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JVS OPENS NEW CENTER TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FIND JOBS

West Hills Location will work with State Department of Rehabilitation

The word “no” has become all too common. With the job market still struggling, many qualified workers are having a tough time finding a job. And if you’re someone with a disability, getting out into the workplace can mean rejection, isolation, and hopelessness. In collaboration with the California Department of Rehabilitation American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant, JVS, L.A.’s first and oldest non-profit dedicated to helping people with employment issues, is opening a brand new assessment center at its West Hills location at the Bernard Milken Center. Specifically geared toward people with disabilities, the Center’s grand opening will take place on August 12.

“This summer marks the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” said Eileen Slutsky, JVS’ Director of Disability and Assessment Services. “But there are still many people out there who don’t know what services are available. Or worse, they’ve been to other places who didn’t know how to help them.”

The West Hills office will offer comprehensive vocational evaluations to clients referred by the State Department of Rehabilitation in order to help them learn about their skills, interests and capabilities, and how they can use those to find a job. Certified counselors then work with each client individually to determine next steps and goals. In addition, JVS will assist with job placement.

Accredited by CARF, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, JVS has been a leader in the field of assistive technology for persons who are blind and visually impaired, as well as people representing a variety of disabilities, such as physical, emotional, cognitive, and learning. Along with the JVS Dashew Assessment Center in Los Angeles, the West Hills Center continues the tradition of providing the only state of the art, comprehensive

evaluation programs in Southern California for people who are blind or visually impaired. All of the equipment at the West Hills location is also ergonomic to ensure physical accommodations.

“We are seeing an increasing number of clients with vision problems. We have several ways to accommodate them, including CCTVs (Closed Circuit Televisions), JAWS screen reading software, and ZoomText magnification software with speech,” explained Vocational Evaluator Deborah Culberson, who heads up the program at West Hills.

Already, the Center has seen over 50 clients, referred by the Department of Rehabilitation. One of them, Jan S., was out of work for 10 years due to several medical issues. Said Jan, “Before I got here, I didn’t know I could do anything.” It took only four days for JVS’ counselors to help her figure out her usable work skills and narrow down her interests and qualifications to the growing field of medical billing. She will soon be starting classes in the subject.

For nearly 80 years, JVS has enhanced hundreds of thousands of lives with vital employment and career services. Each year, JVS helps nearly 30,000 people through 18 locations around the Southland. A non-profit, non-sectarian organization, JVS works with city, state and county agencies to ensure everyone has access to the help they need, including career professionals, at-risk students, and newly arrived immigrants. For more information on JVS’ range of programs, please visit our new website www.jvsla.org. You can also find us on Facebook at JVS Los Angeles or follow us on twitter @JVSlosangeles.

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