

An Introduction to Ken's  
Krew with Vocational  
Coordinator-  
Melissa Tkacs-Soli



# ***Mission Statement***

Ken's Krew provides job placement training and support for individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities in competitive employment

# ***Vision Statement***

Every individual deserves the opportunity to enter the workforce, earn a fair wage, and reach their full potential.







## *Our History:*

- ▶ Ken's Krew, Inc., originally named Ken's Kids, Inc., was founded in 1997 by two sets of parents hoping to find a successful employment option for young adults with either an intellectual or a developmental disability.
- ▶ Ken's Krew Parent Founders, Michael and Constance Solomon remain actively involved as board members and advisors. Karen LaPera, also a Parent Founder, is the Director of Vocational Training.
- ▶ Ken's Kids, Inc. changed its name to Ken's Krew, Inc. in October 2010. The new name better reflects the maturation of both the program and our participants. We began serving those newly graduated from school in our earliest days. Many of them are still with our program and are now in their 30's and 40's. Ken's Krew encompasses the mix of our long-time participants, as well as those now entering the program.

# Some of our Statistics:



- ▶ Ken's Krew has placed and served over 800 individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities.
- ▶ Our One-year retention rate is over 85% and the average job tenure is over four years.
- ▶ 53% of Ken's Krew participants hold their job at least 5 years.
- ▶ 44% of Ken's Krew participants hold their job for 10 years or more.
- ▶ 33% of Ken's Krew participants have now been holding their job for 15 plus years.
- ▶ We are in 9 states: CT, DE, FL, GA, MD, MI, NJ, NY and PA

# *The Program!....Why we are unique!*

- ▶ **Recruiting:** Ken's Krew networks with local school districts, state employment agencies and other service organizations to identify appropriate candidates who possess skills that will match the needs of the employer.
- ▶ **Five-Step Assessment Process:** KKI has an assessment process during which applicants, school staff, job coaches, families and store management can ensure that this program is a good fit.
  - ▶ KKI electronic application, parent/guardian intake, candidate observation/interview, on-site assessment, and parent/guardian meeting.





# What we do....



- ▶ **Job Matching:** Intense focus on each individual allows coordinators to match abilities and skills with employer needs, improving the odds of a successful placement for both the individual and the employer.
- ▶ **One on One Intensive Training:** KKI vocational coordinators work side-by-side with program participants for 6-8 weeks, or until the program participant can work independently, before phasing away.
- ▶ **Follow-Along Support:** For as long as the program participant is employed by our corporate partner, he/she will be supported as needed by a KKI vocational coordinator.
- ▶ **Strategy Training:** We offer training to new or veteran corporate partner leadership teams that are not aware of the Ken's Krew program.

# Who We Serve

## Eligibility Requirements

The candidate must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disability (with documentation).
- Have a desire to work in an independent work setting
- Have an existing support system
- If required by employer, submit to drug testing to the extent permitted under federal state and local law
- Be responsible for transportation to and from the workplace





# *Additional Considerations*

The candidate must:

- ▶ Be able to listen to and follow directions.
- ▶ Be able to work at a task until completion.
- ▶ Demonstrate an ability to function independently in the workplace.
- ▶ Possess basic problem-solving skills. Be willing to ask for help.
- ▶ To work independently in an integrative and competitive employment situation



# More Considerations

## Physical

The candidate must:

- Have the stamina to work at least four hours a day.
- Be able to stand for the duration of the work period.
- Have the strength to lift or carry, if required for the position.
- Be willing to disclose physical and medical conditions to Ken's Krew, Inc. and to the prospective employer.
- Provide statements declaring any material physical impediments from the candidate's medical providers and parents/guardians.







## Social and Behavioral

The candidate is required to:

- ▶ Have appropriate personal hygiene and general cleanliness.
- ▶ Interact appropriately and respectfully with others, i.e. the vocational coordinator, supervisors, co-workers, and customers.
- ▶ Accept direction and supervision including constructive feedback
- ▶ Demonstrate workplace appropriate social skills.
- ▶ Exhibit a positive attitude and good work ethic.
- ▶ Self awareness of disability

*The candidate's eligibility is based on educators/transition coordinator evaluations, student interview/observation, parent/guardian meeting, and onsite employment assessment.*



# Funding

- ▶ Ken's Krew Inc. is incorporated in Pennsylvania and is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization. Ken's Krew, Inc. is funded by a mix of public and private monies. We strive for organizational efficiency in all areas of operations and program delivery.



