

Voice



In Focus: New Canon Training Program



“...the relationship that Canon continues to strengthen with The Viscardi Center celebrates our combined efforts for diversity & inclusion in the workplace...”

Scott Millar
VP and General Manager of Human Resources
Canon U.S.A. Inc.



This spring, The Viscardi Center has teamed up with Canon Solutions America, Inc., a subsidiary of Canon U.S.A., Inc., to introduce a comprehensive office training program for people with disabilities. Led by an experienced vocational training team from The Viscardi Center and a national team of subject matter experts from Canon, the **Enterprise Office Services Training Program** aims to prepare enrollees for competitive administrative positions in professional office environments through educational sessions and hands-on training.

The program’s five week-long sessions are hosted at The Viscardi Center’s new on-site, state-of-the-art, accessible print center. Individualized training spans **Reception and Mail services, Print Production & Reprographics, and Print Fleet Management.** A day trip to the Canon U.S.A. headquarters in Melville, New York enhances the learning experience with an in-depth look at various print production methods.

Instruction also emphasizes soft skill development and etiquette for success in the workplace. This includes interpersonal, communication, and organizational skill building; tips for personal

appearance; job search techniques and resume and cover letter creation; and opportunities to practice interviewing skills during mock interviews with seasoned HR representatives.

“We are so proud to be working with The Viscardi Center on this important program,” said Peter Kowalczyk, President of Canon Solutions America. “Canon Solutions America is thrilled to have the chance to help prepare others for positions in office administration that are vital to the success of any organization. We look forward to celebrating the accomplishments of the program’s participants.”

John D. Kemp, President & CEO of The Viscardi Center, says the partnership with Canon furthers Viscardi’s focus on educating, employ, and empower people with disabilities.

“This training program expands upon key elements of our mission, as it not only educates individuals, but allows them to utilize newfound skills that are relevant to today’s workplaces to broaden their employment opportunities.”

For more information about the program, including criteria and how to apply, please call 516.465.1490 or visit ViscardiCenter.org.

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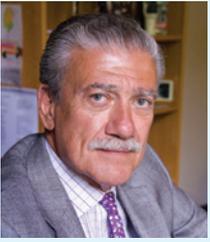


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Your Lasting Impact



Lunching with Broadway's Jenn Colella



If the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace for, among other things, recruiting is based on finding new employees like the ones companies already have . . .

employment outcomes for people with disabilities is and will be far graver than it is today. The February 2019 labor force participation rate for people with disabilities was a mere 20.9%, compared to 68.6% for people without disabilities, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Recent reports and surveys indicate a good percentage of HR professionals are using some form of AI in the hiring process and plan to increase usage. This comes as more companies are recognizing the advantages of a diverse workforce, finally including disability in the diversity and inclusion conversation, and taking steps to hire, retain and promote us at all levels within an organization.

As an employer and service provider, our concern intensifies as the use of AI may screen out qualified candidates with disabilities. If applicant screening programs and/or facial-recognition software mirror current workforces, we're sure they don't account for people with disabilities as there are far too few of us within them.

Imagine being qualified for a job on paper, yet not making it through the first round of consideration simply because one's impaired speech or tone of voice is not well understood by a speech recognition system, or a response to a question is delayed by the use of an assistive device or limited mobility and times out, or a spastic motion doesn't comply with typical body language, or a visual impairment changes eye movement to an atypical pattern — real scenarios happening every day.

The bottom line . . . AI systems for recruitment must accommodate all applicants, otherwise we're working against ourselves.

John D. Kemp
President & CEO



Tony Award-nominated actress Jenn Colella lent her Broadway talents to the Reach for a Star Luncheon this April to raise awareness and vital funds for extracurricular programs and afterschool activities for students with disabilities at the Henry Viscardi School at The Viscardi Center.

Colella performed a selection of songs, including the showstopper "Me and the Sky" from her current role in the hit musical *Come from Away*, to more than 400 attendees. At the end of the set, students joined Colella on stage for a sing-along and to present her with a piece of original artwork created by one of their classmates.

"I had several aha moments while visiting the Henry Viscardi School," explained Colella, who toured The Viscardi Center last fall. "The first was how beautifully connected the staff and the students were. It felt like a family; it felt like a place where people came to hang out and have a community together. The next was seeing the facility itself and all of the various activities."

"The programs and activities this Luncheon supports are critical to our students' social and emotional growth"

John D. Kemp
President and CEO of
The Viscardi Center

Many students at the Henry Viscardi School require life-sustaining medical supports throughout the day and need accessible transportation to get to and from school, leaving few options for socialization outside of class. Every year, the Luncheon aims to expand opportunities students

to explore interests, be independent, and spend time with friends.

"The programs and activities this Luncheon supports are critical to our students' social and emotional growth," said John D. Kemp, President and CEO of The Viscardi Center. "I

cannot imagine a school year that did not include wheelchair basketball, Friday Night Rec, swimming, and overnight stays at our independent living house."

The Reach for a Star Luncheon featured a cocktail hour with over 100 auction and raffle prizes, a sit-down lunch, and live entertainment. Past guests have included Kara Lindsay (*Newsies*, *WICKED*, and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*); Jennifer DiNoia, formerly Elphaba in Broadway's *WICKED*; and Chilina Kennedy, star of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*.

