

February 3, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Community Healthcore is pleased to work with the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) on our Customized Self-Employment Project. TCDD's effort on this project is a strong example of the important work of DD Councils in Texas and throughout the country in encouraging the independence and self-sufficiency of people with developmental disabilities.

Through employment, people with disabilities gain an important point of entry into their community, a sense of being valued, wages and job benefits. With these tangible and intangible rewards from employment, people with disabilities secure greater independence and freedom from public support service systems. In our area of Texas, where counties are spread far apart and resources are limited, self-employment is often the only viable option for a person with a disability to become gainfully employed.

With TCDD's support and guidance, our Self-Employment Project has provided training to more than 350 individuals with disabilities, their families and local collaborating agencies (such as Texas' Department of Aging and Disability Services and Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) on developing and implementing individualized self-employment programs over the past four years. **Approximately 20 of the individuals who received support from our Project continue in their businesses today, including:**

- Billy Butler who owns a lawn service;
- Katie Hall, who runs Slush Fun, a slushy/margarita machine rental business; and
- Mark Puckette, who operates Not A Mark Window Cleaning Services.

When a self-advocate chooses self-employment, we help them:

- identify their area of interest and abilities;
- create a business proposal;
- develop marketing techniques;
- set up the business;
- fund the endeavor; and
- nurture the growth of the business by providing non-financial support for up to six months.

I am happy to provide additional information on our Customized Self-Employment Project if desired. In the meantime, please know what a critical difference TCDD is making in the lives of people with developmental disabilities in Texas.

Sincerely,



Lee Brown  
Project Director