

## A Star Is Born

### FROM NEW HIRE TO EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

When Shantillia began working at The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa, it was a perfect match from the beginning. Quiet and independent, Shantillia excelled at assisting Room Attendants in making beds. Shantillia was embraced by her coworkers because she was dependable, industrious, and could make a bed like a champ. Always looking to challenge herself, Shantillia would time herself, striving to beat her best time.

As Shantillia's confidence grew, her sparkling personality and keen abilities revealed her to be the ideal employee to work around guests. In short order, she was promoted to Public Area Attendant, many times being the first smiling face to greet guests as they entered the resort. "I like interacting with the guests - I like to make them feel welcome!" she said.



▲ Shantillia creates a welcoming environment with her eye for detail and her sunny disposition.

**"I like how people need me and know I'll do a good job. They can count on me to get work done and not waste time."**

During her first 8 months at The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa, Shantillia has been named Employee of the Month in not one, but two categories - Back of House and Brand Ambassador.

◀ Your support creates opportunities for talented workers like Shantillia to use their abilities create independence for themselves!

Shantillia takes great pride in a job well done. "I like to keep the lobby beautiful and clean. I get a lot of compliments from our guests," she said.

Outside of work, full-time employment has made a tremendous impact on Shantillia's life. It has given Shantillia a feeling of belonging and has shown her that others value her as an equal. She has become more confident and independent, has gained financial stability, and has even been able to travel with her family. Her dream vacation is to travel with her family to Paris, France.

Tyler, Assistant Director of Services at The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa, says that Shantillia is mature beyond her years and is a valuable employee. "Shantillia really makes a difference and cares about what she does. That's not always easy to find, but I know I can count on Shantillia every single day," Tyler elaborated. Because of Shantillia's outstanding performance and the impact she has made, The Westin intends to grow their hospitality team further by hiring additional teammates through EmployAbility in the future.

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**DR. KEN BOYD**  
Executive Director

## A NEW YEAR OF SUCCESS AND POTENTIAL YOUR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE

The beginning of a new year is a time of optimism and renewed energies. It's exciting to think of all the possible initiatives and to think about what can be accomplished. For the adults with developmental disabilities who are part of the programs at EmployAbility that future is bright and full of promise, thanks to support from our local community.

As we begin 2019, the EmployAbility team remains focused on providing the highest-quality training programs and being at the forefront of inclusion and employment trends within the disability services field. We are committed to the rigorous assessment and implementation of learning opportunities, to continuing to develop meaningful community connections, and to fostering substantial employer engagement in order to give our program participants the strongest opportunities for achievement and independence possible.

Additionally, we work alongside individuals with developmental disabilities as they achieve success by contributing to their community through volunteer engagement and service. We believe that there is power in a community that works together.

We simply can't imagine taking on the opportunities and challenges in 2019 without the help and support of our volunteers and donors. Thanks to all of you, EmployAbility has the resources and support we need to grow and to help our program participants achieve their goals. Your contributions, monetary as well as your gifts of time and talent, make it possible for us to do what we do every day.

The future is bright for EmployAbility! When we work together there is no such thing as a goal too difficult to achieve.

I look forward to hearing your ideas and thoughts about how we can work together as a community to offer the best workforce development training and support services to those who need them.

*"The dreams and passions stored within hearts are powerful keys which can unlock a wealth of potential."*

John C. Maxwell

# PLAY for a PURPOSE

*Friday, May 17, 2019  
1:30pm Shotgun Start*

*Palmetto Course  
The Landings Club*

*PlayForAPurpose.com*

Come enjoy a beautiful day on the course and support programs that prepare people with developmental disabilities for employment and community integration!



### ▼ STAR, continued from page 1

Each year, EmployAbility's Community Employment Services program connects hundreds of adults with developmental disabilities in Chatham, Effingham, and Bryan counties to integrated employment. Job coaches explore a person's skills and interests and locate employment options that suit those qualities. "We're always looking for that match that results in a successful, long-term placement," says Shantillia's Job Coach, Wanda.

Tyler is grateful for EmployAbility's help in finding him quality employees. He said, "Our partnership with EmployAbility is something we take very seriously. Without that partnership, we'd never have Shantillia here, and I'm grateful for Shantillia."

Community support is vital to the success of EmployAbility's Community Employment Services program. With your support, Shantillia is now a valued team member, and her abilities now shine as brightly as her smile.

If you are an employer and are interested in hiring through EmployAbility, please call Renée Floyd at (912) 644-7482 or visit our website at [www.employabilityga.org/community-employment](http://www.employabilityga.org/community-employment)

# Everyday Heroes

VOLUNTEER VISITS  
CREATE LASTING  
FRIENDSHIPS AND  
EXPERIENCES



Not all heroes wear a cape and have superpowers; some everyday heroes are those who simply go above and beyond to help others in need. At EmployAbility, we are privileged to have a community of friends who volunteer to help us give the adults with developmental disabilities that we serve the most meaningful experiences possible, each and every day. Cesar is one of those remarkable volunteers and his way of bonding with our individuals is unique.

