



BELONG

Special people making special food



INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES(IDD)

- An intellectual or developmental disability, also called IDD, includes many severe, chronic conditions that are due to mental and/or physical impairments. IDD can begin at any time, up to 22 years of age. It usually lasts throughout a person's lifetime. People who have IDD have problems with major life activities such as:
 - Language
 - Mobility
 - Learning
 - Self-help
 - Independent living

THE GAP

- Once dismissed from public school, there are very few opportunities for continuing training, support or job placement.
- There is much emphasis on early intervention and reaching these children when they are young in hopes that therapies and support will help them overcome deficits, but there is little to no emphasis on working to train, support and employ these individuals after high school.
- Due to a history of low employment, older adults with IDD have limited personal savings/income resulting in a greater need to rely on others. For many, their primary source of care and support comes from parents who are aging/older and in need of their own services and supports

THE NEED FOR BELONG

- Employment is a fundamental value and ambition in America.
- As such, there is huge gap in the transition services from education into employment not only in our community but across the nation. In the 1960's, an initiative was born to relocate services for this population from an institutional setting to a community-based support system.
- 60 years later, little progress has been made in terms of legitimate employment. The lack of employment support for these individuals is evidenced by the fact that Texas implemented its **first ever** strategic plan for adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Plan in March of 2019.

STUDY FINDINGS

- One of the most dramatic findings of this snapshot is that less than one out of every two working age adults with ID is in the labor force (i.e. currently employed or searching for work).
- Only 44% of adults with ID aged 21-64 are in the labor force.
- This is compared to 83% of working-age adults without disabilities who are in the labor force.

ADULTS WITH IDD WANT TO WORK

- According to the employment survey directed by S.B. 2027, 85th Legislative Session, Regular Session, 2017, regarding access to employment training programs, 84% of participants expressed a desire to be trained and achieve employment but lacked the resources to do so.
- Youth with disabilities report similar aspirations for the future as youth without disabilities, however youth with disabilities often have limited opportunities to participate in educational and career planning services. T
- The employment outlook for adults with IDD will continue to be bleak until new ways are found to meaningfully incorporate this population into the labor force.

ADULTS WITH IDD WHO ARE EMPLOYED ENJOY HIGH JOB STABILITY

- Despite the fact that most adults with IDD are underemployed, many experience job stability.
- 62% of adults with IDD employed in a competitive setting have been at their current job for 3 years or more.
- 81% of adults with IDD employed in a sheltered setting have been at their current job for 3 years or more.

THE BENEFITS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Employment has been recognized as an important goal for improving the quality of life of adults with intellectual disabilities.
- Employment provides opportunities for socialization and to become more financially independent (Schur, 2002); it also fosters a sense of productivity and self-worth (Kober & Eggleton, 2005).
- From the business perspective, companies that employ individuals with disabilities are viewed more favorably by the public.

GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL (IDD) DISABILITY

- A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY PERFORMED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS SURVEY SHOWS:
- GENERAL POPULATION LACKS APPRECIATION OF THE RANGE OF CAPABILITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.
- AS A RESULT, WE HAVE LOW EXPECTATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH IDD.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

- Worldwide, people believe there are significant obstacles to the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities in society. In particular, the public believes the lack of available supports (e.g., the lack of community services, job training and school resources), the negative attitudes of others and the negative attitudes of the media are major obstacles to inclusion.
- Perceptions of capabilities make all the difference in where people believe individuals should work and learn

- CHANGING THE PERCEPTION



MISSION STATEMENT

- To create dignified, meaningful, **paid** employment for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a nurturing environment where all BELONG



THE CONCEPT

- The bulk of BELONG's business will consist of large, family-sized, prepared meals for carry out to be served in the home. These "pantry items" will cater to busy families in the community that desire a home-cooked meal but don't have time to prepare it themselves.
- BELONG will provide traditional bakery items along with coffee, tea and other beverage offerings for casual, quick dining in or taking out.
- BELONG will also offer a gathering room where various groups within the community may hold meetings.
- BELONG will offer catering (traditional bakery items) for these in-house meetings as well as for businesses throughout the community.
- BELONG will also offer daily after-school specials in an effort to provide social interaction opportunities between the community and our adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

BELONG



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JOB TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- BELONG's paid employees with IDD will be educated, trained and supported in the workplace by a staff of adults who have a heart and a passion for this population. Our programs manager at BELONG has over 15 years of experience in the Spring Branch School District working specifically with special needs students in the kitchen.
- BELONG will assist its special employees in obtaining necessary state certifications for safe food handling and for working in and around a kitchen.
- BELONG is dedicated to developing and continuing to educate and train throughout employment by offering additional vocational and professional as well as social skill training both on and off the job.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

- Special employees at BELONG will be supported by adult and student volunteers from throughout the community.
- This is part of our overall mission at BELONG to expose our neighbors to this population in order to foster acceptance, encouragement, friendships and social interaction thereby affirming and validating these special individuals both professionally and personally within the community.
- BELONG will change the attitudes, open the minds, and increase the general expectations of adults with IDD.



WIDESPREAD APPEAL

- **WIDESPREAD APPEAL:**
- While BELONG is a neighborhood establishment, its appeal will be vast. BELONG will attract customers from all over the Greater Houston area with its unique mission and delicious food offerings. We anticipate an unprecedented following which will help support our efforts to expand and model this employment concept.
- **COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:**
- We believe that BELONG's mission as well as its delicious, quality and reasonably priced food will give BELONG a competitive edge over any competition in the area. There are no other bakery or pantry style establishments near BELONG and certainly no establishments of any type in the area that are employing IDD individuals. BELONG's social purpose will draw customers in and the employees and the food will keep them loyal and committed.

- **CONTINUING PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT**

- In addition to traditional employment, BELONG is committed to providing continuing culinary education and training opportunities in the form of additional classes, instruction and hands-on training. BELONG will continue to advance and support its employees by bringing speakers and educators on various issues specifically designed for our IDD employees. These will include not only professional topics but also valuable social and life skills programs.

- **NEIGHBORS**

- The community of neighbors who support BELONG will have the opportunity to gather for meetings and/or celebrations in our “gathering room” which will provide a way for children and adults in the community to interact with and form friendships with our employees. This positive reinforcement from the community will strengthen our IDD employees as they participate in more social and professional situations.



FUNDRAISING

- Belong is a start-up organization that will require funding to begin operations and fund the working capital needs of the business until it is self-sustaining.

A Place to **BELONG**

- **B** enefit specially qualified individuals
- **E** mpower each other
- **L** earn and laugh
- **O** btain new skills
- **N** uture friendships
- **G** ather at a place where all **BELONG**



