

## PUTTING FAITH TO WORK

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**Congregations as a Promising Pathway to Employment for People with Disabilities**

Erik Carter (Vanderbilt University)  
Gigi Sanders (Christ Presbyterian Church)

**A webinar series hosted by the Collaborative on Faith and Disability ([www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org))**

## VISION AND MISSION

People with disabilities and their families will have compelling opportunities and supports to develop and express their spirituality, engage in congregational life, and share their gifts and talents in ways that are personally valued and that strengthen communities.

Our mission is to support people with disabilities, their families, and those who support them by providing national and international leadership in the areas of research, education, service, and dissemination related to disability, religion, and inclusive supports.


## COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Logos of collaborative partners: Georgia State University, Center for Leadership in Disability, Partnership for People with Disabilities, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, JFK Partners, Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies, UConn UCEDD, Oregon Health & Science University, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, Institute for Human Development, UIC, and Texas Center for Disability Studies.

## A FEW IMPORTANT NOTES

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted soon on the Collaborative on Faith and Disability website ([www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org)).
- All slides, mentioned resources, and several helpful links will also be posted along with the webinar recording.
- Questions can be submitted in the chat box for discussion after the presentations.
- We will read posted questions to the presenters during the Q&A. All phone lines are silenced.
- Our time is brief and so shall the presenters be as well.
- Information about upcoming webinars and the Collaborative on Faith and Disability will be shared at the end of the webinar.



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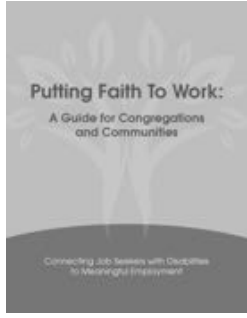
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## TO LEARN MORE





<http://www.puttingfaithtowork.org>

## COLLABORATORS

Institute on Community Integration  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

TEXAS CENTER for DISABILITY STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY  
Human Development Institute  
*Research Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities*

VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER  
FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

[www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org)

## SOME GOALS OF PFTW

- Extend the field's understanding of the possibilities and potential challenges of engaging congregations in supporting employment for people with disabilities
- Replicate and refine a practical and flexible model for congregations to address the employment needs of people with disabilities
- Recruit, equip, and coach congregations to support up to 60 individuals with a disability to secure and/or maintain employment across 4 states
- Evaluate the PFTW model's impact, feasibility, and accessibility
- Ensure project findings penetrate practice by disseminating broadly through prominent national disability and faith networks

## NEED FOR NEW APPROACHES

- People with disabilities have gifts and strengths to share
- Unemployment and underemployment remain pervasive
- Limited opportunities for valued community roles
- Service systems incapable of meeting all needs
- Natural supports are widely advocated, but rarely used

## OVER 335,000 CONGREGATIONS

## A GLIMPSE OF NASHVILLE

<http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/>

Does odd jobs around town

Works at the municipal offices

Runs a local bank

Leads her HR department

Is a construction contractor

Works at a restaurant

Hesitant... I should probably ask

Owens a nursery

Operates a day care

Works at a grocery store

Runs a temp agency

Works at the university

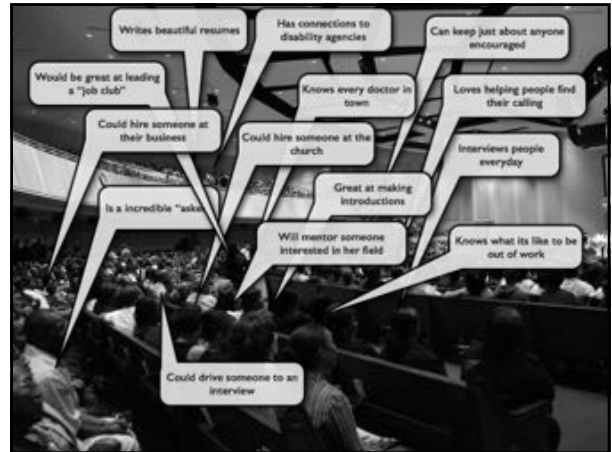
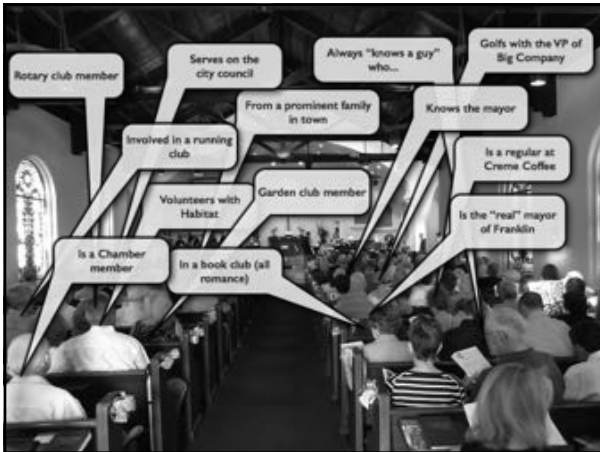
Is a freelance supervisor

