

Center for Excellence and Advocacy (CEA)



On Friday February 28th, Fedcap's newly awarded **Center for Excellence and Advocacy (CEA)** celebrated its launch and ribbon cutting ceremony in the presence of over 140 state and local dignitaries, businesses, advocates, consumers and community partners. Among the attendees were the Mayors of Cranston, North Providence and Johnston, a representative from the Office of the Mayor of Providence, OHHS Secretary Constantino, Directors of BHDDH and the Office of Rehabilitative Services, as well as representatives from the Office of US Senator Whitehouse and numerous state legislators.



The **Center for Excellence and Advocacy (CEA)** is dedicated to developing effective transition to adulthood, community based jobs, and ultimately full inclusion for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

In partnership with community providers and advocates the CEA will work to ensure that employment is a first choice for those who want to work. This

systems change will take time as some practices may need to shift. At the center of this change is a belief that achieving full potential, having an integrated, rich and meaningful life for all people with disabilities is both possible and desirable.

By working in partnership the CEA hopes to help agencies assess what's working well as well as consider other strategies they may want to employ. The CEA will provide many training opportunities that address job placement, natural supports, family advocacy and many other related topics. The CEA will also work to ensure that staff who facilitate and support employment for people with disabilities are well qualified to do so.



Lori Norris is the new Director for the Center of Excellence and Advocacy. Most recently Lori worked as a Project Manager for School & Main Institute, Inc. in Boston MA and as a private consultant in Rhode Island, supporting non-profits to achieve their mission. Prior roles consist of Administrator, Workforce Development Services & Chief of Statewide Youth Services at the State of Rhode Island, Department of Labor & Training and before that as the CEO at Goodwill Industries of RI.

Lori has significant experience in creating programs, services, policies and training to facilitate the successful employment and education of people with disabilities. Lori is an experienced trainer and has provided a wide array of trainings on disability awareness, employability, transition services, youth employment, partnership and collaboration, leadership, mentoring and a host of other related topics. She has exciting visions for the Center of Excellence and Advocacy and looks forward to working in partnership with people with disabilities, families, advocates and all service providers to improve the integrated employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For more information check out the CEA's website at:

<http://www.cea.fedcap.org>