**Office of Disability Services | Texas State University**

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**Welcome from the Director**

As a student with disabilities, your collegiate experience can be and should be equally gratifying and rewarding. Sometimes, there may be supports that you need in order to optimize that experience, and that's why we're here. There are a number of services, resources and accommodations we can arrange for you or assist you with. One of my goals for when you graduate from this institution is that you are an informed citizen. I want you to leave Texas State feeling informed and empowered. There are offices at Texas State that will help you feel both of these things, and the Office of Disability Services (ODS) is one of them.

ODS helps foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment. Our office does many things, but some ways in which we foster a supportive and inclusive environment are by building and maintaining partnerships with faculty and staff, promoting disability awareness among all members of the university community, and by providing guidance regarding university policies and procedures to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life. The ODS maintains and cultivates a culture of care through our interactions with you. We want you to know that we see you, we hear you and that your thoughts and experiences matter to us and help to frame your experiences within the university.

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**Employee of the Month Spotlight**

“My passion is helping people and making a difference in their lives. I do that by working in ODS, volunteering and mentoring two students on campus.”

-Bianca Rodriguez

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“When you have a disability, knowing that you are not defined by it is the sweetest feeling.”

Anne Wafula Strike

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**SASP Conference 2015**

ODS staff members Tabitha Williams, Megan Buxton & Vanessa Vought presented at the 2015 Student Academic Support Programs (SASP) conference sponsored by SLAC.

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**October is Disability Employment Month!**

Disability Employment Awareness Month heightens awareness while recognizing the contributions of Americans with disabilities to our workforce and society.
Our Vision and Mission

The Office of Disability Services will strive to become a model program serving students with disabilities in higher education. We are committed to developing a society in which individuals with disabilities thrive and participate fully. These individuals will be challenged to become responsible decision-makers, problem solvers and self-advocates in charge of their own destiny. We envision a campus community where all individuals are seen as valued and contributing members of society. Respect for all will encompass everything we do.

The mission of the Office of Disability Services is to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to all university programs and activities. We provide students the opportunity to reach their full potential by:

- coordinating academic accommodations and support services
- promoting independence and self-advocacy
- providing information and referral to appropriate resources

We help to foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment by:

- building and maintaining partnerships with faculty and staff
- promoting disability awareness among all members of the university community
- providing guidance regarding university policies and procedures to ensure the full participation for persons with disabilities in all aspects of campus life
Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month is from Sep. 15—Oct 15! There were several events on-campus that occurred in support of the month. Mama’s Kitchen was one of those events which took place on September 15th. Several ODS staff members helped serve food and volunteered in other capacities as well.

Disability Awareness Month Events

*Meet Us At The Quad, It’s Going Down
  Monday, October 5th | Quad | 11a-1p
*Taking A Stand Against The Stigmas
  Thursday, October 15th | Quad | 10a-12p
*I’m More Than Just A Vet
  October 6 & October 20 | Quad | 11a-1p
*Piecing Together The Puzzle: A Look Into The Autism Spectrum
  Monday, October 19th | LBJSC 3-15.1 | 5p-8:30p
*Dinner In The Dark: A Look Into Visual Disabilities
  Thursday, October 29th | LBJSC Ballroom | 7p-9p
*ODS Open House: We’re Open… Come On In
  Friday, October 30 | LBJSC 5-5.1 (ODS) | 11a-1p

Awards won by ODS Staff Members

Staff members working in the ODS were recently recognized for their efforts and dedication to help students achieve academic success. Below is the list of our staff members who were recognized with awards.

- David Hunt, Angelika Lester Wahl Staff Diversity Award
- Geraldo Altamirano, Champion of Success Award
- Sophia Joseph, Outstanding Contributions to Student Affairs Award
- Skyller Walkes, Outstanding Contributions to Student Affairs Award

Community Resource of the Month:

“ARCIL has developed programs that provide services in information & referral, peer counseling, independent living skills training and advocacy. Other ARCIL services are in the areas of transition services from school to adult life, transportation training, employment assistance, community education through ADA technical assistance and disability awareness training.”

— Taken from the ARCIL website: www.arcil.com

On August 28th, the ODS attended the Student Affairs kickoff where we connected with other departments and received various recognitions.

ODS Staff at the 2015 Fall Student Affairs Kickoff

ODS & Dean of Students GA Volunteers
The 1st ODS Fall 2015 event was a success! On Tuesday, September 29, 2015, the Office of Disability Services partnered with the Bienestar Coalition/PartySafe to sponsor its 2nd FREE HIV Testing & Awareness Event. The ODS staff greeted students as they enjoyed free food, music, fun, and learned about our office, the services we provide and information about HIV. Students were also able to get FREE HIV testing and results at this event, which was provided by the Bienestar Coalition/PartySafe. There were over 100 students in attendance and 15 students were tested.

Interview with Aja Rodriguez

Q: What was your role at the HIV testing event?
A: I was the tester, result-giver and did the paperwork for testing.

Q: How did you get involved with doing HIV Testing?
A: About 8 years ago, I became an HIV Prevention Counselor for an organization in Knoxville. I then attended a lot of conferences and became trained on administering HIV tests.

Q: Why is it important for students to get tested?
A: It is extremely important to know your status! This age group is the one who is the most at risk. You cannot tell if someone has HIV so it is important to make sure you are safe.

Q: Are there any resources you would like to share?
A: Avert.org, POZ.com & TheBody.com are all great resources. On campus, Bienestar Coalition and the Health Center are great!

Naturalization Ceremony

On October 8, 51 immigrants from 25 countries were sworn in as U.S. citizens on campus. The ODS staff came out in support of this event!

Assistive Technology Tidbit

The Office of Disability Services has many technologies available to those registered with the office. Here is a look at the Dragon Naturally Speaking Software:

Q: What Dragon Naturally Speaking? Who and how does this software help?
A: Dragon Naturally Speaking is a speech recognition software that allows you to dictate words to your computer and see them form on your screen. You can create reports and papers, enter data, fill-in forms, send e-mails, and work on the Web-all with just your voice! It also reads text back to you for improved accuracy.

Q: How much does the software cost?
A: This software is FREE to use on campus and is available at the Assistive Technology lab at ASB-S on the 2nd floor and in the Alkek Library Lab on the 4th floor.

- Questions answered by Vanessa Vought, Assistive Technology Grad. Assistant