



Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

2023 Art Competition

The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities presents an opportunity for an outstanding **artist with a disability** who resides in the State of Texas to receive statewide recognition.

The person who is chosen as the featured artist will have his or her work prominently incorporated into the poster highlighting National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Spark a conversation about the importance of hiring people with disabilities. #TXHireAbility

For additional information, including submission guidelines and an entry form, email gcpd@gov.texas.gov or call 512-463-5739

www.gov.texas.gov/disabilities

DEADLINE: August 24, 2023

Thank you for sharing your art!

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

PART OF THE EQUITY EQUATION 2022

RAISING THE BAR

AS A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER WITH A RARE DISABILITY THAT OTHERS MAY NOT ALWAYS PHYSICALLY SEE, IT IS BOTH A CHALLENGE AND A BLESSING TO EMPOWER OTHERS WITH SIMILAR DISABILITIES WHO ARE AMONG THE WORKFORCE. MY DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS INVOLVE SERVICING COMMUNICATION ACCESS AND ADVOCACY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE A LANGUAGE BARRIER, PREDOMINATELY THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MUST MANEUVER AROUND MANY HURDLES IN SOCIETY'S WORKING SYSTEM TO BALANCE THE SCALES OF DIVERSITY. COLLABORATION BETWEEN COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE 'INCLUSION FOR ALL' IS VITAL AND FULFILLING TO OUR ECONOMY.

'RAISING THE BAR' ILLUSTRATES AN EXPRESSION OF HARDWORKING INDIVIDUALS IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY WHO ARE PROUD TO BE PART OF THE WORKFORCE. MEMBERS OF THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY WHO HAVE AN AUDITORY DISABILITY - DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING - HAVE ALWAYS INSPIRED ME. THE SHOW OF HANDS IN 'RAISING THE BAR' REFLECTS THE VOICES OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, WHETHER IN VARIOUS FORMS OF SIGN LANGUAGE OR OTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

ARTIST: EVA STORY

For opportunities visit txhireability.gov or scan the QR Code

OCT 2022 NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Texas HireAbility WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS TEXAS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion

2021 Disability Employment Awareness Month

In Our Hands by Kallyna Halla

The inspiration for my painting, "In Our Hands" came from the dynamics involved in a healthy coral reef such as the Florida Keys we have in the Gulf. Just like our Reef, it takes the interaction of many diverse and thoughtful-a multitude of colors, shapes, sizes and functions-to make the whole community successful and thrive.

In the same way, every single one of us needs a special niche where we can contribute our unique skills and natural talents. And to thrive, through give and take, have our needs met in order to reach a balance. The vitality of any environment or community relies on this equilibrium.

I am a 64-year-old resident of Bryan, Texas, and a middle school science teacher, a mother, and a grandmother. In 2006, I sustained a traumatic brainwave lesion, which resulted in paralysis from the waist down, chronic pain and limited use of both hands. I am a user of a wheelchair but that does not diminish my worth as a person, nor do I feel that I am a limiting factor of what I am. Small obstacles never get in the way of fulfilling my personal and professional goals.

With help from Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services, I returned to work as a science teacher and have continued my passion as a painter. Painting gives me the creative outlet that I need to express myself through art, where my creativity has no limitations. I hope to be a role model and inspiration to my students and others by illustrating that even in the face of extreme adversity and challenges, dreams can still be accomplished.

Learn about hiring Texans with disabilities at txc.texas.gov/txashireability

2020 Disability Employment Awareness Month

Increasing Access and Opportunity

We See Things Differently by Dinah Rodriguez

Dinah describes herself as an observant child who loved to draw, color, and paint. She struggled with different health challenges throughout her life, including vision and hearing loss. It wasn't until much later in her life that she was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and General Anxiety. Dinah experienced a major turn of events in 2018 after visiting a family doctor and mentioning her blurry vision. She was referred to an eye doctor and diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, which in turn led to a diagnosis of Usher syndrome—a rare genetic disease that caused hearing and vision loss. According to Dinah, art has helped her find peace and happiness since a very young age.

Dinah says, "Even though we may have a disability and see things differently, we are still useful and capable of producing work. We just need to have faith that we are valuable. Being different doesn't mean we can't provide for ourselves! We love what we are gifted to do, and there is no stopping us from succeeding. We appreciate everyone who has looked at us in this way." She goes on to add, "With the knowledge of professional people around me during these years—from my fourth grade teacher to my family doctor to my therapist—I have begun to flourish."

Today Dinah is a successful artist with legal blindness who continues to grow her knowledge and creativity as she produces work in digital and fine art. She publishes her artwork to different sites where she adds them to products like mugs, t-shirts, journals, and much more! She created a children's book and three coloring books, all of which can be found online and in book stores in McKin.

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