

# NEWS RELEASE

County of Warren, New Jersey



## October is Disability Employment Awareness Month - “Inclusion Drives Innovation”

(WHITE TWP., NJ – OCTOBER 11, 2017) – The Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders proclaimed October 2017 as Disability Employment Awareness Month to raise awareness and celebrate the many contributions that people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities.

“We’ve now come to the age where we don’t have such archaic stigmas attached to folks with disabilities, and it’s a great thing,” said Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner. “It’s a feeling of fulfillment for somebody who can contribute to society no matter what their disability.”

The U.S. Department of Labor annually designates October as Disability Employment Awareness Month to celebrate and recognize the capabilities and contributions of workers with disabilities. This year’s theme – “Inclusion Drives Innovation” – emphasizes how employees from different backgrounds, perspectives, abilities and disabilities contribute to workforce diversity and innovation to build an inclusive community and strong economy.



*Cynthia Wildermuth, CEO of Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Inc., and Dawn Duffy, Program Director at DAWN Center for Independent Living, receive a proclamation declaring October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Warren County from Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski, Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner, and Freeholder Edward J. Smith.*

“When I see everybody put to work, and everybody has an opportunity to produce something, it just gives them such a sense of well-being,” said Freeholder Deputy Director Edward Smith. “It’s just a good thing all the way around,” he added.

*More...*

The Warren County Department of Human Services and its Advisory Council on Disabilities, along with Abilities of Northwest Jersey and DAWN Center for Independent Living, strive to create awareness and opportunities that provide residents with disabilities – and their caregivers – options and support to promote independent living and equal access for all citizens.

“It’s not about a person’s disability, it’s about their abilities, and their ability to contribute to society and work and make a difference,” said Freeholder Jason J. Sarnoski. “That’s what we’re celebrating here - their abilities,” he said.



*Freeholder Director Richard D. Gardner greets Cynthia Wildermuth, CEO of Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Inc., as Dawn Duffy of DAWN Center for Independent Living looks on, before presenting the proclamation declaring October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Warren County from the Board of Chosen Freeholders.*

The proclamation was accepted by Cynthia Wildermuth, CEO of Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Inc.; and Dawn Duffy, Program Director at DAWN Center for Independent Living. Wildermuth said Abilities has been providing employment opportunities to individuals in the northwest region of the state since 1974. Since the inception of its community supported employment division about 20 years ago,

they have placed 667 individuals with different abilities into employment.

“We are truly grateful for the business community throughout Warren County for opening its doors; to individuals in recognizing their strengths and talents and abilities; and we’re certainly appreciative of the support of the county,” said Wildermuth.

Duffy said DAWN CIL has a long-standing, very strong partnership with Warren County, providing resources to enable persons with disabilities to remain independent, and to gain pre-employment, employment readiness, employment management skills, as well as transition for youth out of high school.

Sarnoski said, “I’ve seen in Warren County that there’s no limit to what people can do if they’re given an opportunity. This is great recognition.”

###

## **DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH OCTOBER, 2017**

WHEREAS, the month of October is annually designated “Disability Employment Awareness Month” by the U.S. Department of Labor to celebrate and recognize the capabilities and contributions of America’s workers with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the theme for Disability Employment Awareness Month 2017 is “Inclusion Drives Innovation” to emphasize how employees from different backgrounds, perspectives, abilities and disabilities contribute to workforce diversity and innovation; and

WHEREAS, workplaces welcoming of the talents of all people including people with disabilities are a critical part of efforts to build an inclusive community and strong economy; and

WHEREAS, the County of Warren through its Department of Human Services and Advisory Council on Disabilities strives to create awareness and opportunities which provide residents with disabilities and their caregivers the options and supports needed to promote independent living and equal access for all citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders does hereby proclaim October 2017 as DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH to raise awareness and celebrate the many contributions and talents people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities.

*Richard D. Gardner, Director*

*Edward J. Smith, Deputy Director*

*Jason J. Sarnoski, Freeholder*

*Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders*