# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Our work is everything but ordinary.



# A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT & CEO

# 2018 AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

**504** were hired by our employment partners

\$7.1M Total Work Experience Wages Paid

1,453 individuals had the opportunity to earn a paycheck through VGS' work experience programs

VGS

677,877 Total Work Experience Hours



77% of program participants reported having an annual income of under \$10,000

VGS provides services to individuals from 26 different Ohio counties

#### Dear Friends,

2018 was a year of transition. It is rare that an opportunity comes along to re-imagine what a 129 year-old organization can become. We are honored to have been chosen to lead the reemergence of VGS which was founded on innovation and hard work. As we look to what the future holds, we reflect on where we have been and lessons learned from our past. VGS understands the power of work in a person's life and the benefits it brings. These benefits go beyond a paycheck; work becomes part of our identity, a way to feel valued, and a way to contribute to our community, neighborhood and family. Work has the power to bring out the extraordinary in every one of us.

In 2018 VGS helped over 3,900 individuals begin their path to work. We met those individuals all along their personal journeys, some moving directly towards full employment and others winding through successes and failures, only to try again. We were there when and where they needed us most, providing a web of customized training and job seeking support, helping them to forge their personal path to employment. VGS' strength lies in: the diverse range of abilities of the individuals we serve, the wide breadth of our workplace and employment training programs, and our many corporate partners who experience the value we bring to their companies.

As we look to shape the future, VGS will be the workforce development organization that creates the link between a multi-skilled, available workforce and area employers. With strong partners like Caruso's Coffee, Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Nordson Corporation, RhinoSystems Inc., PNC Bank, and many others, we contribute to an economic engine that fuels community improvement, business expansion, and job creation. Our belief in the power of work drives us to deliver workforce answers to the challenges our corporate partners bring to us.

We would like to thank all of the individuals, donors, foundations and companies that contributed to our past success and have expressed their desire to play a vital role in our future. We celebrate the program participants who took the first steps on their employment journey in 2018, knowing that the skills they learned will carry them throughout the rest of their lives. No doubt, VGS faces challenges in an ever changing nonprofit landscape. We are counting on all of you to join us in changing the lives of those we serve and lifting the communities that surround us. Together, we can provide the catalyst to create real change.

The people we serve, our programming, our business partners, and our benefactors are truly everything but ordinary!





Susie Barragate President & CEO

Angel D. Sa

Joseph G. DuBois Board Chair

TRAINING, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### PRE- AND POST-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMING

Pre-employment programs help individuals explore options and identify immediate and longterm vocational goals. Through these programs, each person's vocational interests, aptitudes and strengths are assessed and identified. The information is then used to determine the path for their journey. In addition, Active Day Services provide community engagement activities and advocacy for those who like additional options beyond work.

- Active Day Services
- Vocational Habilitation Services
- Career Planning Services
- Benefits Analysis/Work Incentives
- Non-Medical Transportation

#### WORKPLACE READINESS SKILLS

VGS pioneered the workplace readiness skills training called Work Adjustment that is now used throughout the world. In most programs individuals earn a paycheck while learning critical job keeping skills such as work quality, punctuality, and productivity.

- Clerical Work Adjustment
- Custodial Work Adjustment
- Manufacturing Based Work Adjustment
- Textile Services Work Adjustment
- Summer Youth Career Exploration
- Individual Employment Supports
- Non-Medical Transportation



#### CURRICULUM SKILLS TRAINING

VGS' customized skills training programs give individuals the tools they need to obtain employment, hands-on work experience skills instruction and relevant curriculum to provide individuals with marketable workforce skills in the following areas:

- Building Maintenance Skills
- Customer Service Representative
- Computer Skills
- Custodial Skills
- Food Service
- Forklift
- Textile Services
- GED Classes
- Non-Medical Transportation

#### CAREER SERVICES

VGS' comprehensive job and career services are designed to help youth and adults learn effective techniques for seeking, securing, and maintaining employment.

