

Deaf Initiatives Receives "Non-Profit Best Practices" Award by the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities

Deaf Initiatives received the 2009 "Non-Profit Best Practices" Award by the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities. This non-monetary award is given to one non-profit that provides exceptional employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The award was presented on August 20, 2009, at a ceremony in the Statehouse. "Deaf Initiatives is proud to provide meaningful employment to workers who have limited access to the job market," said Meredith Crane, executive director of Deaf Initiatives.

The purpose of this award is to honor the nominee judged to implement innovative and progressive methods of improving the quality of life for Ohio residents with disabilities. The agency selected is considered to be a symbol of all who have significantly contributed to employment opportunities and community involvement for people with disabilities. It is anticipated that their example will inspire others in the State government and Non-Profit Communities to realize ability rather than disability as an important factor in employment and community inclusion.

The following are the criteria for the award:

- All nominees for the Ohio Best Practices Award must be located in Ohio.
- The nominees must have exhibited outstanding achievements in improving employment opportunities, within their agency, for people with disabilities.
- The nominees must fit one of the following criteria:
 - State Agency
 - Federal Agency with an office located within the State of Ohio
 - Non-Profit

Deaf Initiatives (www.deafinitiatives.org) is a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides educational programming for deaf and hard of hearing students and their families; and employment for a staff of seamstresses who are deaf. The employment offered by Deaf Initiatives stems from a successful social purpose business known as *Keepsake Theme Quilts* (www.tshirtquilts.com) that creates custom quilts from any customer's personal collection of T-shirts. After meeting payroll for the quilting staff, the proceeds from the business are directed to support Deaf Initiatives' educational efforts offered to Ohio families who have children with a hearing loss.