SHALOM DENVER

SHOPTALK

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LEGO® MANIA HITS SHALOM DENVER

They arrived as elaborate castles, scary dinosaurs, sturdy bridges, and tall buildings. They departed as neatly sorted, colorful interlocking plastic bricks, elements, and minifigures—ready for children to imagine.

Did you attend the recent LEGO KidsFest that took over the Colorado Convention Center at the end of April? At this event, families enjoyed three acres of hands-on fun with hundreds of pounds of LEGO bricks! Before kids could create and build to their hearts' content, all those little bricks had to be taken apart from the tour's previous stop in Ohio and delivered to the convention center. And that's where JFS's SHALOM Denver came in.

At the end of March, a truck containing 15 large rolling laundry baskets (like the ones used in hotels) filled with mountains of LEGO creations rolled up to JFS's SHALOM Denver work center. Then SHALOM's clients—people with developmental disabilities or transitioning from welfare to work—spent much of April disassembling the attendees' handiwork and separating and sorting the individual LEGO bricks. SHALOM staff delivered bins of sorted individual bricks to the convention center in time for the April 27–29 event. When LEGO KidsFest was over, SHALOM received the newly rendered LEGO creations, only to take them apart again and prepare the bricks for the next stop in Wisconsin.

Dan Murray, chief operating officer with Life Marketing and Events, producers of the LEGO KidsFest, was pleased to award the contract to SHALOM Denver. "We're always looking for ways to give back to the communities we serve, and being able to provide meaningful work to people with disabilities presented a win-win opportunity," he says."We were thrilled to get this job," says Arnie Kover, JFS Disability and Employment Services director. "Not only was it a fun project for our clients, but it was wonderful to see all the elaborate creations inspired by children. We hated to have to take some of them apart."

SHALOM Denver client, Emily Wenstrom, enjoyed disassembling LEGO Bricks.

SHALOM Denver specializes in printing and mailing services, product assembly, and piecework for area businesses and provides meaningful work for people with disabilities. The LEGO KidsFest project was one of the more unusual—and fun—jobs ever to hit the production floor. •

SHALOM DENVER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: TRAINING WITH A PRO

Meeka Houston, manager of employment services at SHALOM Denver, used her networking skills to reach out to career coach Gordon Miller, an author and director of marketing at CBIZ. He has been featured weekly on Colorado's Own Channel 2 KWGN-TV News, offering employment tips and advice for the past 10 years. Meeka invited Miller to speak to clients about new hiring processes. He spoke for two hours about the top two things employers look for: creativity and industry knowledge.

Gordon Miller

Clients were also trained in networking by focusing on a circle of three people. This initial three leads to three more until soon an individual has built a valuable network of contacts. Clients were asked to look outside their circle of family and friends and reach out to childcare providers, teachers, case managers, professional contacts, former coworkers, or supervisors to identify three professionals with whom to network.

Miller encouraged the class to volunteer in the community. "You would be surprised about who you might meet and the contacts you can make from putting yourself out there," he said. As an example, Miller spoke about volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and how he ended up pounding nails next to Pete Coors, chairman of Coors Brewing Company.

Clients were very impressed with the training and left feeling that they learned a lot of valuable and practical information.

The SHALOM Denver Employment Services program continues to grow stronger. This dedicated staff has helped more than 110 welfare recipients find meaningful employment since July of last year. They feel confident they will meet their year-end goal of 120! •

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT: PRECIOUS METAL PROCESSING

Precious Metal Processing is a family business that started in the late 1950s. The company recycles precious metals from dentists around the nation, as well as from individuals who sell jewelry, sterling silver, or other precious metals.

Jack Shapiro, a longtime friend and supporter of SHALOM Denver and Jewish Family Service, introduced Arnie Kover, SHALOM Denver's director of Disability and Employment Services, to Howard Greinetz, owner of Precious Metal Processing, back in the 1980s when the opportunity came to solicit bids for his mailings. Howard wanted to give SHALOM Denver the opportunity to bid on his project because he knew he would be helping people to help themselves.

Since 2004, Precious Metal Processing has relied on SHALOM Denver to process its 75,000-piece mailing every six weeks. SHALOM Denver workers fold reply pouches and insert them with a letter into a business envelope that is addressed on our high-speed inkjet machine. The envelopes are then sealed, placed in mail trays, delivered to the USPS Denver Network Distribution Center, and mailed.