Owens a landscaping business

Is a vocational rehab counselor

Coordinates a non-profit network

Works in a law firm



## A CALL ON FAITH COMMUNITIES

**INTERFAITH DISABILITY ADVOCACY COALITION**  
July 4, 2015 • 2015 U.S. News, Nov. 17th Floor • Washington, DC 20005

**Statement of Solidarity by the Religious Community Around Employment of People with Disabilities**

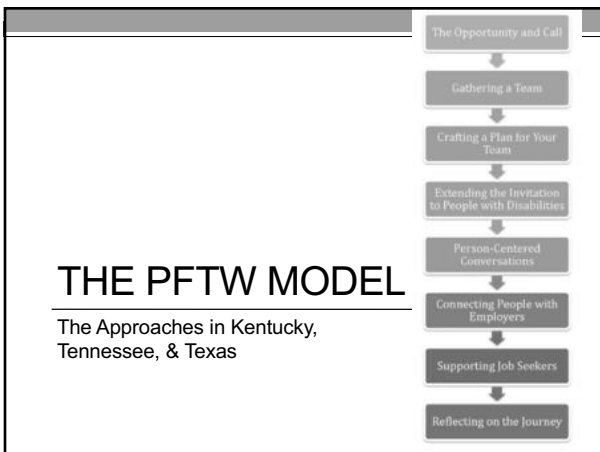
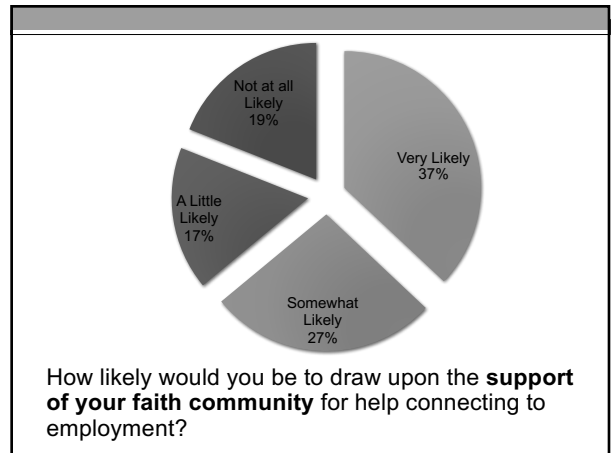
More than twenty years ago, with bipartisan support in Congress and broad endorsements from the civil rights, faith and labor communities, President George W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), calling for the "maximum self-determination" to come knocking down. Today, our country is still not accessible and welcoming to people with a wide variety of disabilities and chronic health conditions that it was in 1990.

Nevertheless, based on all of the available data from the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it is an unfortunate fact that the low-mobility rural areas to experience the people with disabilities the least in our nation's employment. The needs of Americans with disabilities who want to work are unmet and underrepresented. The number has not changed since the ADA's passage. This is a shameful situation which we in the religious community that committed to address.

**The Call and Opportunity for Faith Communities to Transform the Lives of People with Disabilities and Their Communities**


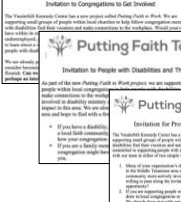
By Bill Gowers, M.Div., Wesley Allen, M.Div., Harold Hansen, Ed.D., and Erik W. Carter, Ph.D.

Putting Faith To Work



## INVITING CONGREGATIONS

- General announcements
- To congregations with disability ministry initiatives
- To families impacted by disability
- To agencies providing disability services
- To faith-based networks





## POSSIBLE ENTRY POINTS

- Building an initiative project around one person
- Person with disability and/or family member asking
- Word of mouth among disability networks
- Helping a young adult with transition
- Beginning a new ministry in line with mission
- Expanding scope of current employment ministry or job club
- Expanding scope of inclusive or "special" ministries
- Tapping gifts of members in a new way
- Agency invitation for collaboration
- And many other ways yet to be found.....

