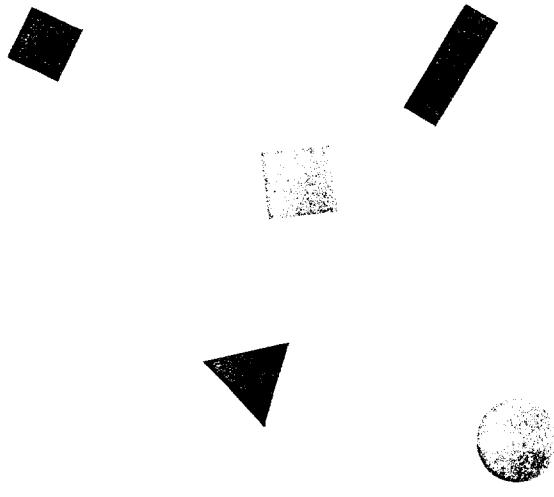


IT'S WORKING



SE
MINNESOTA
**SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT**
PROJECT



PEOPLE with severe disabilities are capable of experiencing paid and meaningful work in integrated, community business settings.



IN THE PAST decade, pioneering service agencies and research projects alike have demonstrated that integrated employment options for persons with severe disabilities are indeed a reality when responsive organizations take affirmative steps to insure the availability of ongoing job support services.

The new directions each state and local agency continue to undertake brings Minnesota closer to the reality of providing supported employment to people who need and desire it. By working together, Minnesota agencies are creating a system that assures that necessary supported employment services are available statewide. This book summarizes our experience during the first two years and also outlines the direction we will undertake in the future.

INTRODUCTION

LIKE MANY STATES throughout the country, Minnesota is a state in transition. The educational and adult service systems for people with severe disabilities are undergoing an unprecedented period of change. This current course of change has been fueled by increased:

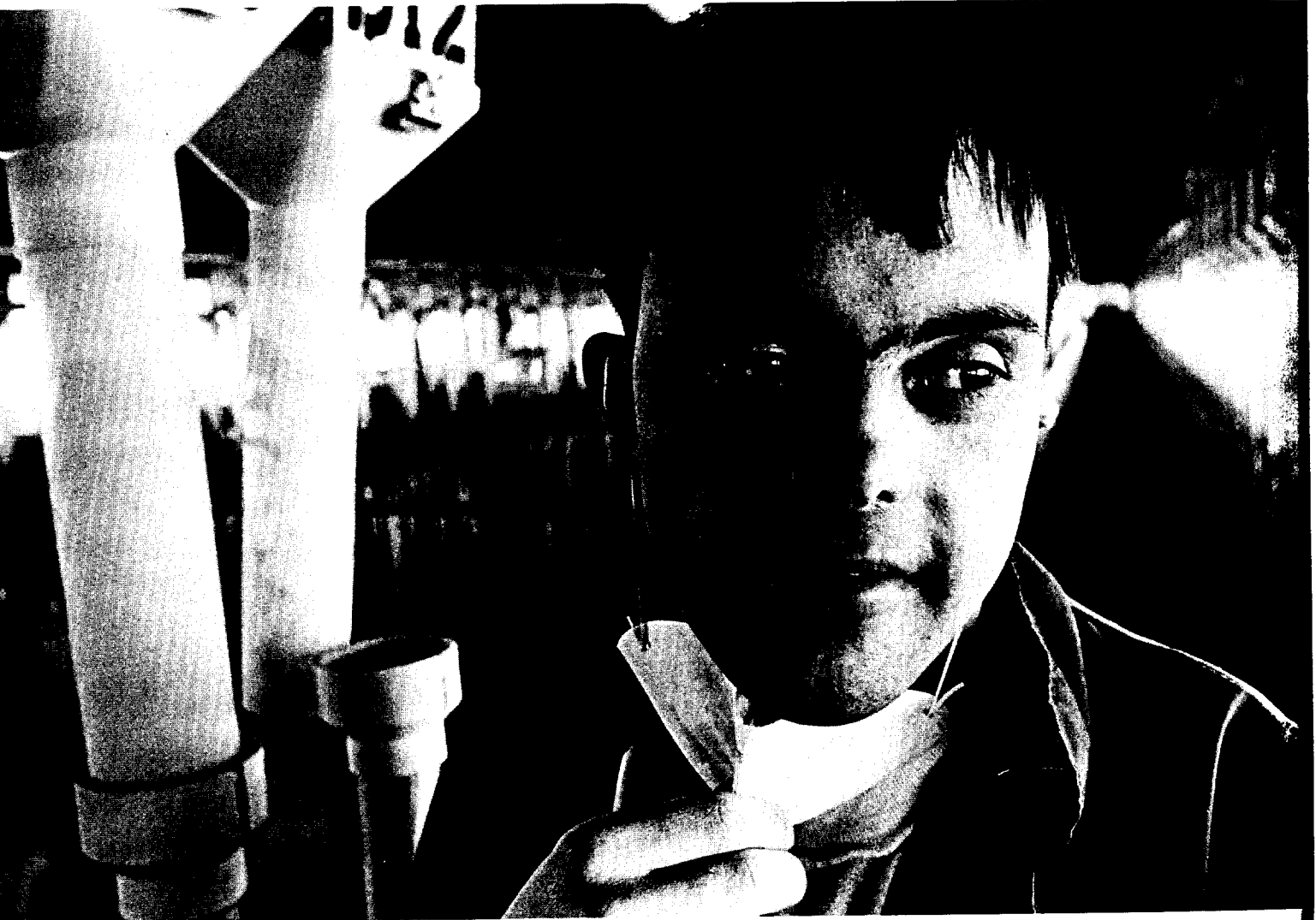
- advocacy efforts directed at integration of individuals into community life;
- demands for program accountability;
- demands for cost-effective employment outcomes in exchange for the expenditure of public funds; and
- demands to apply program service strategies and technology which have demonstrated the employability of persons with severe disabilities in non-segregated, less restrictive work settings.

