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Filmfest Highlights Importance of Hiring Citizens with Disabilities

Milwaukee, WI – June 5th, 2014- Last Thursday, a diverse group of stakeholders including employers, decision-makers, advocates and Employment Consultants gathered to learn about the advantages of hiring citizens with disabilities. The event, sponsored by the Board for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and hosted by Creative Employment Opportunities, Inc. (CEO) was held at the Rosebud Cinema Drafthouse. Features included short films starring employees with disabilities and their employers, many of whom were in attendance and available to answer questions from the audience.

Employers in attendance included representatives from Kwik Trip, Walgreens, and Villa Shoe Store. Among the stars featured were employees of Boston Store, Marquette University, John Paul Buick, and IMS Marketing Group.

The event was part of a national movement to promote integrated employment known as Employment First. In essence, Employment First seeks to establish integrated employment as the first and preferred option for citizens with disabilities.

The presentation emphasized establishing genuine needs-focused relationships with both employer and job seeker to provide a level of quality in the hiring process that goes beyond standard hiring procedures. Participation in the labor force among people with disabilities is a paltry 21.8% compared with 70.1% for working age adults. With \$796 billion in spending power at the current levels of employment, people with disabilities should be considered a consumer market for expansion. In addition, with increased levels of employment, individuals with disabilities will also contribute to the economy through increased tax revenues. The American economy simply cannot afford *not* to employ individuals with disabilities.

Please follow the link below for a PSA featuring employees with disabilities working in integrated settings. <http://youtu.be/GLcdtPhbPLI>

Creative Employment Opportunities Inc. is committed to advancing economic solutions to business through the social inclusion of all people. This has been the work of CEO for over 25 years, and now is the time to recognize it as necessary for the health of our national, state and local communities. www.ceomke.com