

Editor's Letter

Creating Job Opportunities for Our Disabled Veterans

Although we, as citizens of a great democracy, hold a wide range of opinions on many issues of national importance, we are united and resolute in our support of our returning military veterans. This is part of our collective tradition. After having sacrificed so much, those that have served our country with courage, conviction and honor deserve every opportunity to live their lives with dignity. Our soldiers do not dictate the policies of our government; they serve when they are called upon. And for many of these returning young men and women, their lives have been permanently changed by the injuries that they sustained in the service of our country. A group of private citizens right here in Florida is dedicated to improving the lives of many of these brave Americans. But they need our help to succeed.

Our disabled military veterans face huge obstacles upon their discharge from the armed services. Not only must they re-acclimate to society, they must also try to obtain gainful employment without compromising their ability to receive the essential military benefits that they require. These benefits are often tied to rules that limit their income, and depending upon the disability may be restricted to employment opportunities in the home. Virtual Training Systems (VTS) is a not-for-profit organization based in Miami, Florida that was created to address this very need. Linda Walsh, President & CEO of VTS founded the organization in an effort to support the disabled community. "Imagine having the absolute need and desire to return to the workforce, but you lack specific skills to apply for a job. These veterans want to be productive, but they don't know

how. The online training that VTS provides boosts the confidence of our candidates and prepares them to go back to work with the necessary skills to support themselves and their families."

The positive impact of VTS on the lives of disabled individuals is best described by Edna Lopez, Esq., Chairman of the Board, "Our training gives them the confidence to pursue productive jobs with the knowledge that they can add tremendous value to a company's bottom line. The ability to maintain qualified, at-home staff over long periods of time is a significant cost advantage for businesses. Today's economic environment is pushing companies to look for significant ways to improve their profitability - - disabled individuals need to know that they can be a key driver of this improvement."

VTS was organized exclusively to provide these free online training skills to disabled and economically disadvantaged Americans nationwide. The VTS story began with the COPD Foundation's C.O.P.D. Information Line (866-316-COPD). COPD, short for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. and is an umbrella term used to describe progressive lung diseases which include: emphysema, chronic bronchitis, refractory (irreversible) asthma, and severe bronchiectasis. The C.O.P.D. Infoline is staffed by volunteer COPD patients who

answer thousands of calls from individuals seeking information about COPD. Bill Clark, Director of Outreach Programs for the COPD Foundation attributes the success of the Infoline to many things, not the least of which is the quality and dedication of its patient associates. He says, "When you are blessed to have workers who are not only passionate about their cause, but the work it involves, how can you not succeed? Our associates are motivated, educated and empowered, and above all, they have a strong desire to reach out to others."

The COPD Foundation is a founding charity of VTS. Due to the success of the C.O.P.D. Infoline, the initial educational program for VTS was an e-learning job skills platform offering call center agent training and utilizing the technology of industry leader Knowlagent. Knowlagent's on-demand call center solution software for hiring, communications, training and coaching are used by some of the largest third-party call centers in the world.

Many of the large call centers are expanding their capacities to include a virtual or at-home agent base. What better way for a disabled veteran, disabled individual or a family member or caregiver to earn additional income than by working at home? The VTS call center agent training provides basic customer service and sales training that will qualify the candidates for a contact center support professional position.



Virtual Training Systems, Inc.

Linda Walsh, President & CEO of VTS



Walsh continues, “We have partnered with several contact center organizations that have committed to hiring our VTS trainees for their at-home program. They believe in the quality of our training curriculum as well as the dedication to our disabled community.”

What attracted Lopez most to volunteering for the organization was the opportunity to provide a viable business solution while also meeting a significant social need. “The unique value proposition of VTS is its ability to lower business costs while employing a skilled but underutilized workforce. The opportunity to become involved in building this model was an extremely attractive proposition.”

The C.O.P.D. Infoline volunteer associates not only feel rewarded by the service they provide to their community, Clark says, “The biggest effect is that our associates have a more positive attitude that reflects in the fact they are managing their disease instead of their disease managing them.” It is the hope of VTS that this same affect happens to all disabled Americans who return to work with their newly acquired job skills.

VTS is training disabled Americans in preparation for a secure and independent future. You can help support VTS either with a tax-deductible contribution or one of the most important resources, your time. VTS not only needs

financial support, but also the intellectual resources of business leaders, corporate partners as well as individuals to volunteer their time to assist with its critical mission of developing e-learning programs. These programs will provide the necessary job training skills to our disabled community. Walsh takes no salary, as she feels compelled to donate her time to this worthy cause. “It is our duty to give of ourselves in some philanthropic capacity. There is nothing more rewarding than to know that you have helped someone achieve a goal that they so richly deserve and I am grateful to be able to help the family of an individual that gave unselfishly to our country...it’s the least that we can do for our war heroes.”



The staff of this magazine applauds the efforts of Linda Walsh and everyone at VTS for their tireless efforts on behalf of our disabled veterans. For more information, visit www.vtsystems.org. To help our returning disabled veterans, mail your contribution to VTS, 2829 Bird Avenue #10, Miami, FL 33133 or call 1-866-576-8762.

About Virtual Training Systems, Inc.

Virtual Training Systems is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization providing charitable and educational services by training disabled and economically disadvantaged Americans for home-based employment.

About The COPD Foundation

The COPD Foundation is dedicated to developing and supporting programs which improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

For more information visit www.copdfoundation.org.