

# Shift

"Reinventing Opportunities"

Volume 2, Issue 1  
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Tenille Ademiluyi

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ROI is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization committed to serving adults with disabilities.



## ROI Renamed to Align With Mission and Vision

Rehabilitation Opportunities, Inc. has a new name!

Last spring, The Board of Directors had a discussion about the agency's current name and whether the name properly



**Kristin Nelson,**  
*CDP Coordinator*

reflects its mission and vision. There are many definitions for the term, "rehabilitation" and it was decided that none of those definitions accurately capture the purpose of the services we provide. After all, we seek to help individuals move forward and embrace greater levels of independence, not move them backward to some former state as the term suggests.

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As a result, the quest for a new name began! ROI held an agency wide contest and staff was given the opportunity (hint) to suggest new names. If their name was chosen by the Board, the winner would receive a visa gift card and the legendary status of having renamed the organization.

The new name was announced on January 24<sup>th</sup> at a staff training. The winner of the contest is Kristin Nelson, Community Development Coordinator in Germantown. The name she chose is... (can you stand the suspense?)

### Opportunities Inc.!

That's right, we are dropping the term "Rehabilitation" to more fully capture our mission and vision. The change will be a process as our website and promotional materials will be updated in the coming months.

Congratulations Kristin!

## Executive Director's Message

This quarter, ROI is increasing its focus on staff training. As a recipient of the Transforming and Improving Practices through Customized Technical Assistance (TIP) grant, ROI is receiving technical assistance from Corey Smith, a senior Griffin-Hammis consultant with expertise in customized employment services and organizational transformation.

Corey is working with ROI to help build capacity in the area of supported employment. In addition, ROI has partnered with Greenland & Associates to deliver the "Leading through Coaching" training. This training teaches staff how to empower participants and peers through a positive coaching communication style. These partnerships are designed to equip ROI staff with the tools necessary to make the shift to providing more community-based day services.

Staff training will continue to be an important part of the change process as we shift the focus of our services. Learning new skills and building upon existing ones is proving to be challenging and rewarding. I am very excited about these training opportunities and the progress ROI has made this quarter. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Shift*.

~Tenille Ademiluyi

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# Highlights

## Points of Interests:

- We seek to help individuals move forward and embrace greater levels of independence.
- Current partnerships are designed to equip ROI staff with the tools necessary to make the shift to community-based day services.
- Families are one of the key factors in an individual's journey toward independence.
- Workshop skills prove useful as participants give back to the community.



### Montgomery County **DRIVERS NEEDED** Start Immediately

**Details:** 15 Passenger Van, 3 Yrs. Good Driving Record, \$12.00/Hr, Split-Shift/(M-F) 6-8am, (M-TH) 4-6pm, and (F) 3:30-5:30pm.

**Contact:** Stacey Thomas, Transportation  
240-686-0866 ext. 237

## Parent Shares Travel Training Experience in Blog

As ROI supports individuals in the community, families are one of the key factors in that journey toward independence. Mark, the Byamugisha's son, joined the Community Development Program (CDP) in the fall of 2016. In a heartfelt article featured in *Autism Articulated* ([www.autismarticulated.com](http://www.autismarticulated.com)), we are allowed an inside look at how Mark's mom felt during his first independent bus trip.

*"...I am feeling jittery about this whole independent travel plan. Mark...is going to college by himself. A trainer from Mark's day program is supposed to be watching...from somewhere near the bus stop. I debate if I should go and watch him too. I walk really fast as all kinds of questions wrestle in my mind. What if the traffic light does not change in time to allow him to cross walk safely? What if the bus is late?*

*As I watch from a distance — not close enough to be seen — I pace nervously and wonder how anxious he might be. Does he*

*feel I have given up on him?*

*I gather strength and remind myself how far he has come and how ready he seems to take on this new challenge. I wonder if he is doing this because he is so compliant and will try to appease his counselors and trainers. Does he realize the importance of this experience?*

*The bus stops and from my view point, I can see him in his Adidas jacket entering the bus, with a lanyard identification holder that has a badge to indicate his disability.*

*As I walk back home, I think about him in the seat for the disabled. I hope that maybe his badge will identify him and people will not think this nice-looking, "abled" body is taking the wrong seat. I hope that maybe everyone he meets on this journey will be as understanding and wonderful as the team that has believed in his potential and competence.*

*Mark travelled independently from home to Montgomery College and made it on time. Here comes Bus #90, and our Mark B is leading the way, one bus ride at a time."*

## Law Enforcement Meet and Greet

On October 4<sup>th</sup> a meet and greet event with the Mitchellville law enforcement and first responders took place at the Enterprise Park Police Station and a number of individuals, advocates, and staff of the disability community were in attendance. ROI participants had the chance to meet with multiple law enforcement personnel and first responders from within the county and community.