- Community Based Work Experience
- Community Based Work Adjustment
- Summer Youth Work Experience
- Job Search Skills Training
- Job Placement/Retention
- Job Coaching
- Individual Employment Supports

### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

VGS partners with public and private businesses that have staffing, production, or operational needs. Our solutions include on-site supervised workers, in-house manufacturing, and more.

- Food Services Production
- Manufacturing
- Sewn Products Production
- Packing And Assembly



onald Jackson is affectionately known as the 'King of the Loading Dock' at our Cleveland Workforce Campus. Donald, who has mild intellectual disabilities, started his journey with VGS in 1985 as a program participant and recently achieved his goal to become a permanent VGS employee.

Throughout the past 34 years, Donald has worked in multiple departments and developed skills in several areas including custodial services, manufacturing and assembly, and operations. Donald has also participated in workplace readiness programs to identify his strengths and vocational interests, and apply that knowledge to his workforce journey. With the encouragement of VGS staff, Donald built his confidence and honed new skills that led to a part-time position on VGS' shipping and receiving team earlier this year.

# MEET DONALD JACKSON



Today, Donald thrives in his position and is our resident expert for all things related to package distribution and the loading dock. He is considered by his colleagues to be one of the most dependable and driven people in our facility. Donald's journey has not been without its challenges but, with the help and steady reassurance of dedicated VGS staff, he tackles each challenge that arises. Donald takes great pride in the quality of his work and we continue to support his development as he hones new skills. Best of all, and much to our delight, Donald says he plans to continue working at VGS until he's 80-years-old!

Donald is the deserving recipient of this year's Frederick C. Crawford Award for outstanding achievement in overcoming barriers to employment. We are inspired by Donald's dedication to his employment journey and look forward to his continued growth!

# MEET GENO MCKINNEY



eno McKinney's journey with VGS began in 1995 through a referral from the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. Despite physical challenges brought on by rheumatoid arthritis, Geno's desire to work has never wavered and he is willing to give just about anything a try. For Geno, independence is everything and VGS staff worked closely with him to identify a position that matched his work ethic, extensive operations knowledge, and positive attitude.

Geno found his niche in Elyria's Contract Shop managing the extensive label-printing operations for VGS' business partners. He also manages the Shop's shipping department including scheduling pick-ups and deliveries, tracking all jobs, and interacting directly with customers to get products out the door efficiently. Geno often takes the initiative to contact customers directly and ensure clear expectations. Though in a wheelchair and with limited use of his arms and hands, Geno is indispensable to our Contract Shop and he was awarded the 2018 President's Award SourceAmerica that celebrates and recognizes the achievements of people with disabilities in the nonprofit sector. As one of VGS' most outstanding employees, Geno's commitment to providing extraordinary customer service and problem-solving is best summed up in the words of his manager: "Geno is our conscience."

Geno is an inspiration to us all for his dedication to VGS and we look forward to his continued leadership in the Contract Shop for many years to come!

### CARUSO'S COFFEE, INC.



Located in Brecksville, Caruso's Coffee is one of the largest specialty coffee roasters in the Midwest. VGS has proudly partnered with this growing family business since 2015 to provide job opportunities for 40 individuals with developmental disabilities. The partnership with Caruso's Coffee has provided ideal work for the individuals in VGS' programs who are building their skill sets with the goal of integrated community employment. The Caruso's work is fast-paced, clean, safe, and consistent but, best of all, it makes our workshop smell great!

Caruso's manufactures delicious individual-serve coffee pods which are sent to our Cleveland campus in bulk. Once received, individuals in our Personal, Social and Employment Skills Training program and our contract shop, package the coffee pods for wholesale distribution in Ohio and six other states. All of the packaging work is completed by an individual with a physical or developmental disability, serving as an impressive example for other potential business partners that tour our facility.

