

## Department on Disability Services—DCWorks Submission

### **Darren Barbour** **Kitchen Manager** **Union Kitchen**

*This native Washingtonian credits his mom for nurturing his skills for cooking, cleaning, and sewing at a young age. Losing his mother to cancer caused him to fall into a cycle of self-pity and addiction, which eventually led to a period of incarceration. He came to DDS for a fresh start. Now, he pours himself into various aspects of his role at the business incubator. Licensed in commercial and industrial cleaning, in 2015, with the help of colleagues at Union Kitchen, Darren launched Barbour Cleaning Services. His business motto: "No job is too hard for us."*



If you ever visit Union Kitchen, be sure to wear your running shoes. **Darren Barbour** will guide you at whirlwind speed through prep areas, refrigerated spaces, up and down stairs explaining the ins and outs of his duties as **Kitchen Manager**. His boundless energy represents incredible enthusiasm and immense gratitude for his colleagues at the food incubator; sentiments which colleagues also feel toward Darren. Around every corner you're apt to hear "Darren is the best."

Darren started out as a janitor with Union Kitchen about five years ago. The native Washingtonian credits his mom with nurturing his skills for cooking, cleaning, and sewing at a young age. But losing his mother and stepmother to cancer caused him to fall into a hole of self-pity and addiction, dangerous places for a person with bipolar manic depressive disorder. For many years he struggled with severe mood swings which resulted in negative behaviors and eventually a period of incarceration. He came to the Department on Disability Services Rehabilitation Services Administration to get a fresh start.

Paired with a vocational rehabilitation specialist he revamped his resume, attended job fairs, and participated in life skills and empowerment trainings that helped build his confidence and boost his esteem. Now, more than 10 years free of addiction, Darren pours himself into various aspects of his role at Union Kitchen. From security guard and carpenter to food handling and sanitation compliance, Darren proudly proclaims that he is "built to serve others." Licensed in commercial and industrial cleaning, in 2015 Darren launched Barbour Cleaning Services.



### **Kenneth Miller** **Laundry Attendant** **Embassy Suites, Georgetown**

*Kenneth is a graduate of Project SEARCH, a one-year Transition Program designed for young adults with intellectual disabilities who are either in their last year of high school or are recent graduates. The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total workplace immersion. Working 40 hours per week, Kenneth ensures hotel guests have clean, fresh linens. He is known for his quickness and pleasant demeanor, grasping the details of loading, unloading, folding and packing with dedication and a smile.*

**Kenneth Miller** is a Laundry Attendant with Embassy Suites, Georgetown. He is a graduate of Project SEARCH, a one-year Transition Program designed for young adults with intellectual disabilities who are either in their last year of high school or are recent graduates. The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total workplace immersion. Embassy Suites by Hilton and The Smithsonian Institute have engaged participants in a wide range of training and career exploration activities. Several people supported by the Department on Disability Services have completed the program and have maintained full-time jobs, many like Kenneth in the hospitality industry—a major growth industry for the District. Kenneth enjoys his colleagues at Embassy Suites and has earned the reputation of being diligent, efficient, punctual, and friendly.

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**Deborah Gaither, Clerical Assistant  
DDS/Rehabilitation Services Administration**

*Deborah answers the phone, gathers and distributes mail throughout her unit, assists with meeting room setup, processes orders for office supplies, and handles other duties as assigned.*

**Deborah Gaither** resided in Forest Haven, the District's former institution for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities until she was 17 years old. But after just one year of living with her grandmother, she emerged as a strong advocate for herself and an expert at maneuvering the streets of DC with relative ease. The native Washingtonian has held a variety of jobs, from cook to housekeeper, to construction demolition assistant.

At the urging of her daughter, Deborah came to DDS in 2014 for support and a fresh start in pursuing a self-directed life. Her two primary wishes at that time were to get a new place to live and a new job. Within the year, she began an internship with the DDS Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), working with the operations unit. Her duties included filing and assisting with preparations for the agency to relocate to the southwest area of the District. Based on her performance as an intern and the agency's commitment to model the employment practices it works to cultivate with local business, in March 2016, Deborah became a full-time employee with DDS/RSA.