They learned how to respond appropriately when there is an emergency and observed multiple simulation procedures. Individuals also received training on response procedures and how to properly utilize the emergency equipment. The purpose of this event was to increase communication and awareness between law enforcement, first responders, and the disability community as a whole, making it a collaborative community outreach effort.

As stated in the last issue of *Shift*, ROI was a recipient of the TIP (Transforming and Improving Practices through Customized Technical Assistance) Grant. In this grant, ROI had to choose a subject matter expert to assist in developing a plan and process in which individuals successfully move from the day program to competitive employment.

ROI has identified Corey Smith, to assist in this process. Corey hails from Pennsylvania, where he works as a consultant for Griffin-Hammis Associates and specializes in teaching Discovery and Customized Employment methods.

Discovery is considered the foundation of career planning and can result in participants obtaining customized employment, which is a position that perfectly aligns with one's desires, passions, skills and level of supports needed. The theory behind Customized

## Have You Heard?

Employment is that anyone, no matter the level of support needed, is able to successfully work competitively.

Corey recently visited the Lanham location where he worked with the management team and job developer to design a pilot project. This pilot will offer discovery and customization to no more than 10 participants (5 in each location) in order for both the participants and staff to start to become familiar with this process.

Corey will be visiting the Germantown location in February in order to meet the employment staff as well as develop webinars for the Board of Directors and families regarding competitive employment and benefits. We will also take the next steps in our pilot project, staff training and the participant selection process!

# ROI Programs

## Workshop Skills Prove Useful As Participants Give Back to the Community

ROI participants in Germantown began volunteering weekly with Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) in September of 2017. Lanham participants joined shortly after in November. CAFB relies on volunteers to provide 540,000 people each year with good healthy food. This offered participants a huge opportunity to use current skills or learn new ones.

Each week, the Community Exploration Program (CEP) staff takes a group of 10 individuals to volunteer at CAFB. These individuals have the desire to explore

employment and build skills. Upon arrival, their belongings are packed away in lockers and they sit in the waiting area for CAFB staff to direct them to their

*“The participants are building confidence because they are able to use the skills they learned at ROI.”*  
~ **Shanella, Germantown Staff**

*“Our groups really enjoy going to the food bank and taking responsibility.”*  
~ **Claudette, Lanham Staff**

work assignment. Participants work for two hours, receive a lunch break, then work for an additional hour.

CAFB staff immediately noticed how skilled the individuals were as they demonstrated team work; and their abilities to sort, pack, label, stack skids, and make boxes, which are skills they learned in ROI’s Day Program.

When asked, participants say they enjoy volunteering at CAFB because they are able to learn new skills, meet new people, and show they are able to get along with and work along side others who do not have disabilities. CAFB also offers them the opportunity to give back and be a part of their communities by supporting those in need. These things prove useful as they give back to the community.

## Panel Discussions Allows Participants to Openly Share Community Experiences and Challenges.

On Friday December 22<sup>nd</sup>, a participant led panel was formed to discuss the community programs offered at ROI. Participants from the Community Exploration Programs (CEP), Employee Development Services Program (EDS), Community Development Program (CDP) and Supported Employment programs (SEP) volunteered to share their experiences, challenges and lessons learned throughout the past year.

They did an excellent job of articulating what they liked most about their increased engagement in the community to an audience of their peers and family members. Many participants spoke about their volunteer experiences, while others talked about their successes and challenges with obtaining competitive integrated employment.

The regional manager of Planet Fitness also spoke at the event and praised ROI participants for helping build a sense of community and acceptance at the gym. The panel occurred before the annual holiday parties in both ROI locations.





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**Established 1964**

*About Us*

ROI assists adults with disabilities allowing them to achieve their fullest potential for independence and self-confidence. Our services include supported employment, employment focused training and support, and community inclusion activities.



Plan a visit to ROI and take a tour. We would love to show you around.

**ROI Lanham**  
301-731-4242

**ROI Germantown**  
240-686-0866

**DORS Helps ROI Provide Intense Services**

**Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**

“DORS helps people with physical, emotional, intellectual, developmental, sensory and learning disabilities go to work and keep their jobs by providing services such as career assessment and counseling, assistive technology, job training, higher education and job placement.”

ROI seeks assistance from DORS when an individual needs more intensive job coaching and development than what ROI has traditionally been able to offer through its supported employment programs.

Specifically, DORS provides additional funding support for job development, job coaching and job training. Mark, an ROI participant, and his job coach have been able to work 1:1 multiple times a week to fine tune his work skills at Outback Steak House. This has included learning alternate transportation routes to and

from work, how to advocate for additional work hours and duties, kitchen sanitation best practices, and learning new skills including rolling silverware and preparing condiments.

Also, Donnell, another ROI participant, is interested in obtaining additional competitive employment on top of his position at Custom Courier Associates. In order for this to happen, ROI has assisted Donnell in applying for DORS for additional job development and coaching.

For more information regarding DORS please visit their website <http://dors.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>



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