Looking forward, as this extraordinary family business continues to expand its customer base, we are excited that our partnership will result in additional work opportunities for individuals with disabilities. We value Caruso's dedication to our mission and honor their commitment to helping individuals with disabilities along their pathway to employment.



## RHINOSYSTEMS, INC.



RhinoSystems, Inc. (RSI) was established in 2007 as a global company focused on bringing innovative nasal hygiene products to the market. VGS joined forces with RSI six years ago to offer a pathway to employment for individuals with disabilities and to help meet RSI's production needs for their popular Naväge® Nasal Hygiene System, the world's first handheld nasal irrigator that uses gentle suction.

Since 2013, the partnership has grown to provide jobs for nearly 30 individuals with disabilities! Through the program, individuals with developmental disabilities learn manufacturing skills, work on RSI's production lines, or package and inspect saline solution packets. Together, VGS and RSI recently added a second shift of work opportunities to support skill development in online order fulfillment. These hands-on training and work opportunities allow individuals with disabilities to earn a paycheck while acquiring marketable job skills. RSI serves as a positive example of a truly integrated workforce and their commitment to providing a positive work experience for VGS' program participants is critical in helping shift how society perceives individuals with disabilities.

RSI continues to be an essential stepping-stone on the pathway to employment by allowing individuals to transition from VGS' facility-based programming to a supportive community-based work setting with a local employer. We are excited for the future of our partnership with this innovative business and look forward to helping more individuals with disabilities enter the workforce thanks to RSI's leadership.

# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We appreciate the generous support of our contributors and are pleased to have this opportunity to acknowledge their 2018 gifts. It is through their generosity that we are able to fulfill our mission of Preparing People with Barriers to Employment for a Brighter Future and we are forever grateful.

#### EXCEL SOCIETY

The Excel Society is comprised of VGS' most dedicated supporters who, by making a multi-year Annual Fund commitment, are ensuring that VGS is able to provide the vocational rehabilitation services vocational skills training, and paid work experiences that are critical to individuals with disabilities or other barriers, in order for them to excel on their path to a brighter future.

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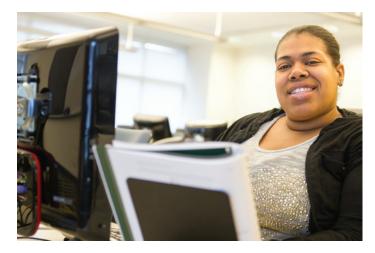
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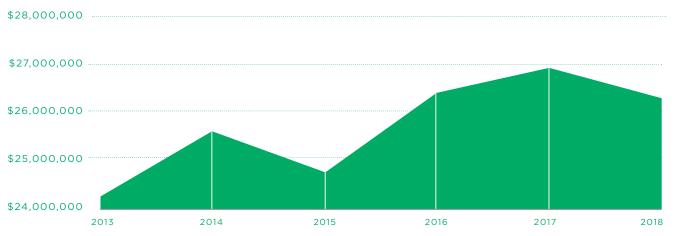
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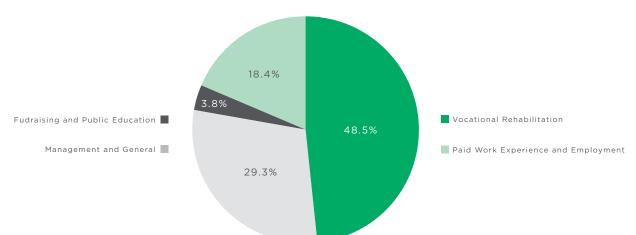
Vocational Guidance Services is proud to report another year of strong financial results that highlight our sustained ability to adapt to the needs of a changing workforce. We are especially grateful for support from our generous donors. As we look ahead toward growth and expansion, we remain committed to fiscal prudence to ensure continued mission impact, sustainability, and high-quality programming for every individual we serve.



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