

## **Joe Perry Receives Frank Loughran Award**

(Pictured L to R – Tiffney Bergeron, Joe Perry, and Joe Leddy)

(Portsmouth, NH) Joe Perry, a Career Resource Specialist on our Rhode Island Team, was presented our Company's special *Frank Loughran Award* at our mid-year management meeting. The Award was presented by our Company's founder, Joe Leddy. Joe Perry was nominated for the award by Tiffney Bergeron, the Rhode Island Director. Joe is known for his methodical approach to working with each individual so as to establish natural supports and independence in the workplace. At the Award ceremony Tiffney read her nomination, which focused on Joe's extraordinary work with three of our clients, Neftali, Nick, and Lee.

Here are two excerpts from what Tiffney wrote:

Neftali works an early morning shift as a porter at TJX. Neftali was finding it difficult to complete all tasks assigned to him at work during his shift. This was due to a lack of organizational skills and time restraints on tasks, as store needs to be cleaned prior to being open to the public each day. Joe was able to create a picture schedule checklist that organizes Neftali's daily schedule in the most manageable and time effective way. This simple tool has not only helped Neftali become more successful, it has also improved the relationship between the employer and Joe and, more importantly, the employer and Neftali. Neftali is now able to communicate better with his employer regarding certain tasks. Prior to Joe creating the picture schedule, Neftali would wait until he saw Joe at work to ask questions. Neftali is now significantly more independent in his communication with his employer.

Lee is a 38-year-old man who has a bachelor's degree in communications from Rhode Island College. Lee has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheel chair. Lee has been the East Greenwich Assistant Girl's Varsity Basketball Coach since 2007. Joe assists Lee with improving his communication with his employer and urges Lee to seek new opportunities at his school. Lee was asked during the 2010 season to be the head coach to the East Greenwich integrated basketball team (combines 80% of students with disabilities with athletes from other sports with no disabilities). The team looked to Lee for guidance. Lee has a difficult time with verbal communication but during time-outs the team would all gather around Lee and listen to his directions. Lee's integrated team won the state championship and he was able to inspire all of the students on his team who have disabilities themselves.

### **History of the Award**

This award was established in memory of our late Vice President, Frank Loughran, to recognize excellence in Supported Employment. It is given annually to an employee who has exhibited creativity in job development strategies for individuals with disabilities and a commitment to natural supports in the workplace. Frank was a wonderful person who balanced his work as head of the finance department with the work Work Opportunities

Unlimited did with the individual clients we served. Frank cared deeply about the quality of services we provided and was a leading voice in the company to ensure individual clients were gaining vocational skills and independence. Upon Frank's untimely death Work Opportunities Unlimited decided to honor Frank with this recognition in memory of his commitment to helping individuals improve their lives through the world of work. This award has been given annually since the early 1990's.

Congratulations, Joe!