

Our Mission:

“We develop, deliver and use learning systems that benefit people with disabilities and those who support them.”

Our Vision:

“People with disabilities are visible, valued participants in the community.”

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HSI WARC are not-for-profit, 501(C) (3) agencies that provide jobs, employment, day and community based training, and residential supports to people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

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www.hsireno.org



From the Executive Director’s Desk



Teach your children well ... a line from a song popular in the 1970’s. Who knew that, 40+ years later, education would still be a challenge socially and financially? Of specific concern to me is are we teaching our children with special needs well?

With the passage of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1975, federal lawmakers hoped to revolutionize how public schools educate students with disabilities, who account for about 13% of all enrolled students.¹ The law accomplished much for students initially. As time went on, however, federal shortfalls became greater, so more of the cost was shifted to states and local school districts, which are today in various stages of disaster recovery from the '08 financial crisis.

Currently the federal funding for special education services to approximately 6.9 million students (ages 3 to 21) is about 16%, well below the 40% committed to by Congress in IDEA. In fiscal year 2014, the federal cost shift to states was \$17.6 billion², and in 2016, that figure increased to \$17.85 billion³. Students receive only the materials and services districts can afford, and students requiring additional supports to learn are at even greater risk.

Given these challenges, HSI’s team of skilled professionals, with many years of collective experience developing learning systems for people with disabilities, wanted to find out how we could help.³ In 2013, HSI met with Washoe County School District (WCSD) leaders to brainstorm ideas for partnering. From those conversations, the two entities collaborated to design a curriculum for Special Education Teachers and Teachers’ Aides.



HSI’s Ryan O’Donnell instructs a class of WCSD teachers and teachers’ aides.

HSI delivered the first class to approximately 200 paraprofessionals between 2013 and 2015. Based on feedback data from prior classes, in November 2015 the team at HSI worked with the current WCSD administration on some revisions. The revised course, Effective Classroom Interactions (ECI), is being offered to 6 cohorts of 16 professionals in 2017. Two additional modules are planned for delivery in spring and fall.

This public and private non-profit partnership is a great example of talent pooling to achieve mutually beneficial results. We hope this relationship continues to grow, and working together we believe we can *teach your children well*.

¹National Center for Education Statistics

²U.S. Department of Education Budget Service and the Congressional Research Service).

³U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY)

⁴HSI’s staff has 6 professionals with advanced degrees in Behavior Analysis, including 4 Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

DID YOU KNOW...

According to figures available from Data Accountability Center, 2,415,564 students were identified as having a Specific Learning Disability. That figure represents 41% of the 5,822,808 students with disabilities, between 6 and 21 years of age, served under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

—Source: U.S. Department of Education

HSI in the classroom ...

HSI started its new Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Service) program in conjunction with the Washoe County School District in November 2016. Since then, HSI's CDA program has partnered with Special Education Directors at Reed High, Carson High and Spanish Springs to start classes. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) is the primary funding source and administrator of the public Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services programs in the United States, which delivers Employment Transition Services in the school setting. (There is no direct cost to Washoe County.)

Pre-ETS is open to all students with disabilities and available to students 14 years of age through their exit from high school. The service works in conjunction with the school's transition services and is based on individual need.

Currently, HSI recently completed teaching Module 1 Pre-ETS classes to 190 students at Reed and Carson High Schools, and started Module 2. "We're reaching more students now, and scaling up our involvement with the school district," noted HSI Learning Systems Development Specialist Ryan O'Donnell, who's facilitating the classes. Sessions at more schools are expected to ramp up after Spring Break.

X-treme Ability Challenge 2017!

High Sierra Industries biggest fundraiser of the year, the X-treme Ability Challenge staged a HUGE comeback last year. The races revved up and blazed across the finish line without missing a beat. Hundreds of community members, including many families, turned out to support HSI and our Mission.

This year we're not only going to stage it again, we're planning on going BIGGER with more teams and that means more EXCITEMENT!



