

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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## LIVE LEARN WORK

Newsletter 1

Spring 2016

## Our History



JEFF Industries, Inc. was started by a group of parents, and is the result of a grass roots effort beginning in the 1980's. In the mid 1970's, a young man named "Jeff" was about to graduate from college when he was diagnosed with schizophrenia and was committed to the State Mental Hospital. He spent seven years in the hospital prior to being released to his now elderly parents. One morning prior to his monthly psychiatric visit, Jeff committed suicide. He left a note saying, "I have no reason to wake up." At that time there were no community-based programs in place that assisted persons with mental illnesses in getting on with their lives and integrating them into the mainstream community. In 1983, Jeff Industries was incorporated as a 501© (3) agency by his parents/and a grass roots board of directors. The agency was created to fill a need for meaningful community-based programs that assisted persons with mental illnesses transition from the hospital to the community. Adults with serious mental illnesses, ages 18-65, are given the opportunity to be productive, stay out of psychiatric hospitals and increase self esteem.

Jeff Industries provides support and services, which allow persons with severe and persistent mental illnesses and at risk youth, to become a successful part of the community with minimal professional intervention. We continue to help people with mental health challenges integrate into the community by providing social, leisure, networking, employment services and affordable housing so that they can live productive and stable lives AND "have a reason to wake up in the morning."

## Message From

**Claudia Roberts, MEd, CPRP**  
*Executive Director*

Adults with severe mental health illnesses are among the most underserved individuals in our community. They do not have the mental health stability and employment-oriented skill sets required to obtain and maintain employment thus eliminating any chance of achieving long-term financial stability. Besides impacting these individuals, it impacts their families, the criminal justice system, hospitals, clinics, homeless shelters and the local economy.



For over 30 years, our LIVE, LEARN WORK Program also known as 'Supported Employment Continuum' supports and teaches persons with severe mental health illnesses to learn work skills, live independently and become productive members of the community.

It has been recognized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) that 'one of the best recovery steps from mental illness is having and keeping a job.'

We consistently have a waiting list for our agency services. However, funding is needed to support our successful Program.



Palm Beach & Martin Counties

## Meet Some Members of Our Professional Staff



Claudia Roberts has been with Jeff Industries, Inc. for 25 years and has served as Executive Director for 10 years. Claudia holds a Master's Degree and is a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner. As Executive Director she is responsible for the leadership and management of the agency. She works directly with the Board of Directors.

Matthew Kwarchak is the agency's Clinical Director. Matt is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and has over 12 years of mental health counseling. He is responsible for assessing participant's mental health, vocational and health needs to develop a client driven individualized treatment plan. These plans serve as a roadmap for improved employment and mental health skills.



Karla Ortega is the agency's Consumer Services Facilitator and hold an AS degree in Human Services from Palm Beach State College. Karla assists vocational instructors and the Drop-In Center staff in the development of work-skills training and health programs. She also provides support to participants to help them increase their independence and mental health wellbeing.



Maurice "Mo" Sewelson is the Vocational Coordinator for the agency and has been with Jeff industries over 20. He oversees all agency-owned businesses and coordinates clients' and staff's workloads. Mo is a highly skilled wood working and graphic design artist. He also serves as the procurement officer for the agency. He develops, produces and oversees all agency-owned businesses.



## A Success Story

Bruce Gold is a guy with a bright future! Not so long ago, he thought his future was pretty bleak. Diagnosed with ADHD and bipolar as a child, Bruce struggled in school, his personal life and ultimately his work life. He bounced around from job to job never staying at one place very long. His Mother had heard about Jeff Industries from a friend of hers who worked at NAMI.



Bruce reluctantly entered the Supported Employment Continuum Program with the hope of learning a job skill and eventually getting a "good job". Unlike typical employment agencies, Jeff develops an Individualized Employment Plan for each of its participants. Bruce was placed in the wood-working shop and began to develop excellent work habits and work skills. Under careful supervision by Jeff's Placement staff, Bruce got a job at JFK Hospital (an HCA company). "Jeff Industries is like a Safety Net for me," says Bruce. "We talk weekly or more often as I grow my job/work skills." Bruce is proud to announce that he recently was promoted to "Floor Technician" at JFK. He also hopes to move up with HCA and eventually go back to school. "With the support I receive from Jeff Industries I have been able to accomplish much more than I ever dreamed of, they give me the confidence to keep going and dream big," he continued.

There's more happy news for Bruce too. He recently purchased his first home and will be moving in shortly.



# Our Agency in Action

### Some of the Products We Produce and Sell

