

Brian Landreth
Senior Graphic Designer



Photo courtesy of U.S. Air Force/Kelly White

SPECIALISTS IN CRITICAL AREAS

When much of the nation shut down due to COVID-19, one thing at DRTC remained: operations at our SourceAmerica federal contract locations (Tinker Air Force Base, Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center at FAA, US Marshals and federal buildings downtown). The U.S. Department of Homeland Security designated 16 critical infrastructure sectors vital for overall operations of the country, including food service and custodial work. Fortunately, DRTC was well-equipped, well-trained, and well-staffed to handle the challenge.

“(My job) helps make a difference by keeping people safe while they’re at work,” said Johnathan, a custodian at DRTC’s FAA contract location.

Johnathan is one of about 300 of DRTC’s federal contract employees who carries the all-too-familiar title of “essential employee” on their job description. Dedicated employees proved their critical designation by their service—keeping military personnel fed and areas sanitized and clean.

“When the vast majority of workers in all types of jobs were working from home for safety, our employees (people with disabilities) were on the front lines ensuring a sanitary atmosphere for the essential customers,” said Carolyn Thompson, DRTC Director of Custodial Services. “They are very proud of the job they perform.”

DRTC staff at these locations took on a new look, donning face masks and face shields, while also increasing sanitation efforts to ensure a safe working

environment for all. Their work continues to be an invaluable part of not only their lives, but also those that depend on their services.

“Having to wear a face mask is minute compared to other people that might not have a job,” said Dylan, a custodian at Tinker Air Force Base. Dylan has worked for DRTC for seven years.

Contract managers at each location praised the work of their team for being willing to help, and maintaining a positive attitude.

“I believe that a position or industry that was many times overlooked by the general population has now been noticed and appreciated for all that we do,” said Marsha Vega, Assistant Contract Manager at Tinker.

Rebecca Nieto, Assistant Contract Manager at FAA, added the situation has also led to revelation for the staff. “This has helped several employees realize that they are so much more than ‘just a janitor,’” she said. On top of all the changes in protocol for our contract employees by COVID-19, food service personnel also were adjusting to a remodeled Vanwey Dining Hall at Tinker Air Force Base. The kitchen underwent extensive renovations in 2019. Typically, this contract serves just under 13,000 meals every month.

- Cont on Page 6

HAVE A QUESTION? DaleRogers@drtc.org



ESSENTIAL BUSINESS

In the rush for personal protective equipment (PPE), DRTC and DD Audio teamed up to get much needed equipment in the hands of first responders.

Dale Rogers Training Center has partnered with DD Audio, a high-quality mobile audio equipment manufacturer based in Oklahoma City, since 2012 under much different circumstances. Typically, DD Audio hosts a team from DRTC's Mobile Workforce to complete kitting and other projects on site. This time, however, with the pandemic shutting down businesses across the nation, DD Audio shifted gears from audio equipment to PPE.

DRTC re-purposed its laser engraver to help cut out templates for face shields and other related materials. Staff on the main campus then assembled these items, and DD Audio delivered finished products to the Oklahoma City-County Health Department.

"We learned that DRTC has the equipment necessary and can do manufacturing as well," said Shawn Wright, with DD Audio. "This project helps both entities with their missions as well as helping the community at large."

"This opportunity helps address a critical need in the community while maintaining our relationship with DD Audio during the pandemic," said DRTC Sales/Business Manager Mark Claunch.

DRTC also manufactured cloth face masks using t-shirt material from DRTC Promotional Items. The agency distributed both face shields and face masks to staff on its main campus and federal contract locations. 🧐

A NEW NORM

Familiar faces were serving on the frontlines during the pandemic: DRTC Employment Services program participants found steady work in their various capacities. Every year, job coaches at DRTC help more than 100 people find new work opportunities and learn the nuances of the position. While coronavirus shifted the way job coaches interacted with participants, offering more remote-based services than in-person, there was still work to be done.

Job coaches team up with participants, matching their jobs needs and interests to openings in the area, assisting with the job application process, that they are trained on-the-job, and can work independently. Over time, they leave a well-trained employee, checking in with them and the employer to ensure everything is working smoothly.

Ready for the challenge

Bradley found work during the height of the safer-at-home guidelines, starting as a Sales Associate at CVS Pharmacy. As an essential business, Bradley was put on the frontlines, helping customers with their needs, and ensuring a safe shopping environment. He enjoys answering their questions, is forging new friendships with his co-workers, and has grown personally during this time.