## INVITING THEIR MEMBERS

- Bulletin inserts
- PowerPoint announcements
- Social media
- Newsletters
- Personal invitations
- Other approaches



## INVITING THEIR MEMBERS

BOX 2-2: Example Bulletin Insert

**Be Part of Putting Faith to Work at [congregation name]!**  
 Did you know that the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is more than double that of people without disabilities? Join efforts within our synagogue to make a difference by helping people with disabilities connect to meaningful jobs by drawing upon the personal connections and creativity within our church. Are you:

- A person with a strong relationship with local employers and employer networks
- An ability to make connections among people
- A knack for helping people to identify their gifts and callings
- A passion for helping others


If any of the above describes you, please contact Jenny Gestalton at 615.936.7075 or [jenny.gestalton@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jenny.gestalton@vanderbilt.edu).

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Your e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## NEW CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WORK

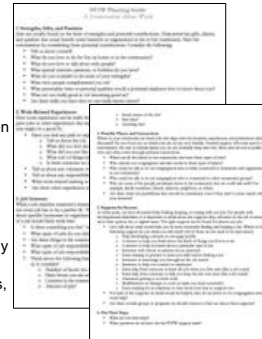
**Questions to Answer**

- Which strengths, gifts, and passions should we consider when thinking about a meaningful job?
- Which prior experiences should we remember when considering possible jobs?
- What types of job responsibilities might be a really great fit?
- What are possible businesses and organizations in our community where these types of jobs exist?
- Who should we talk to in our congregation (or beyond) who may have connections to such employers?
- What supports do we think will be needed to promote success?
- What are our next steps as a group?



## NETWORKING TO EMPLOYMENT

- Where are all the places in our community that have these types of jobs?
- Who attends our congregation and also works in these types of places?
- Who could we talk to in our congregation who is really connected to businesses and organizations in our community?
- Who should we talk to in our congregation who is connected to other community groups?
- Who are some of the people you already know in the community that we could talk with? For example, family members, friends, relatives, neighbors, or others.



## SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT

**Which of the following supports do you think you'll need to find and keep a job?**

- Help developing a resume or one-page profile
- A mentor to help you think about the kinds of things you'd love to do
- A mentor to help you learn about a particular type of job
- Someone with whom to practice for an interview
- Extra training or practice to learn job skills before finding a job
- Someone to encourage you throughout the job search
- Someone to help you connect to employers
- Extra help from someone to learn the job when you first start (like a job coach)
- Extra help from someone to help you keep the job over time (like a job coach)
- Assistance getting to or from work
- Modifications or changes to a job to make you more successful
- Extra training for an employer so they know how best to support you

**For each support we think would be helpful, who do we know in our congregation who could help?**

**Are there outside groups or programs we should contact to find out about these supports?**

# CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Gigi and Carl Sanders

## A FEW LESSONS LEARNED

- This approach holds great promise
- The benefits extend beyond just finding employment
- The benefits are reciprocal—for congregations too
- This is new territory for some individuals, congregations, and service providers
- Congregations often move at a different pace
- Our inclination is to replicate formal supports, but they are not always appropriate or needed
- Building capacity and continuity of support among volunteers is a challenge

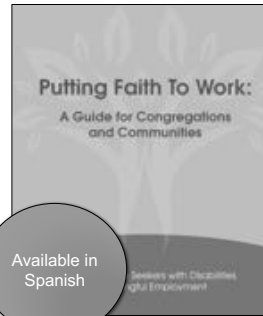
## DIMENSIONS OF BELONGING

- Invited
- Present
- Welcomed
- Accepted
- Known
- Supported
- Cared for
- Befriended
- Needed
- Loved



Carter, E. W. (2016). A place of belonging: Research at the intersection of faith and disability. *Review & Expositor*, 113, 167-180.

## Purchase Your Copy...



Available in Spanish

<http://www.puttingfaithtowork.org>

## PFTW PROJECT TEAM

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  - Derek Nord
  - Joe Timmons
- University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (Kentucky)
  - Harold Kleinert
  - Milton Tyree
- Texas Center for Disability Studies (Texas)
  - Ana Carnevaro
  - Penny Seay
- Consultants
  - William Gaventa
  - Wesley Allen

**SPECIAL THANKS**

## Q&A WITH THE SPEAKERS

Please post your questions in the chat box

## UPCOMING WEBINARS

- December 13 (2-3EST): DANCING WITH THE SPIRITS: INITIATIVES BY UCEDD'S TO ADDRESS SPIRITUAL SUPPORTS (AND LESSONS LEARNED)

• Register at [www.faihanddisability.org](http://www.faihanddisability.org)

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