IN AN EFFORT TO involve the principal stakeholders in the process of systems changes and ease the transition to a new generation of services, the State of Minnesota applied to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) for federal assistance. In 1985, OSERS approved a five year grant which resulted in the establishment of the Minnesota Supported Employment Project (MnSEP).

The Minnesota Supported Employment Project (MnSEP) is an interagency effort involving the Minnesota Department of Education, the Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services. The Project is guided by key administrative executives from each of these state agencies. The Project also receives guidance from an advisory council which has broad membership and represents the major stakeholders who purchase, provide, or receive vocational and other adult habilitation services.

THE PRIMARY GOAL of MnSEP is to increase the quantity, quality, and diversity of supported employment opportunities for citizens of Minnesota who are challenged by severe disabilities. In order to achieve this goal, the Project has implemented a diversified work plan to address systems change through the following objec

- consumer and parent education
- employer education and marketing strategies
- legislation and policy making adjustments
- funding
- training and technical assistance
- administrative structures
- management informations systems
- interagency cooperation, and
- advocating for the development of new programs and the conversion of more traditional vocational and habilitation services



Chris Bringgold grew up on a farm. He now works at Holden Farm, a disease control hog operation. "I like the work and I get to hang out with all the guys too."

Faribault Regional Center (FRC) is a state institution which provides an array of services including specialized care, treatment, development and habilitative services to more than 540 people with mental retardation. The center's purpose is to integrate or re-integrate these individuals into their respective communities.



Working with a power hose is a tricky operation. The force could cut the hogs in the pens. This job is skillfully handled by Calvin everyday.

PLAN

FRC applied to MnSEP for resources to move a portion of its vocational program "off campus". In their proposal, FRC established a plan to place 15 persons into supported employment options within the greater Faribault community. This plan included the development of individual placements, work enclaves, and mobile crews. The administration of FRC was committed to exploring new program service options which would facilitate the return of its clientele to their communities.

RESULT

The development of a supported employment project within FRC has produced numerous organizational changes and implications for other state institutions and day habilitation agencies. The staff and residents of FRC have demonstrated this past year that supported employment is a viable service option . . . even for persons who were assessed as requiring "Regional Center care".

FRC administration took a number of risks. They were required to manage:

- a state bureaucracy unfamiliar with the goals and policies of supported employment;
- introducing a new service technology to staff;
- retraining staff to assume job development and training responsibilities;
- educating local employers about the work potential of its workers;
- re-allocating resources to continue the project beyond the grant period; and
- overcoming the stigma and reputation of a state Regional Center to become a viable business partner.

In the past year, FRC has assisted 28 persons in achieving supported employment. Their average rate of pay per hour is \$2.11 and each worker averages 16.75 hours per week. There is little question a higher quality of life has been realized by these individuals who have been fortunate to attain jobs in the private sector.

The supported employment project at FRC has had a profound impact upon the facility. . . and others in the State of Minnesota. FRC plans to expand the program and give more clients the same opportunities for meaningful work and community integration.

Kaposia, Inc. is a non-traditional **training and habilitation service** located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Kaposia is dedicated to providing **customized employment services to persons with severe developmental disabilities**. The agency presently serves **95 persons**. It has made significant inroads for providing integrated employment options for **the people it serves**.

PLAN

In its project application, Kaposia proposed to expand its supported employment model by placing eight individuals challenged by severe disabilities. The project was to focus its attention on the placement of individuals with severe mental retardation and social-behavioral disorders.

In order to accomplish their goals, it was necessary for Kaposia to:

- adjust its staffing pattern
- build expertise in the area of behavioral management
- implement a diverse marketing strategy, and
- establish a management support structure for an increasingly decentralized service base

RESULTS

The funds from MnSEP have enabled Kaposia to continue its conversion toward supported employment services. The project enabled the agency to place an additional **27 persons** into integrated employment, thereby, expanding the ratio of individuals served in supported work by **28 percent**. The average hourly wage of these workers equalled **\$2.88** and the average number of hours worked per week was **25.5**.

As Kaposia had already been operating a successful supported employment program at the time of funding, the agency focused greater attention to refinement of its administrative systems to support its expanding program. These adjustments included:

- the implementation of a policy regarding fringe benefits for supported employees
- developing a quality circle for staff to share ideas and improve services
- refinement of job descriptions for staff

