

DISCOVER THE DIRECTV DIFFERENCE

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For ten clients of Harbor Regional Center, the “DirecTV Difference” is the dignity brought to their lives, now that they are DirecTV employees.

These employees work at DirecTV, whose offices are located in the business sector of El Segundo, under a contract with AbilityFirst. Many of them are able to take The Metro to get there.

“I like taking the train and bus to work,” explains Michael Oliver.

Once there, they have the support of AbilityFirst’s supported employment full-time job coaches that work alongside the employees, offering assistance and supervision as needed. “I like the job coaches,” adds Kevin Shirley. “They teach us the right way to do things.”

Two days per week DirecTV receives a shipment of up to 300,000 programming cards. Employees are responsible for sorting the cards into three categories: cards that need basic cleaning, cards that need more intensive cleaning, and cards that are damaged and cannot be reprogrammed. Once the cards have been sorted, another group of employees is responsible for cleaning the cards.

“It’s a cool job! I put the clean cards here, the dirty cards here, and the damaged cards here,” Linda Pickup explains while demonstrating the process of sorting the cards. By doing so, these employees save DirecTV quite a lot of money. It is this success that has allowed the partnership between AbilityFirst and DirecTV to expand.

Matthew Lopez likes his job for a variety of reasons, “I like the team I’m working with. My co-workers are great. The job is easy, yet fast-paced. The job coaches are terrific. The pay is good and hours decent.”

All the employees at DirecTV earn minimum wage, accrue vacation and sick hours, and have seven paid holidays. Employees are recognized on a monthly basis for their top work performance by receiving a certificate of appreciation. Additional incentives have been a \$10 bonus, pizza lunch, and an AbilityFirst polo shirt. Sean Tamer was sporting his blue AbilityFirst shirt he earned after being recognized three months in a row.

“This job has meant a lot to me. I was looking for jobs everywhere and couldn’t find one. Now I can pay my own rent and my own bills,” explained Boaz Walker who just moved into his own apartment. “The people are nice here and treat you with respect.”

It is obvious these 10 individuals have access to a “private channel” that provides them the confidence and dignity to lead fulfilling, productive lives. It’s a way of living and adopting a positive approach in one’s life that has made a difference – the “DirecTV Difference.” ■

Boaz Walker enjoys a comfortable and individual work station where he can inspect and clean the programming cards.



Linda Pickup is all smiles while she sorts her stacks of cards.