Every month, Cesar visits EmployAbility dressed as Marvel's Captain America. Although he isn't fighting crime, his visits make a positive impact in the lives of our Day Habilitation participants. Cesar founded Heroes Overcome, an organization of men who dress up as superheroes and visit local schools, hospitals, and youth groups in our local community to delight and inspire and began volunteering in Day Habilitation a year and a half ago.

Adrian, who takes on the role of Black Panther, says "Volunteering with EmployAbility gives me an opportunity to add value to my community by giving back." Together, he and Cesar reiterate their ultimate goal is to spread the grace of God, positivity, inclusiveness, and love. They spend time

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**"My mission is to help everyone discover the hero within themselves. Everyone can be a hero and everyone has superpowers that make them unique."**

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▲ *Captain America spends time talking with each individual in our Day Habilitation program, giving each person the gift of his time and attention.*

with each person, giving them focused attention, posing for photos, and shaking hands.

Cesar and his Heroes Overcome teammates see firsthand the impact that volunteers have on non-profit organizations like EmployAbility. They know that volunteers often fill critical roles and that most non-profits would have a difficult time functioning efficiently without the help of volunteers. A wonderful way to get out and meet people, discover new talents, and impact your community in a meaningful way, volunteering doesn't need to be intimidating. Cesar offers advice to those who want to volunteer, but don't quite know where to begin. When looking back on his volunteer journey, he says, "Start anywhere. At the end of the day, I am just a guy behind a mask. My friends in Day Habilitation impact me more than they know."

Discover your superpower by becoming an EmployAbility volunteer! For more information about how you can donate your time or talents, visit [www.employabilityga.org/volunteer](http://www.employabilityga.org/volunteer) or contact Volunteer Services at (912) 644-7510.

◀ *Captain America and Black Panther are just two of the Marvel superheroes who make time to visit and inspire the adults with developmental disabilities who are served by EmployAbility.*

# Success Through Self-Advocacy



## COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAM

Self-advocacy is an important skill for anyone who wants to be successful. For adults with developmental disabilities, it is especially challenging. Effective self-advocacy empowers people to have new experiences, make new friends and supports, and to make their own decisions and learn from them. As people increase their independence, they gain personal satisfaction with their lives.

EmployAbility's Community Access program creates opportunities to cultivate new, natural supports and to become integrated in the community and, as a result, to become stronger self-advocates. Each day, 36 individuals in six groups engage in activities such as creating art, seeing interesting new places throughout Savannah, and, most importantly, building new connections through volunteering at local nonprofits.

"Our Community Access participants love exploring the community and making new friends. But most of all, they love knowing that people look forward to seeing them and that they are using their abilities to help people," said Community Access Manager, Mattie.

One of the popular volunteer activities is delivering Meals on Wheels to elderly citizens who would otherwise have very little exposure to people and nutritious meals. Through Meals on Wheels, individuals make new friends and visit old friends as they use their abilities to improve the lives of others.

Because of your support, the Community Access program has grown by approximately 40%, allowing individuals to demonstrate that everybody at every ability level can make a difference.



Through these activities, program participants learn that they are accepted as they are – as a whole and an equal – and that they are an integral part of the community.

**"I love to volunteer. I get to meet new people, and I love making them smile!"**

**Marian,  
Community Access participant**

## PEOPLE FIRST

For more than 20 years, EmployAbility has been proud to support an active chapter People First, a nationwide self-advocacy group for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). Founded in 1974 in Salem, Oregon, People First's goal was to be a coalition where people with I/DD could come together to share information, ideas, and make new friendships. The name People First was conceived because people who have disabilities should not be defined by a diagnosis or label; rather, they are "People First."

Open to all citizens of all ability levels, "The goal of People First is to promote self-advocacy, community involvement, and inclusion. It offers members a sense of belonging that they can do something as a group and make a difference in the community and in their own lives," says Case Manager, Millicent, who serves as the People First Facilitator.

People First attendees discuss their rights and responsibilities as well as listen to guest speakers lead discussions on topics such as financial wellness, personal safety, and how to identify and speak out against bullying. They have also held activities to benefit the community, like making "blessing bags" filled with hygiene products to give to local nonprofits helping people experiencing homelessness or displacement.

**"People First gives me a voice,  
and I want it to be heard!"**

**Ebony, 2019 EmployAbility People First President**

The group recently held a voter registration drive at EmployAbility to encourage voting in future elections. They took a field trip to the local Voter Registration Office to become familiar with voting machines and how to cast their vote at election time.

*Your support helps adults with I/DD know that they are a valued part of the community and that they are wanted, needed, and appreciated! If you would like to partner with People First or be a guest speaker, please contact Millicent Newkirk-Glover at (912) 644-7500 or [mnewkirk@employabilityga.org](mailto:mnewkirk@employabilityga.org).*