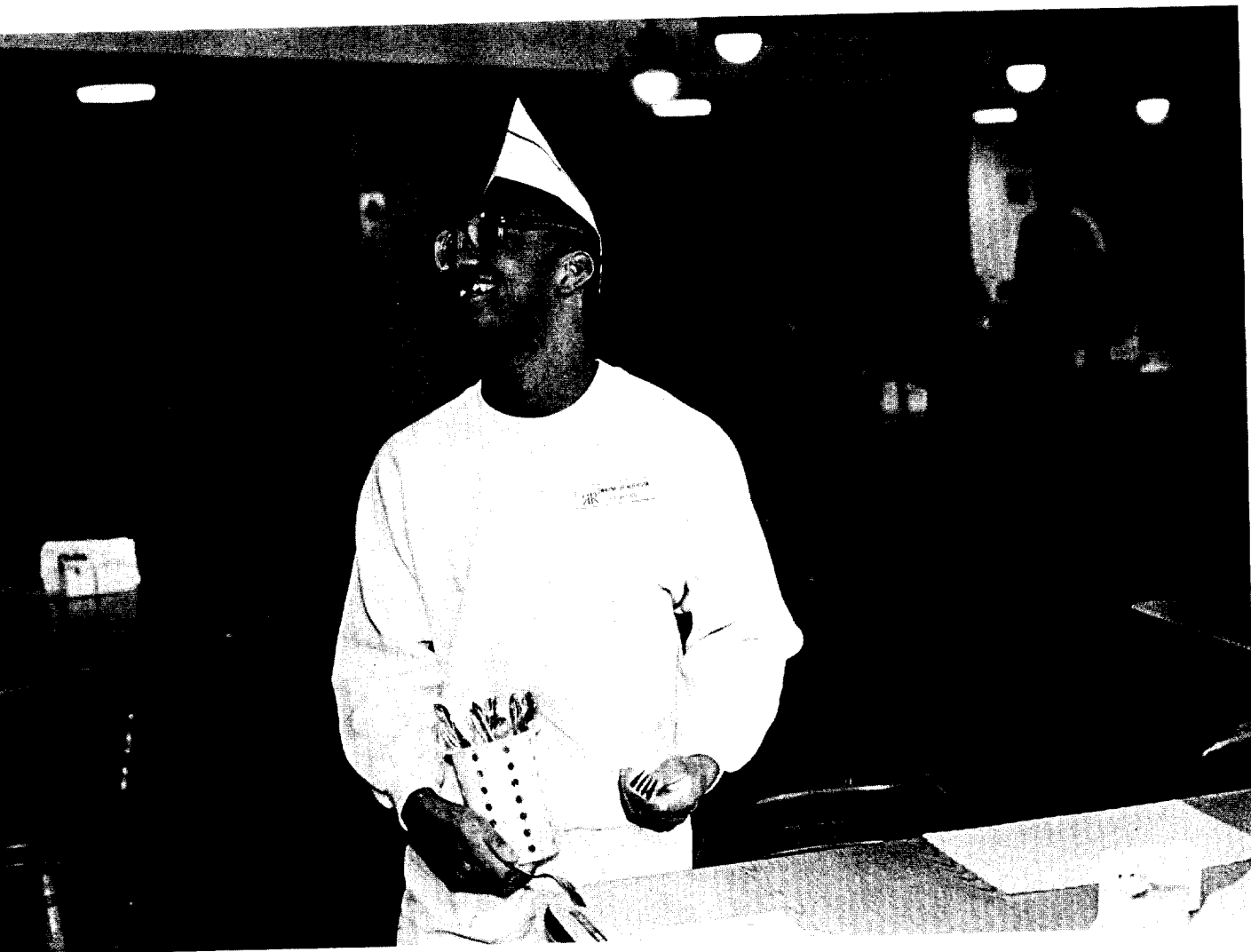
- the development of a computerized management information system for the agency to track data
- establishing back-up staff coverage systems, and
- coordinating transportation options for persons with more severe handicapping conditions.

Kaposia had positioned itself as a leader in the movement toward supported employment among Minnesota's **day training and habilitation centers**. The performance of their project this past year is indicative of the creativity and energy the organization is exerting to expand supported employment options for persons traditionally excluded from the labor market.

Kaposia has received numerous requests for guidance and technical assistance from other **day training and habilitation centers** who are interested in launching similar initiatives. In addition, Kaposia will play an active role in providing technical assistance during MnSEP's second year.



Heidi Hirchoff and Duane Henderson work as dining room helpers at Redeemer Nursing Home.



"Duane is very proud of his work and tends to smile all the time. He likes being with other people and he is very social with the other workers at Redeemer," says job coach Liz McDermott. The program has been in operation since September, 1987.

UNITED
DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENT CENTER

The United Developmental Achievement Center (UDAC) serves 123 adults with severe disabilities in the greater Duluth metropolitan region. **Prior to receiving their grant award, UDAC had an in-house work program which involved assembly and packaging of fishing tackle. Before the grant no resources, staff or monetary, had been expended to employ clients beyond the Center in the community.**

PLAN

UDAC applied for MnSEP funding with a goal to place eight of its clients into supported employment. The focus of their project was to place individuals with profound and severe retardation and other clients with documented histories of behavior problems. In evaluating the service needs of identified candidates, UDAC staff chose a diversified supported employment model including the development of enclaves and individual placements.

