



Media Release

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Little Rock woman with visual impairment named state winner of achievement award

Margaret “Meg” Berry of Little Rock has been named the Department of Human Service’s Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) Consumer of the Year for Arkansas. She was chosen from among 13 nominees from around the state.

Berry is a Licensed Master Social Worker at Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and an individual who is visually impaired.

Her employer, Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI), has been named as the state’s Employer of the Year as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

Berry and her employer were recognized at an awards presentation following the DSB Board meeting December 13, at DHS and during a celebration of the 30th anniversary of DSB.

Other nominees and their employers included: Paul Tankersley of Oden, self-employed dog breeder; Larry Hartman of Pea Ridge, merchandising manager at Barnes and Noble; Dalia Vega of Springdale, training instructor with Pathfinders, Inc.; Jennifer Manasco of Cabot, teacher at Cabot United Methodist Church Child Development Center; Dr. Jaafar Al-Azzawi of Little Rock, anatomy and physiology instructor at Pulaski Technical College; Jillian Watson-Hulum, Ph.D., of Alexander, psychology professor at ITT Online Educational Services; Carol Carroll of Pocahontas, retail store owner; Debra Boykin of White Hall, housekeeper at Hampton Inn and Suites; Warren Smith of Texarkana, massage therapy business owner; Larry Randall of Camden, mechanical technician at Jim Golden Ford-Lincoln, LLC auto dealership; Linda Masterson of Corning, cafeteria manager in the

Corning School District; and Semonita Sandoval of West Memphis, food preparation service worker at Shoney's.

“It was my privilege to work with Meg through the years and to see her grow as a person,” said her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Dwight Turner, who nominated her for the award. “She was diligent in completing her education and seeking employment in the field she chose.”

Berry graduated from the University of Central Arkansas in 2006 with degrees in music and dietetics. She went on to receive a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 2012.

As part of her degree requirements, she completed internships at the Women and Children First organization against domestic violence and the Centers for Youth and Families non-profit, where she worked with children in residential treatment facilities. Berry said DSB helped her through college by paying her tuition, books, and reader services, as well as technology equipment.

This is the sixth year that DSB has given Consumer of the Year awards to recognize individuals who have managed their rehabilitation plans, gained marketable skills, secured good jobs, and become role models for others.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB's programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.