We're looking to book at least 40 teams this year, so if you haven't already, be sure to set registration money aside for your business or organization's teams in your philanthropic budget TODAY. In addition, HSI is planning a **Legislative Day** at the Capitol in Carson City on May 17 to show off XAC to state lawmakers! Watch for registration details on the 2017 edition of the XAC Races COMING SOON!

iChoose artists get exhibition

A picture is worth 1,000 words, but for iChoose artists, all you need is one word: priceless! Some of the work by budding artists in the HSI iChoose the Art Room studio has gotten attention from a gallery! According to iChoose Activities Specialist Jenny Stokes, the artists will have their own month-long exhibition at the Sierra Arts Foundation Gallery. The original art will be on display this August. Check our Facebook and Twitter for previews and more details!



CDA moves in new "Directions"

HSI Career Development Specialists Allison Cunningham, who also serves as a QIDP in iChoose, and Rhiannon Moccio, as well as Community Development Officer Jimmy Breslin and Government Relations Officer Ron Smith, all of whom represented HSI at the The Chamber NV's Directions 2017 event on Wednesday, Feb. 1. HSI staffed a booth promoting our Career Development Academy and to generally promote what HSI is doing in our community.



Allison (left) and Rhiannon taking the CDA into new "Directions" at this year's Chamber event.

customer service skills. Jacob was not present, because he was starting a job that day!

"All the people from our last 201 cohort have been placed into a job," Allison enthused. "I am working on rolling out our expanded 201 program into iChoose for our Career Exploration Track, which we anticipate starting in summer."

In other CDA news, Career Development Academy 201 students Christian, Austin and Jacob, closed out 2016 by graduating on Dec. 30! HSI is pleased to report all three are currently making headway in the job market! At graduation, the students presented on their accomplishments, including job skills development and performance goals, interviewing skills and what they learned. Christian emphasized his increased social skills and interactivity, while Austin stressed teamwork and his



Christian with Rhiannon (left) and Allison

FAQ Corner!

Q: What is Precision Teaching?

A: Precision Teaching is a method of speeding learning based on the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Like other methods derived from Behavior Analysis, such as Discrete Trial autism training, or Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, Precision Teaching is a data-based approach that creates optimal learning conditions adapted to the individual. PT pinpoints smaller precise components of a behavior and teaches these skills to fluency.

—HSI Staff

iChoose has lots in store!

HSI's iChoose department continues making big strides. First off, 100% of iChoose participants have at least one Precision Teaching goal inside their Hab Plans, which are used to work on development of skills and abilities goals of the person's choosing. Centers are run every day, with a goal of 400 daily data points by December.



QIDP Bret is all smiles as he posts the latest data points on the "Chart of Charts!"

At the rate they're progressing, that goal might well be met and exceeded by summer.

Currently, the program is logging 336 data points daily, an increase of 300% over the roughly 100 points it was posting just a few months ago. "What we used to in three days, we're now doing in a day, which means the persons served can achieve more progress" noted Programs Director Mark Malady. "That's the most important takeaway."

Thanks to another grant from our partners at the **Matley Foundation**, the program has been able to stock our Token Store with some of the latest and greatest items, including everything

from DVDs and CDs to nail polish and makeup, books, the hottest new headphones, FitBits and even Kindles. As they progress in their hab plans, persons served earn points that translate into "HSI dollars" to make purchases at the in-house store.

The Store is in fact its own micro-economy. "It means more than just paying them Token dollars," iChoose QIDP Bret Jorgensen said. "The Store makes the results more tangible and goal-oriented, and gives them access to items they might not otherwise be able to get or afford."

He added that, as an extension of iChoose, it's a great behavior reinforcer, and also reinforces other concepts, such as budgeting, setting priorities, earning and spending management. The Store also functions as a work environment. Person served using the Store get to brush up on their stocking and inventory tracking, cashier and customer service skills. "Not everyone uses it, but it's very much a part of the iChoose community," Jorgensen observed.

The iChoose staff also sends a shout out to our friends at [Recycled Records](#) for helping our iChoose program stock up on DVDs & CDs. We're happy to have you as a community partner. Support this locally-owned business ... Reno has a GREAT record store!

Government update!

HSI Government Relations Officer Ron Smith reports that his team is preparing to start work on renewal of our landscaping services contract at **Fallon Naval Air Station**, which is due by Oct.1! Smith also serves as Sparks Mayor Pro-Tem, and advised that the flooding concerns experienced by Reno and Sparks, as well as in some of the outlying areas, earlier this year during winter might not be over yet. With spring rainfall and melting of the enormous winter snowpack received in the local mountains, flooding could be a real possibility into June and potentially July.