RESULTS

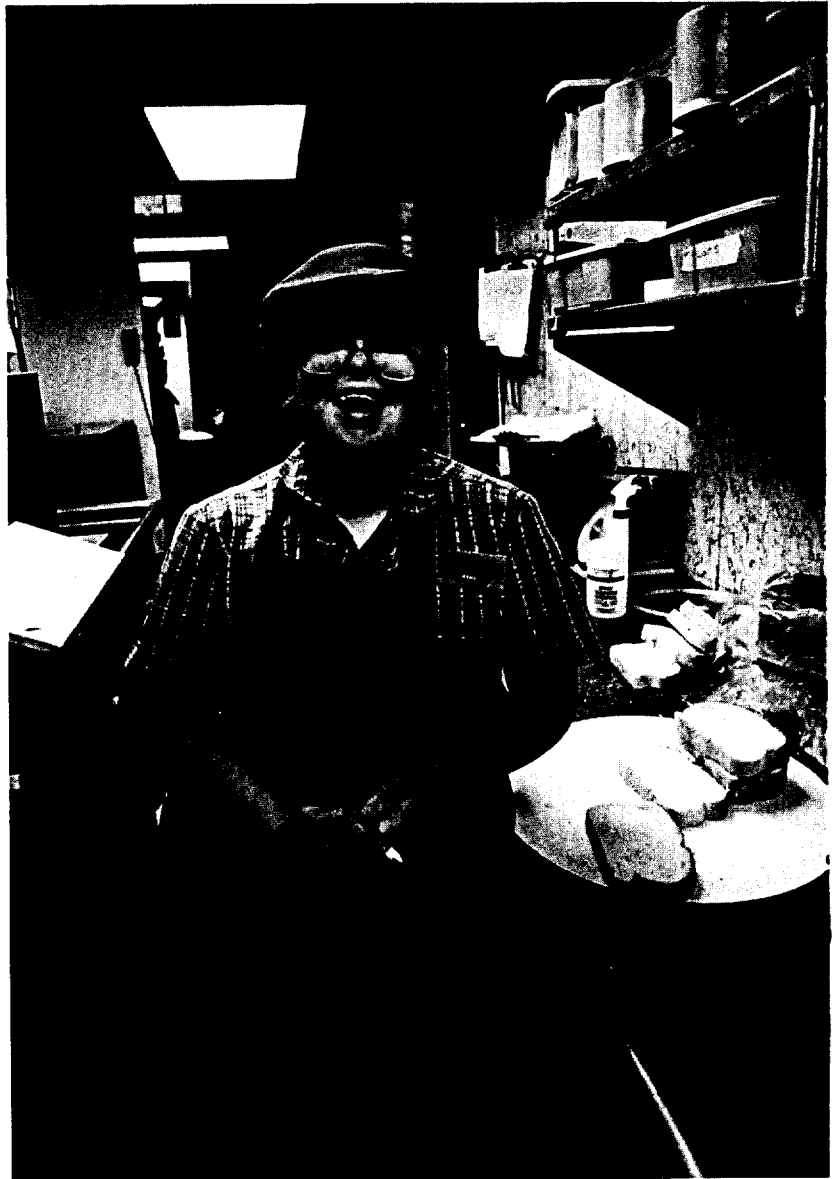
At the completion of its project year, UDAC has assisted 22 participants in securing supported employment. The average wage per employee was \$1.04 and the employees' average number of hours worked per week was 10. These accomplishments are meaningful in the context of a sluggish economy in the City of Duluth.

Numerous organizational achievements have also been realized by UDAC as it redirects its service delivery to supported employment. In the past year, for example, staff have gained invaluable expertise in such areas as:

- time-study techniques
- job bidding methods
- marketing and job development services
- job coaching techniques, and
- the development of a computerized management information system

The acquisition of these competencies will help UDAC expand supported employment opportunities for other participants served in its in-house program.

The success of UDAC's supported employment project has charted a new service direction for the agency. The administration and staff are dedicated to increasing supported employment options and they are presently collaborating with the Duluth Public Education system to place young adults with severe disabilities who are in transition from school-to-work. This new program initiative coupled with the agency's existing conversion effort will insure UDAC remains responsive to the employment needs of its program participants.



Left, Bill Hunter feels very special now that he works at the Pizza Hut near his home. Renee Sycks, right, has moved from dishwasher to food preparer. She works 5 days a week at a local Pizza Hut.



Harvey Thurston is a housekeeping aide at Augustana Nursing Home. "This is the first full-time job I have had in a very long while, and it's going great. I hope to get a car soon."

SPRC (formerly St. Paul Rehabilitation Center) is a private, nonprofit rehabilitation center serving adults and children from the greater east-metropolitan area of the Twin Cities. SPRC served approximately 500 individuals within its Vocational Rehabilitation Department during fiscal year 1986. The agency features a diversified mix of vocational services including:

- vocational evaluation
- vocational training
- sheltered employment
- supported employment, and
- job placement services

SPRC is accredited by the Commission of Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and holds a certificate of operation issued by the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services. In order to develop a system of supported employment for unemployed residents of Ramsey County with serious mental illnesses, SPRC has formed an interagency alliance with the Ramsey County Community Human Services Department (RCCHSD), Ramsey County Community Support Program (CSP), and the Minnesota Division of Rehabilitation Services.

PLAN

The project proposal submitted by SPRC emphasized the need for an interdisciplinary team effort to meet the employment objectives of persons with psychiatric disability conditions. Oftentimes, case management for this population is fragmented among a number of agencies providing no assurance that a person's service needs are being met in an organized and complementary fashion. The SPRC proposal emphasized a need to coordinate an array of services among the county, DRS, residential and other mental health practitioners to assist 15 individuals in achieving and maintaining supported employment. Both individual placements and enclaves were proposed as appropriate service delivery formats for these individuals, many of whom had not been able to work in over a decade.

RESULTS

The project has resulted in benefits for consumers and the organization alike. A total of 15 persons were placed into supported employment positions at an average wage of \$3.40 per hour and an average of 20 hours worked per week.

The project also enabled SPRC to:

- adjust its staffing pattern to include personnel with mental health experience
- establish an interdisciplinary service model
- refine its computered program evaluation system
- implement new inter-organizational contracts with community businesses, and
- develop an ongoing funding structure to support a specialized program for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

The success of SPRC's project has encouraged the agency to expand supported employment options for individuals with severe mental health disabilities. Recently, the agency was awarded a contract by Ramsey county to operate a Transitional Employment Program with an ongoing case management structure. In addition, SPRC was awarded a three year demonstration grant by OSERS to implement a similar project.