Various fundraising events occur though out the year to help defer our costs.





# Participant Stories: Meet Danielle!



- ▶ Danielle worked for Publix in Florida for 20+ years. She moved to Connecticut in 2019 after her program in Florida shut down due to Covid-19.
- ▶ Danielle did an in-store assessment at Home Depot and did not particularly like how big the store was, or the idea of stocking shelves/organizing.
- ▶ Ken's Krew partnered with the local grocery store, Adams Hometown Market in Milford and Danielle has been working there in customer service for 10 months now and she loves it.
- ▶ Danielle has attended some events with us to spread the word about Ken's Krew and loves getting to go on "business trips" with us!



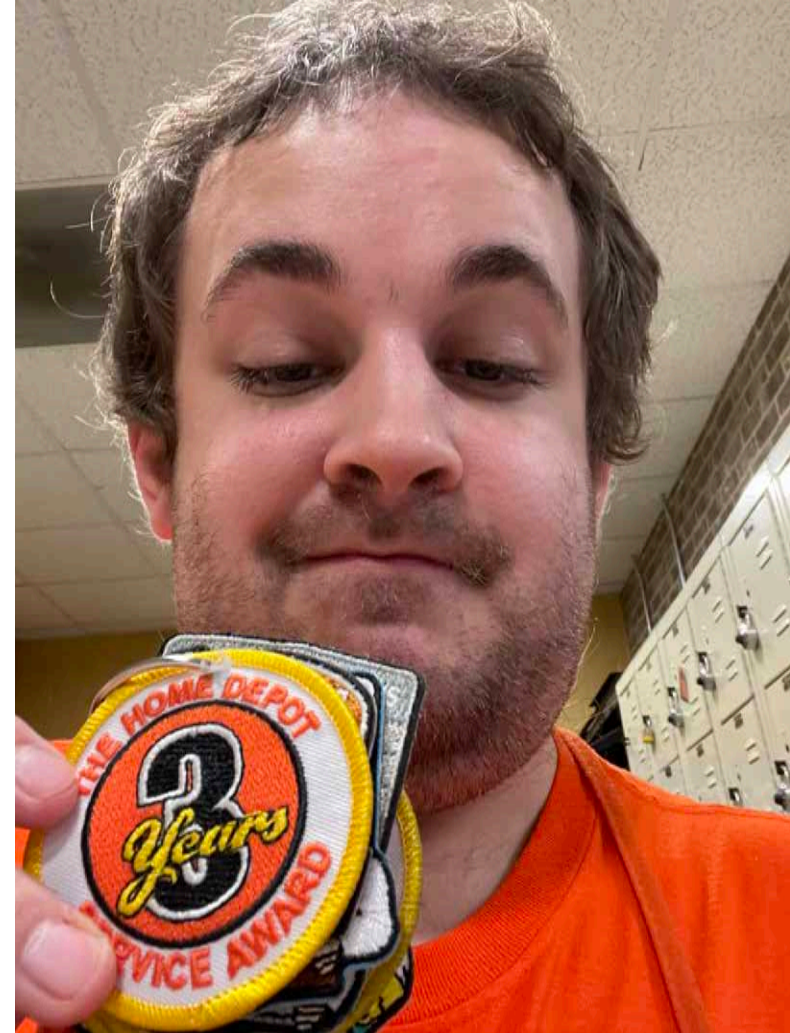
## Participant Stories: Meet Spencer!

- ▶ Spencer worked in a café before coming to Ken's Krew. He desired a different, more active job. He has always been interested in the different colors of paint and keeping things organized well.
- ▶ Spencer began working at the Home Depot in Orange 7 months ago in the paint department and loves it!
- ▶ Spencer recently was awarded the “Living our Values” Homer Award at Home Depot for his excellent customer service.



# Getting Stated With The Application Process...

<https://kenskrew.org/apply/>





# Thank You- Any Questions?

Please Stay In Touch!



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