

Chelsea Nguyen

Chelsea C. Nguyen

Hair International Day Spa

Response to the Sunset Staff Report from May 2014 : My Testimonial

Dear Honorable Sunset Committee Members,

My name is Chelsea Nguyen and I am a salon and spa business owner and hairstylist from Sugar Land, Texas who started out as a curious volunteer that wanted to help and serve the blind and visually impaired community. I am now proud to say that I have come full circle and have become a new employer for two consumers from the Division of Blind Services (DBS).

I stand here before you today to share with you all my direct experiences with DBS which has given me my own perspective in regards to the Sunset Staff Report on Issue #1 on issues and recommendations for the separation between DARS' Division for Blind Services and Rehabilitative Services.

I would like to begin by saying that through my direct experience, I have come to understand that there is no wrong door or pathway to serve, rehabilitate and employ our fellow citizens with blindness and visual disabilities, but rather one door that will help those without sight to a more direct ,effective and efficient path to help all of their unique and specialized needs.

I also acknowledge that I have experienced some frustrations and setbacks at times with the Department of Blind Services, but like my small business, many other organizations and companies throughout the United States, the Division of Blind Services is not infallible. There is room for growth and improvement, but this can be done more effectively as a sister agency with the Division of Rehabilitative Services since DBS can help the needs of the whole person with a multitude of disabilities

while still addressing each consumers dominant blind disability that requires special assistance.

The reason I know this to be true is because since I first inquired about what blindness is, how does this happen to people... to how can I help ? And ultimately, what can I do as an employer and how can a business partnership with DBS possibly benefit my business while also serving a greater good?

Through my whole education and evolution as an employer for the Department of Blind Services, their highly qualified and uniquely specialized and skilled staff who also include blind and visually impaired members, fully understood the means to help and guide me and my staff through out the hiring process.

With their help, I have been able to find two ideal employees for my salon who are both salon assistants that are vital to our current growth and success. They are both help me perform important tasks such as meeting and greeting our clients, scheduling and booking all of our appointments into our new computer system and other important tasks that keep my business running on a daily basis.

One of my new employees from DBS, Lisa has a degree as a registered nurse, but could no longer work at the hospital several years ago after she began to lose her vision and developed multiple disabilities such as Multiple Sclerosis and other various disabilities.

The division of blind services was able to provide all of the services we both needed in order to create an ideal and successful employer and employee relationship.

For example, they provided me with many important tools I needed as a female minority small business owner with limited resources that I could not and have not ever received from any other agency to help my business grow and thrive.

Several of these important such services were to help me develop interview questions that helped me remain ADA compliant during our hiring process. They have also provided me with a job coach that has the specialized skills to teach and train my new staff member adaptive techniques accompanied by Assistive Technology to perform their jobs while this frees my time to continue to do what I do best in my salon

such as servicing clients and managing my salons daily operations during the often detailed, lengthy and time consuming training period of a new employee.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that the Division of Blind Services has truly helped me and my new employee from DBS with multiple disabilities in a way that I could have never imagined or wished for. Not only has there uniquely qualified staff helped bring us together throughout this whole process, but they have taught me that I can be successful in my business and help a fellow human being find their purpose again and now become a contributing tax payer who can also find their sense of purpose and give back to our society.

Thank you all for letting me share my experiences and perspective with you all today.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Nguyen