ALPHA DEVELOPMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT CENTER / RATHJEN HOUSE

Alpha Developmental Achievement Center provides training and habilitation services for 49 adults who are developmentally disabled and reside in the Freeborn County area of southern Minnesota. Alpha is located in the City of Albert Lea which has a population base of 17,000. The program emphasis of Alpha is community integration with supported employment being targeted as a major area of need. At the time of application, Alpha had 11 individuals employed in part-time supported employment positions, although the hours worked ranged from only two to twelve hours per week. Alpha is committed to expanding its existing program to include people who are more severely disabled.

Rathjen House, Hecla, Inc., is a Rule 36 residential and day treatment program providing services to 14 residents and 5 individuals from the community who are vocationally handicapped by severe and persistent mental illnesses. The emphasis of Rathjen is to enhance community integration through training in vocational, education, recreational, and basic skills of daily living through individualized treatment plans. Rathjen had no prior experience in the area of supported employment, but was eager to see the development of such options for their program participants.

As Alpha and Rathjen had established similar goals for their consumers, they agreed to collaborate and submit a joint project application to MnSEP with Alpha serving as the administrative agency.

PLAN

Alpha and Rathjen established a goal to:

- place 10 unemployed individuals (5 from each agency), and
- recruit a Project Coordinator and a part-time Job Developer

Due to the agricultural crisis in Freeborn County and its impact upon the overall economy in the region, the organizations selected primarily an individual placement approach accompanied by one-on-one job coaching and support services. These positions were held by existing staff in each agency.

RESULTS

The project got off to a slower start than anticipated for couple of reasons:

- a stubborn economy which yielded fewer job development opportunities than expected, and
- a miscalculation regarding the time demands and flexibility essential for the scheduling of existing staff members as job coaches

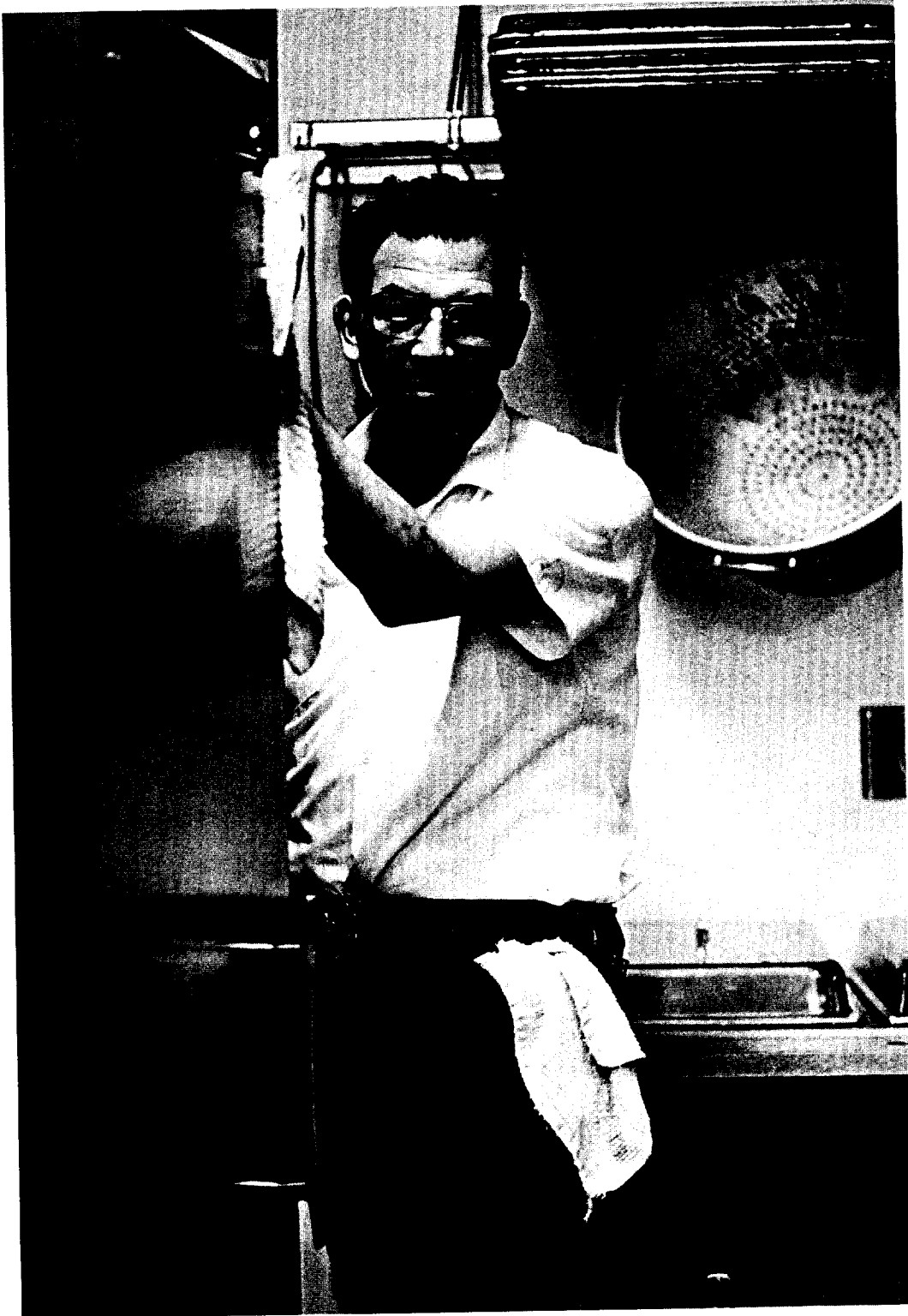
Although these difficulties provided a frustrating start, they were overcome with additional planning, interagency cooperation, and increased job development activities.