**Charlene Bond  
Business Owner  
Switzer 9 Café**

*Charlene became a vendor with the Randolph Sheppard Vending Facilities Program (RSVFP) in 1998 for a fresh start, a new life free from the isolation her blindness*

*once held her in. RSVFP was made possible by the Randolph Sheppard Act of 1936 which established the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). The BEP helps people who are blind with business ownership and financial self-sufficiency through the operation of vending facilities on federal, state, and other property. DDS/Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) serves as the State Licensing Agency for 35 RSVFP sites in the District of Columbia.*

**Charlene Bond** was born with a visual impairment, but it was a freak accident of shattering windows during a storm that caused permanent nerve damage which left her only able to see silhouettes of people and things. She became a vendor with the Randolph Sheppard Vending Facilities Program (RSVFP) in 1998 for a fresh start, a new life free from the isolation her blindness once held her in. With the program for 17 years, in 2016 Charlene opened the Switzer 9 Café, located in the Switzer federal building in southwest D.C. She previously managed the Seeing Eye Dog Café in Potomac Center Plaza, named in honor of her former companion McKenzie.

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**Steven Powe, Safeway Courtesy Clerk, 10 years  
2017 SARTAC Fellow; Vice President, Project ACTION!**

*Steven is passionate about making sure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to earn a good living, continue their education, and lead the lives they desire. Determined to live a self-directed life, Steven holds two jobs—Safeway on Kentucky Avenue in southeast and the DC Department on Disability Services—proving that given the right opportunity, people with disabilities can make positive contributions to the workforce.*

Employed with Safeway for 10 years, **Steven Powe** is passionate about making sure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to earn a good living, continue their education, and lead the lives they desire. No stranger to Council hearings and public forums highlighting disability services, Powe serves as the vice president of Project ACTION!, a regional coalition of self-advocates and self-advocacy groups from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. ACTION! stands for Advocacy, Change, Training, Information, Organizing and Networking.

This year, Powe was selected by the Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) as a 2017 Self-Advocate Fellow. The fellowship is a year-long opportunity for self-advocates to sharpen their leadership skills through the development and implementation of a policy-related project. Powe's project is entitled A Place at the Table: Preparing Self-Advocates to Serve on Human Rights Committees, Boards and Workgroups. He is working the Department on Disability Services to develop training materials and approaches to assist people with intellectual disabilities with interacting effectively with groups that make decisions that affect their lives.



**Jonathan Miranda, Gardener Assistant  
Smithsonian Gardens**

*Jonathan is a graduate of Project SEARCH, a one-year Transition Program designed for young adults with intellectual disabilities who are either in their last year of high school or are recent graduates. The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total workplace immersion.*

Visitors enjoying the flowers and greenery as they explore museums on the National Mall are most likely admiring the work of **Jonathan Miranda**. Miranda is a Gardener Assistant with the Smithsonian Gardens. A 2016 graduate of Project SEARCH, Miranda assists with landscaping at various museums planting and watering flowers, laying sod and mulch, and installing holiday displays.

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**Tyrone Tibbs, Retail Associate  
Modell's Sporting Goods Store, 10 years**

*Tyrone is part of the supported employment program offered at Capitol Hill Supportive Services (CHSS). Supported employment helps people with disabilities develop marketable, transferrable job skills that create pathways to self-sufficiency and full community integration. He works four hours per day, four days a week. Job coaches periodically check-in with him and store managers to make sure things are going well.*

If you're in the market for athletic gear provided with great customer service and speed, then consider visiting Modell's in northeast D.C. There you are likely to be greeted by one of the friendliest sales associates you may ever encounter. **Tyrone Tibbs** has been with the sporting goods store for 10 years; his main section is the shoe department, but he does whatever needs to be done to ensure that the store remains in good order and that customers are served quickly and properly. Tyrone is part of the **supported employment program** at Capitol Hill Supportive Services (CHSS). Supported employment helps people with disabilities develop marketable job skills to create pathways to self-sufficiency and independence. Tyrone works four hours per day, four days a week. Job coaches check-in with him and store managers periodically to make sure things are going well.

In addition to helping customers find the right, he maintains the stockroom, places sensors on shoes, and assists managers in processing delivery trucks—unloading, unpacking, and tagging new merchandise and replenishing shelves and racks as needed. Assistant Store Manager Tiffany Smith is quick to compliment Tyrone's customer service skills. "He has a great attitude, is very independent, and understands what we do and how it should be done quite well."