

IDD CAUCUS HEARS MESSAGE OF EMPLOYMENT

By Scott Masson

Connecticut legislators who are members of the IDD Caucus recently heard first-hand stories about the need for more employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Speaking at a public hearing hosted by the IDD Caucus, Tom Fiorentino, president of the Arc of Connecticut, talked about his son Dan, who has an intellectual disability. He noted that not knowing what's going to eventually happen to your child is a major concern, adding that there are 55,000 young adults or adults with IDD in the state of Connecticut.

Win Evarts, executive director of the Arc of Connecticut Arc, also testified about how his son wants to make an impact in his community. Win told the legislators that the governmental system needs to help individuals like his son achieve their goals. Every young adult has a dream that they want to happen.

Kim Morrison and Noelle Alix, co-owners of Beanz & Company, a new cafe located in Avon inside the New England Pasta Company, spoke about how their daughters who have Down syndrome couldn't get jobs. One day Kim and Noelle decided to create a cafe where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities could work together. Noelle noted how 80 percent of people with IDD are unemployed. The partners put forth a call for action to the legislators to get people with IDD off the streets and get them a job. Their motto is "Everyone Belongs."

Finally, Lauren Traceski, a self-advocate with both the Connecticut Arc and Favarh, as well as a staff member at Beanz & Company, testified about how having a job lets her pursue her dreams, like working and one day living in an apartment and being a productive member of her community. She went on to mention how most people with IDD don't have jobs and how people with IDD are just like everyone else.

The message is clear to legislators: People with IDD NEED MORE JOBS!

EVERYONE Belongs!!!!!!