The Alpha/Rathjen project produced 7 supported employment placements. The average wage of the workers securing jobs was **\$3.35 per hour** and the average number of hours worked per week was 5.

The project has also stimulated numerous organizational changes such as:

- an increased ratio of workers experiencing employment in the community
- acquired staff expertise in managing supported employment services
- acquired staff expertise in marketing
- knowledge of mixing various funding streams, and
- a planned program for conversion of the job roles of personnel employed within their respective facilities

Both Alpha and Rathjen plan to continue their interagency collaboration beyond the grant period. Supported Employment has become a major organizational priority for the future as a result of their success. A major change in the image of their organizations also happened as a result of the project. They are no longer viewed publicly as "program for the handicapped" but rather as agencies of employment and viable partners in the Albert Lea business community.



Richard Geshick has become a very valued employee at Dunham's restaurant. Owner, Gloria Dunham says, "We created this new position after a night cleaning services took over his usual tasks. He was just too good an employee to lose."

The Northwest Supported Employment Initiative is a multi-agency dedicated to the expansion of supported employment options for individuals residing in a three county region in northwestern Minnesota. The project application was prepared by the East Polk County DAC, Polk County DAC, Clearwater County DAC, and Marshall County DAC. East Polk County DAC agreed to serve as the fiscal agent on behalf of the consortium. Although the project was a collaborative effort involving interagency collaboration, the geographic distances of these agencies required the implementation of four sub-programs administered autonomously by each participating organization.

East Polk County DAC is a nonprofit agency serving 22 adults with severe disabilities who live in the rural municipalities of eastern Polk County. Its headquarters is located in Fosston, a community with a population of 1,600 (third largest city in Polk County).

In recent years, East Polk DAC had made programmatic adjustments to increase their level of vocational activities such as the operation of a beverage can recycling center, in-house janitorial work and three supported employment placements in community businesses.

The Marshall County DAC is located in Warren, Minnesota, a rural community with a population of 2,000. The agency serves 19 participants in its multiple programs. Prior to the grant award, Marshall County DAC was providing limited in-house work opportunities and had three individuals placed in community job settings. Under the grant, staff have developed an excellent working relationship with the business community.

The Clearwater County DAC serves 22 adults with severe disabilities residing in the Clearwater County area. The agency is located in Bagley, Minnesota, a municipality, with a population base of 1,400. Before applying for MnSEP funds, Clearwater County DAC was providing limited pre-vocational activity within its facility and had placed a few individuals into community employment.

Polk County DAC is the largest consortium member serving 48 adults with severe disabilities in a wide geographic area of the region. The agency is headquartered in Crookston, Minnesota, a community of 8,000 persons and operates a satellite program in the City of Grand Forks, with a population base of almost 8,000.

Since 1982, the agency began a process of "normalizing" services for its participants by:

- eliminating simulated work
- increasing vocational activity within the facility
- increasing community integration efforts, and
- initiating supported employment opportunities within the local business community

PLAN

The Northwest Supported Employment Initiative proposed to place 20 individuals (five employment outcomes per agency). The project proposed to accomplish this goal through:

- through development of partnerships with local business
- training of staff, and
- development of resources

A major function of the project was to recruit substitute staff to free up existing staff and enhance supported employment conversion efforts. Because of the limited number of larger employers in the northwest region, the consortium expressed a preference for individual or scattered job sites accompanied by one-on-one job coaching and follow-up services. Two of the DAC's also explored janitorial mobile crews and enclave models when possible.

RESULTS

The accomplishments of the Northwest Supported Employment Initiative were remarkable, given the depressed economic conditions experienced by these communities (the highest unemployment rates and lowest per capita incomes in the state). Special marketing and job development were needed for these agencies to place individuals with no previous work experience and severe disability conditions.

In spite of these enormous barriers, the Northwest Consortium was able to exceed the majority of its established project goals! In total, the agencies placed 44 individuals into supported employment at an average hourly wage of \$1.80. Although the average number of hours worked was only 5 ½ per week, significant progress was achieved in the area of community based involvement and conversion. (Three of the participants were working 20 or more hours per week.) For example, 23 percent of the Clearwater DAC, 55 percent of East Polk County DAC, 53 percent of Marshall County DAC, and 36 percent of Polk County DAC participants have experienced employment in community jobs. Five years ago, that figure would have been 0% for all.

Among the more interesting outcomes of this project was the degree of responsiveness demonstrated by these small rural communities to the concept of supported employment. In all four northwestern localities, there is an unbridled pride in a shared community concept and the idea that people need to support one another for the betterment of all citizens. In spite of its poor economic climate, business leaders in these communities demonstrated "affirmative action" and an eagerness to support the integrated employment objective set forth by these agencies. It is refreshing to observe that sophisticated marketing strategies were not necessary to secure a positive community response to these organizations' new service delivery directions.

The accomplishments of the Northwest Support Employment Initiative have clearly charted a new course of service provision for these agencies. Each of the participating organizations plans to refine and expand their employment models so as many individuals as possible may secure earned wages, increased productivity, social contact with others, and enhanced self-esteem.

The very success of the Northwest Supported Employment Initiative raises an interesting question for other service organizations in the State of Minnesota: If individuals with severe disabilities can obtain and succeed in supported employment in a rural and economically depressed area of the State, should not others be given the same opportunity?



Jason and owner Jim Suchan. Below, Jason washes down the spray room. "I get to do a lot of different kinds of thing here at Blacksmiths Auto Body. Some day I would like to learn body work too."