"Our workers love Precious Metal Processing," says Vicky Brittain, mailing business manager for SHALOM Denver. "It's a job everybody can be a part of and provides steady work on an ongoing basis. Everyone takes a lot of pride in doing a good job for them."

It's a win-win business relationship. Howard's granddaughter, Lisa Carnahan, is the office manager at Precious Metal Processing and manages the relationship with SHALOM Denver. "The hardworking, detail-oriented team at SHALOM Denver saves us countless hours of work," she says. "They're super efficient and perform their job with joy and enthusiasm. The SHALOM Denver staff is great about keeping us updated on new cost-saving technologies." •

A DAY AT SHALOM DENVER'S PALS PROGRAM

The SHALOM Denver PALS staff is busy keeping clients buzzing with fun, engaging activities.

Before daily activities start, clients are greeted by staff and participate in social activities with their peers, working on communication skills. Clients then start their group activities with yoga followed by exercises. We have an 86-year-old client who loves to lead our exercise class and he's excellent at engaging our clients in a robust workout!

Next is the topic of the day. Recently, we've covered everything from Cinco de Mayo to the Holocaust to limericks and more. Before lunch we work on an art project that gets our creativity flowing.

After lunch we either get assistance from a volunteer nutritionist or hear a story. We are currently reading *Alice in Wonderland* and once we finish the book, we're looking forward to a magical Alice in Wonderland tea party. In the afternoon, we play games, and lately, bingo is a favorite. It challenges our clients to focus on numbers and cognitive skills. Then we do a no-bake cooking activity to create a delicious, nutritious afternoon snack. This month we've been enjoying summer fruits and have even made smoothies. Once a month, we have a fun celebration day with dancing, food, and art.

Our clients love to get out in the community and volunteer. We have been working with Westminster Gardens to help them prepare for summer by planting and picking up litter. As a result, the gardens look better than ever! We have also been volunteering with Project Angel Heart, decorating meal bags that bring cheer to homebound patients. Sometimes we go out in the community just to enjoy ourselves by visiting Denver's gorgeous parks and fascinating museums.

PALS

We will soon be launching a nutrition and exercise program to educate and involve our clients in actively participating in their own health.

SHALOM Denver's PALS program offers opportunities for people with disabilities to participate fully in an array of recreational, educational, and cultural activities. Depending on individual interests, clients choose from a variety of activities and community outings, including Culture Club, Healthy Habits, Helping Hands Volunteers, Community Connecting, and Arts Unlimited.

If you or someone you know could benefit from SHALOM Denver's wide array of activities or training programs, please contact Sara Leeper, coordinator of client services, at 303.623.0251, x206, or sleeper@jewishfamilyservice.org. Visit us at www.shalomdenver.com. •

Arnie Kover, Director of Disability and Employment Services at JFS of Colorado.

"AS I SEE IT" BY ARNIE KOVER
T.E.A.M. "TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE."

It's an old familiar motivational slogan, but it rings truer now than ever before. With shrinking resources and ever-increasing needs on the part of the most vulnerable in our society, it's critical that we all work harder than ever to **COLLABORATE, SHARE RESOURCES, AND WORK AS A TEAM.** This applies both internally to Jewish Family Service/SHALOM Denver staff and externally to other local nonprofit and for-profit business partners and federal, state, and local government partners.

None of us are an island unto ourselves, but working together, we can do a world of good for our communities and those in need. Thank you to **ALL** of our great partners. We couldn't do it without you! •

SHALOM
DENVER

A division of Jewish Family
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Return Service Requested

Jewish Disabilities Network Coordinator Inna Ermakov proudly displays the community quilt that was created by attendees of Jewish Disabilities Awareness Day last February. More than 200 people attended the event, which included numerous presentations, a resource fair, a musical performance, and an art show.

THE POSTCARD: SIMPLE, EASY, AND COST-EFFECTIVE

If you have neglected your marketing budget over the past few years, you're not alone. Marketing and advertising is often the first expense to be cut during tough economic times. But the power of print and the ease of direct mail make it a cost-effective way to get your company's name in front of current and previous customers—and reach out to new markets.

SHALOM Denver offers mailing list purchasing services, digital printing, data processing, and complete mailing services to get your marketing back on track. Contact Ann Wilson for additional information and a competitive bid, 303.623.0251, x223, or awilson@jewishfamilyservice.org. •