"I'm more intelligent than I thought that I was," said Bradley. "I am finding I can handle things much better."

A musician at heart (Bradley plays three instruments), he is appreciative of the opportunity to learn the position and feels confident in his abilities. Bradley's supervisor complimented him on his eagerness to learn and join the team.

Lisa is Bradley's job coach and has helped place dozens of other people in new jobs in her time at DRTC. She says it is always a time for celebration when someone finds employment, and it's even more rewarding when they finish the program, no longer needing her assistance. She says each person is different, offering unique skills and talents to organizations.

"In each person there are strengths that we can recognize and we bring that to the employer, not the disability," said Lisa.

Since he started at CVS, Bradley is already making plans for the future.

"I would like to grow in the company and perhaps become a shift manager," said Bradley. "And to pursue higher education in psychology."

From the classroom, to the classroom

A 2019 high school graduate, Alex found himself back in class—in a new role. He's a custodian with Sodexo, Norman Public Schools.

"I like having something to do each day," said Alex.

Fortunately, for Alex, his work has kept him busy through the pandemic. For the past few months, he's been cleaning Alcott Middle School—classrooms, restrooms, you name it. - Cont on Page 6



HAVE A QUESTION? 405-946-4489



Camp Tumbleweed is going virtual during Summer 2020 out of an abundance of caution due to COVID-19. For the first time, registration is open throughout Oklahoma, giving pre-teens to young adults with disabilities the chance of experiencing what Camp Tumbleweed has to offer.

Counselors provided ability-appropriate boxes of crafts for participants. Camp will be split into two parts, four days per week: campers 11-13 years old in the morning; campers 14-21 years old in the afternoon. Each session lasts for 2.5 hours and will feature Camp staff guiding campers via video conference (Zoom). Contact DRTC for funding options and/or assistance with Internet access. 📺

Want to join in the fun? Email us today!

SPECIALISTS IN CRITICAL AREAS - from Page 3

Due to adjustments in procedures for safety, Vanwey switched to offering take-out for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Customers complete a health screening and have their temperature checked prior to entering the facility. Employees are continually cleaning and sanitizing high-traffic areas.

Assistant Food Service Manager Tori Richardson is proud of how her staff stepped up and were willing to do what was necessary to maintain operations.

"They all went above and beyond to do all I have asked," said Richardson.

Jason Lee, Food Service Contract Manager, recognizes the importance of his team's role and is proud of how they have stepped up when needed most.

"The dining facility staff have presented a full understanding of mission necessity and proved willing to provide exceptional service in support of USAF Command requirements," he said. 📺

CLASSROOM - from Page 5

It's an important job in preparation for the 2020 school year, which suits him just fine.

His work ethic has been outstanding and he has a wonderful attitude every day," said Sarah, Human Resources Manager with Sodexo. "He is a delight to work with and we are excited to see where his strengths take him!"

"I get bored at home and enjoy knowing I am helping others," said Alex.

Helping others is also key to his employer's success. DRTC and Sodexo have worked together for five years promoting inclusion in the workplace, helping people with disabilities like Alex find work in custodial and food service jobs. Alex has already made a great impact.

Vivian is Alex's job coach and has helped countless people in her 15 years with DRTC find meaningful employment. Her greatest satisfaction comes when the person reaches his or her potential.

"I like to watch the person soar with confidence," Vivian said.

Alex enjoys playing video games and working on art in his free time, but also realizes the importance of his job and his impact on students. While he's learning the details of his position, he appreciates all the assistance from DRTC and Sodexo.

"Showing me how to do things, guiding and checking on me to make sure I am going in the right direction of completing tasks," said Alex. 📺



Does your business have staffing needs?
Our Employment Services program may be able to help! Learn more online or email us.



MOVING FORWARD 2GETHER



DRTC shifted into “drive” while many of our co-workers were in “park” during the safer-at-home guidelines, reconnecting with our friends throughout the metro. Programs staff got behind the wheel for a “We miss you tour,” visiting main campus co-workers at their homes (respecting social distancing rules, of course). Our week-long journey took us from Edmond to Moore and Midwest City to El Reno. Employees provided goodie bags to those along the way, and shared a kind word to let them know we miss them and can’t wait to see them on campus again. Want to see more pictures? Visit our Facebook page or our blog. 📷





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