Although the concept of supported employment has received broader acceptance within the adult habilitation and vocational services provider system in Minnesota, the encouragement to begin new services or convert existing programs is oftentimes inhibited due to lack of information or expertise necessary to implement these work models. The Minnesota Supported Project (MnSEP) has established a Training and Technical Assistance (T & TA) Advisory Committee to recommend specific training and support strategies to support agencies in their program development efforts.

In the initial year, the T & TA Advisory Committee endorsed the sponsorship of four projects to implement a diversified T & TA work plan.



Jeff McCoy has been employed at Augustana Nursing Home as a clerical assistant for almost 2 years. "A few months back we had a pizza party after a state inspection. I really enjoy the time with other people."

RISE, INCORPORATED

A primary goal for MnSEP is to provide T & TA to all organizations receiving Start-Up/Change-over grant awards. The T & TA Advisory Committee recommended a systematic technical assistance program which incorporated a direct intervention or "hands on" approach.

Rise, Inc. carried out this T & TA model. They are a private, nonprofit corporation which operates an extensive transitional and supported employment program for adults with developmental disabilities, severe and persistent mental illness, and severe physical impairments. Rise has successfully operated community based training and employment programs for more than 11 years. They recently published a book "The Industrial Work Model" to assist agencies in their program development and conversion efforts to transitional and supported employment models.

The Rise T & TA project was designed to assist all six start-up/change-over programs in achieving five primary goals:

- meeting established project objectives as defined in the applicants' approved work plans;
- providing training and support services to administrative and direct service staff responsible for carrying out project objectives;
- removing organizational and systems barriers impeding progress and success;
- insuring compliance with policies and standards set forth by MnSEP and OSERS; and
- facilitating the continuation of funded projects beyond the grant application period.

All project grantees were assisted initially in analyzing their organizational strengths and weaknesses in regards to implementation of their start-or conversion programs. From these self-examinations, customized technical assistance plans were developed for each agency including specific goals, expected outcomes, implementation methods, timeliness, and responsibilities.

The T & TA model employed by Rise, Inc. involved diversified activities including multiple on-site visits to each agency through the project year by a consulting team of professionals who have varying areas of expertise. In order to meet certain TA objectives, it was also necessary for Rise to hire the services of outside consultants to work with some project recipients in agreed upon service areas. In addition, Rise scheduled two networking conferences to provide opportunities for all agencies to share information and program experiences.

The T & TA model proved very successful especially because of its direct on-site assistance. The Advisory Committee has recommended future brokering and delivery of direct on-site assistance for service providers in Minnesota committed to converting or expanding supported employment services.

PACER CENTER, INC.

In order for the State of Minnesota to meet the challenge of implementing effective systems changes which will eventually result in expanded supported employment opportunities, it will be necessary for MnSEP to carry out a program of public education. A major part of this effort is to provide education and counsel to the parents and guardians of individuals with severe disabilities to facilitate a better understanding of supported employment and encourage their advocacy for these employment options.

Due to the important role parents/guardians/families play in the overall planning and placement of persons with severe disabilities into the vocational and adult habilitation service systems, MnSEP funded a parent education and training program. MnSEP secured the assistance of PACER Center, Inc., a parent information and training organization in Minneapolis, to initiate such a program on a statewide basis.

During its project year, PACER developed, marketed and presented twelve (12) three-hour workshops on supported employment throughout Minnesota. A total of 669 individuals attended the workshops. The primary attendees were parents/guardians of persons with disabilities, as well as professionals from various disciplines.

PACER staff prepared written materials to supplement the presentations/workshops for persons attending the supported employment workshops. This information covered a variety of topics including:

- definitions, concepts, and issues surrounding supported employment
- Minnesota Rule 185 and related requirements for individual habilitation plans (IHPs) and case management services
- fiscal incentives and disincentives related to government entitlement programs and supported employment
- eligibility and other information regarding the availability of services
- legislative mandates established by the recently passed Minnesota Comprehensive Mental Health Act, and
- other timely topics

Following the workshop presentations, PACER conducted a follow-up survey of nine percent of the registered parents who had attended. More than 80 percent of the individuals polled had found the workshops to be extremely informative and many had commented that the presentations provided them with a base of information to make better decisions relative to their son/daughter's vocational futures. Pacer's future training efforts will emphasize advocacy and leadership training so that parents and families can influence change toward supported employment in state and local service agencies.

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES

The Minnesota Association of Rehabilitation Facilities' (MARF) Technical Assistance Program was contracted to plan, develop, and coordinate three two-day training programs designed for new and existing providers of supported employment. The workshop entitled "Supported Employment: Department of Labor (DOL) Standards, Payment Options and Employer Incentives" provided training and information to 205 participants from 103 different organizations, including developmental achievement centers, rehabilitation facilities, the Division of Rehabilitation Services,

regional treatment centers, intermediate care facilities for persons who are mentally retarded, school districts and Rule 14 and 36 facilities for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

The workshops provided timely and up-to-date information on such topics as:

- establishing wage rates in community work sites
- applying DOL standards to various supported employment models
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) earnings and allowances
- programmatic and administrative impacts of various payment options
- employer fiscal incentives
- newly enacted single sub-minimum wage certification, and
- reliable strategies for achieving and maintaining compliance with DOL regulations

The workshops were lead by nationally recognized experts on DOL standards from Goodwill Industries of America. In addition to their workshop presentations, one of the consultants prepared a written manual for MARF which outlines the standards and regulations vendors of supported employment services must follow to meet DOL compliance. This publication is an excellent reference resource and will be disseminated by MARF to organizations requiring guidance in Wage and Hour matters.