Meet Daniel

A 'wintern' delves into the tech world



While many college students might prefer to relax during winter break, Daniel, a junior at New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), used the time off to get a head start on his career. The electrical and computer

engineering technology major completed an intensive 'winternship' at Verizon's operational headquarters in New Jersey, where he engaged with professionals from a variety of backgrounds and analyzed corporate data.

Daniel tapped into the opportunity through the Emerging Leaders Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities, funded by the UPS Foundation and coordinated by Viscardi's National Business & Disability Council (NBDC). He hopes enrollment in the program will connect him to competitive internships and jobs.

"Visiting different Verizon offices and speaking with employees of all levels about their unique career paths was a valuable experience," he said. "A highlight for me was learning how engineers test 5G speed and phone durability at the Verizon lab."

Daniel and a fellow intern were tasked with harnessing a nuanced analytics platform to transform complex data into meaningful insights. At the end of the internship, the

duo demonstrated their knowledge by mapping and graphing specific data sets and presenting their findings to senior analysts.

Using creative solutions to solve problems isn't new territory for Daniel. As a driven student who has what he describes as a neurological processing disorder, patience and out of the box thinking are key.

"I have a condition called dyspraxia, so sometimes when I learn something new, it might take a little while for me to pick it up. But eventually, once I give myself time to fully process a new idea, I'll get it."

This spring, Daniel is studying how to use single board computers to program sensors, LED lights, and other electronics. As his fluency in programming languages expands, he envisions one day coding sophisticated software and hardware like security systems and robots.

"My intentions are to succeed, and in the past, I have succeeded in everything that I have tried. When things get hard, I work harder."

out & about



Every winter, the Henry Viscardi School travels to Albany to fight for the funding it needs to provide appropriate, high-quality education to children with disabilities. During the annual trip in February, Viscardi seniors Jasmine and Boruch shared their plans after graduation and implored lawmakers to back funding for their school in the 2019-20 budget. Students and staff continued the discussion on the New York State Assembly floor with Assemblyman Edward Ra and Assemblywoman Melissa Miller. The group was also introduced in the Senate Chamber by Senator Anna M. Kaplan.

AWARDS & ACCOLADES



Christina Eisenberg, a Henry Viscardi School alum and employee at The Viscardi Center, was selected to receive a Long Island Business News's Diversity in

Business Award. The awards shed light on the outstanding achievements of business leaders of diverse ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities across Long Island.

Christina is the Employer Service Specialist at the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), a free resource operated by The Viscardi Center and funded by the U.S. Employer Service, where she trains employers around the country on best practices for hiring, retaining, and advancing qualified individuals with disabilities. She also spearheads customer service etiquette workshops for several high-profile businesses, including Canon and Hornblower Cruises. She combines both personal and professional expertise to encourage employers and service providers to make inclusion a top priority in all areas of business.

NewsBytes



New on the blog: As a person with a disability, finding quality employment isn't always easy. Rachel Gross, Henry Viscardi School Class of 2014 and Hofstra University graduate, lists four important things to keep in mind while job hunting.

Read this and more disability-related updates at ViscardiCenter.org/viscardi-blog.



FREE Summer Rec Program for Children & Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Town of North Hempstead residents: Register for a memorable six-week program offering recreational and educational activities for people age 8 and up.

For more information, contact Barry Tussman at 516.465.1529 or visit ViscardiCenter.org.

You're



Disability Pride Parade NYC

14 JUL | Madison Square Park
New York, NY

Let's walk and roll in celebration of the New York disability community!



Sign up by calling 516.165.1608.

7th Annual Golf Outing

23 SEP | Mill River Club
Oyster Bay, NY

New location! Join us for a round of golf and enjoy cocktails, dinner, on-course enhancements, and a silent auction.



For tickets, sponsorships, and information call 516.465.1595.

YOUR LASTING IMPACT

When it comes to studying Shakespeare, reading his works is only half of the journey at the Henry Viscardi School. Thanks to the generosity of the Dr. Robert C. and Tina Sohn Foundation, his classic plays come to life each year on Viscardi's Ralph & Lucy Palleschi Family Foundation Stage with performances from Massachusetts-based Shakespeare & Company.

The troupe recently brought a high-energy adaptation of "Hamlet" to Viscardi and spent time with students during their lunch hour to discuss the play's themes. On-site productions not only strengthen the curriculum, but also allow students, many of whom have severe physical disabilities, to experience professional theatre for the first time.

"Exposure to the arts expands perspectives and encourages students to engage with what they're learning in different ways," says Barry R. Shapiro, chair of the Sohn Foundation and

a member of The Viscardi Center's Board of Directors. "When you look at the statistics, most kids at the Henry Viscardi School go on to pursue college. The experiences they have inspire them to achieve."

The Sohn Foundation supports a range of causes related to environment, health care, and the arts for those who are underserved, particularly young people. In addition to theatrical arts, the Foundation has supported several "green" initiatives at Viscardi, including hydroponic gardening and funding for educational Earth Day activities.



Shapiro's philanthropy has touched Viscardi for over 30 years, and he remains energized about improving the outlook for young people with disabilities in the future.

"At the Henry Viscardi School, there are many opportunities to make a direct and immediate impact. It's a remarkable place where I have received far more by being involved than I could possibly give."