Brave the shave!

HSI staff member Pamela Kelley's grandson, Daimaeon, participated in a fundraiser for the [Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation](#) and [St. Baldrick's Foundation](#) to help cure childhood cancers. On St. Patrick's Day, he rocked his shaved head as part of this year's "Brave the Shave!" Daimaeon cleared his goal and then some, totaling out at \$575! HSI staff helped out with \$100 of that amount. Thanks to everyone who pitched in as part of this worthwhile effort!



Argentum wins Silver, Gold Addy

The word "argentum" literally translates to silver, but HSI's PR firm – whose name comes from the symbol Ag or "silver" – took home both Silver and GOLD awards at the 2017 American Advertising ADDY Awards. The awards are part of a national competition that recognizes creative excellence in the advertising industry. [Argentum Partners](#) and Creative Director [Paul Klein](#) were awarded two local "ADDYs" in its first year entering the competition. A silver ADDY was awarded for branding work for Nevada Home Infusion, and a gold ADDY was awarded for a national commercial for the Northern Nevada Dairymen with Angela Comphele and Matt Morning. You can see the Dairymen spot [here!](#)

Did you know ... ?



HSI-WARC is contracted to provide crews for projects such as landscaping and irrigation at the Fallon Naval Air Base, janitorial services for the Bureau of Land Management, electronics assembly work for IGT, Ambassadors of Clean trash cleanup and weeding for the City of Reno in the downtown corridor, and other jobs.

Reno Mayor Hillary

Schieve recognized our Downtown Ambassadors program in her 2017 State of the City address in January!

Thanks to our all the companies and organizations working with our iWork and CDA programs. We'd love to talk to you about opportunities to hire our clients and support our Mission in a unique and valuable way. Contact Jimmy Breslin at 775-846-8008 or email jimmy.breslin@hsireno.com.

Show HSI your Smile!

High Sierra Industries WARC is now officially signed up with Amazon.com as an Amazon Smile registered charity!

That means whenever you or anyone you know with an Amazon account goes shopping, they can register with Amazon Smile and a portion of their purchases will be donated to HSI! It's easy, it's free and it supports our cause! Here's all you need to do: Get signed up TODAY and be sure to pass this along to anyone you know who shops online! Start at smile.amazon.com. Log in to your Amazon account, then under Your Account go to Your Amazon Smile to select HSI WARC as your charity! Then, START SHOPPING!

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases!

Community contact!

Help get our persons with intellectual disabilities involved in the Reno area community with tickets to community events (in sets of 4, please), i.e. bowling, movies, sports (Wolfpack, Aces), plays ... anything! This gets them out and participating in local civic events, and allows us to send up to three persons served and a staff member. We appreciate your support! Contact Jimmy Breslin at 775-846-8008 or email jimmy.breslin@hsireno.com.

Capital Campaign Update

We're pleased to report that construction on the new addition to our Reactor Way building has passed the 70 percent mark! We plan to move in by spring! Meanwhile, we are still \$380,000 shy of the \$2.9 million we need to close out the project. If your company or foundation has grant money available, help support this important part of HSI and its mission by contacting Jimmy Breslin at 775-846-8008 or email jimmy.breslin@hsireno.com.

Visit us!

We're proud of what we do at High Sierra Industries for the people we serve and would love to share what we're doing with you. If you haven't visited in a while, call us today to schedule a tour! We'd love to see you! Contact Jimmy Breslin at 775-846-8008 or email jimmy.breslin@hsireno.com.

How can I help?

Your tax-deductible contributions help us advance and promote programs with a variety of needs such as iChoose, iWork, iLive and CDA.

One example of how your donations help: through Precision Teaching, our iChoose persons served learn life skills that boost their self-confidence, independence and knowledge, and earn points to make purchases at the in-house Token Store. We need cash donations to stock the best quality items that are most relevant to our persons served.

We appreciate your thinking of HSI as part of your tax deductible contributions for this year and welcome any level of support!

Employers, we would like to talk with you about placement of our persons served with your company through our CDA job development program.

For more information on how you can be an important part of HSI and its mission, contact Jimmy Breslin at 775-846-8008 or email

jimmy.breslin@hsireno.com.