A follow-up survey of registered participants rated the workshops from

the good to excellent range. Most participants who completed the questionnaire stated the workshops were very beneficial in providing clarity on topics new providers of supported employment often find confusing.

GOVERNMENT TRAINING SERVICES

MnSEP contract with Government Training Services (GTS) to develop and conduct workshops on supported employment service strategies and values clarification for administrators and direct service practitioners. GTS is a public organization in St. Paul which was established to provide training and consulting services to government agencies and publicly funded non-profits within Minnesota.

GTS held six workshops on supported employment service strategies, with a total of 84 participants. Evaluation feedback indicated a majority of registrants found the information helpful in planning and providing supported employment services in their respective communities.

GTS also hosted three workshops on Values Clarification Training. The purpose of these presentations was to explore individual attitudes and service delivery practices which prohibit opportunities for persons with severe disabilities and oftentimes lead to the development and maintenance of segregated models of services. Sixty-eight individuals participated and rated the two-day programs very highly.



Patti Mastey has worked at Augustana Nursing Home since November. "I like talking with the residents. Mostly, I am interested in getting a good work history."

Significant progress has been made in the deinstitutionalization of people with severe developmental disabilities with a corresponding relocation of service systems to communities. This recent emphasis has shifted the focus from medically oriented interventions to community-based ongoing support programs for these people. Beginning in November, 1987, MnSEP began a research project that focuses on serving ten of the more severely disabled persons in Minnesota to show how by providing the proper support any person with severe disabilities can succeed in supported employment.

As Minnesota becomes more skilled in providing supported employment to persons with developmental disabilities, it has also learned that supported employment is a viable option for other populations as well; persons with severe and persistent mental illness; persons with traumatic brain injury; students with severe disabilities about to enter the work world; and others. An interagency agreement between DRS and the mental health division of DHS was signed last year and calls for cooperation in the improvement of community support and a full array of vocational rehabilitation services. MnSEP is expected to play an integral role in the development of a lasting collaborative arrangement for supported employment between rehabilitation services and mental health community support services.

Transition services help students with disabilities to make smooth adjustments from school to adult life. A major effort in this regard is reflected by the State Transition Interagency Committee (STIC) that includes representatives of nine state agencies and two consumer-advocate organizations.

STIC is addressing school-to-adult-life transition by emphasizing cooperation and better coordination in the delivery of services at the local level for students. Many are likely to benefit from supported employment.

The STIC interagency agreement that defines the roles and responsibilities of each agency is in place and includes a matrix describing those responsibilities for transition services. Legislation passed in 1987 requires local planning groups for transition services and that these groups include representatives from Education and Social Services agencies, DRS, adult service providers and consumer-advocates. Additional legislation requires a transition plan by ninth grade, or equivalent age, for each student in special education. Six community-supported employment conversion efforts funded during year two of the project have adapted transition community planning strategies to deal with critical issues related to conversion within their communities.

A key development occurred in 1987 when the Minnesota Legislature created a task force on supported employment. Task force members were directed to review and make recommendations to the Legislature and affected state agencies on the following points:

- Appropriate roles and functions of Developmental Achievement Center (DAC) programs and rehabilitation facilities in providing supported employment opportunities to people with severe disabilities.
- mechanisms for identifying and placing clients with appropriate support services
- the relationship between funding and outcomes for clients
- common standards for delivering supported employment services for all similar programs
- improved ways of providing employment services to all disabled persons regardless of the severity of their disabilities
- and the need for demonstration projects that would determine how existing funds can be consolidated or unified to expand community based-supported employment opportunities.

The task force provided an excellent forum for developing understanding, promotion of collaboration and agreement among the various stakeholders. Recommendations from the task force have been developed and implementation activities will be spearheaded through MnSEP.

Projected outcomes are:

- supported employment will be readily available to any person who needs the service regardless of the severity of their disability
- a supported employment legislative agenda by each affected agency for the 1989-1991 biennial budget request to be developed and submitted to the governor
- an interagency agreement that establishes a statewide supported employment system

The policy committee and the project advisory committee, made up of representatives of providers, social service agencies, private business, education and consumer-advocates will continue to assume leadership roles in the systems change towards supported employment.

As the change effort moves ahead in Minnesota, the project has developed with broad stakeholder support six basic assumptions under which future activities will proceed.

- Individual client choice must be encouraged and should guide service planning and placement into employment.
- For each person there is a need for integration, independence and productivity in the community, unless otherwise determined by that person. Supported employment is but one of many services that people with disabilities may need to lead productive lives with others in society.

- The delivery of supported employment services should be planned cooperatively with the individual, the community, and the state and the federal governments.
- The process of further defining and developing supported employment needs the active participation of groups and people who have a role in the program, including consumers, advocacy organizations, parents, government agencies, providers, employers and other interested parties.
- A successful supported employment system must be collaboratively developed with ownership being perceived by all stakeholders. Final control is vested in the people receiving supported employment services. Those state and local governmental agencies which administer key elements of the system must be jointly accountable for the delivery of the services.
- Most of the basic elements of a Minnesota supported employment system are in place. Linkages between state and local government agencies need to be enhanced and expanded. Missing elements must be identified and created. The system should be consistent, not duplicate other systems and administration should be uncomplicated. Supported employment needs, and should have, adequate public funding.

Paul Wassen works 4 to 7 hours every day at Rainbow Foods. His job coach visits once a week now. Paul works with minimum supervision corraling carts and helping customers.



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