



THE DESERT ENTERPRISE

**First Half
issue
Jul – Dec
2023-2024**

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Wants...**



Interested in supporting the mission of DHE by employing those whom we serve, donating your time or financial resources, or joining our team as an employee...

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DHE GOES GREENER WITH ANOTHER AVAQMD GRANT



When the City of Lancaster announced its plan to eliminate the use of gas-powered grounds maintenance equipment within the city, Desert Haven partnered with the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD) in its quest to secure green equipment options for use on its many grounds maintenance contracts. Thanks to a grant program offered by the AVAQMD, DHE has been able to equip each of its grounds maintenance crews, both within the commercial sector and the government sector, with quality, commercial grade, e-powered equipment. In fact, Desert Haven has since been designated as a Certified Green Zone by the American Green Zone Alliance and last year also received the William J. "Pete" Knight Memorial Achievement in Reducing Emissions (AIRE) Award from the AVAQMD.



Above, DHE consumers and staff put the new e-equipment to the test...

This year, DHE is at it again, not only testing electric equipment for various vendors, including Kress and Greenworks Commercial, but also securing additional electric equipment needed for larger projects through its ongoing partnership with the AVAQMD. Once again, thanks to the grant process, the organization recently secured an e25 Soletrac three point harness tractor for use on multiple projects throughout the Antelope Valley, as well as a 74-inch and a 60-inch Mean Green Zero-Turn Electric Mower, aligned to the Edwards Air Force Base service contract. In December, the AVAQMD presented DHE with a grant totaling \$67,173, which covered a significant portion of these purchases.

To date, the AVAQMD has supported DHE through its grant process to the tune of some \$200,907. "To say that we are thankful for the ongoing support of the AV Air Quality Management District would be an absolute understatement," noted DHE Executive Director Jenni Moran. "Were it not for the AVAQMD, there is absolutely no way we could have possibly secured this equipment nor accomplished our goal of going green within our grounds maintenance department. Doing so, well ahead of the City's deadline, and now that of the State of California, was an added bonus. This, most definitely, is a win-win-win-win for Desert Haven, the AVAQMD, our city, and for our state."

DESERT HAVEN VENDORED FOR CIE BY NLACRC

DHE has recently been vendored by North Los Angeles County Regional Center for the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) incentive program. Aligned to the agency's supported employment individual placement program, the purpose of the CIE is to increase opportunities for Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate in competitive integrated employment by increasing overall job placement and retention in regular employment positions and work settings of their choosing. To that end, service providers receive incentive payments from their local regional center for placing individuals served into CIE, and for individuals' continuous employment for milestones of 30 consecutive days, six consecutive months, and 12 consecutive months.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines competitive integrated employment as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is: compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience; receiving the same level of benefits provided employees without disabilities in similar positions; at a location where the employee interacts with others without disabilities; and presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions.

How are we doing?...Keeping a finger on the pulse of our consumers

Following is a summary of performance in DHE's key program areas, based upon a review of data for the first half of the 2023-24 fiscal year:

Accelerated Work Readiness Services: Off-Site Hab Crews - AV and SCV

- ✓ Seventeen percent of consumers placed in the Work Readiness program were trained on jobs new to them.
- ✓ The availability of paid work averaged 59% for consumers in the Work Readiness program.
- ✓ A total of nineteen additional contract opportunities were developed or expanded in the first half of the fiscal year.
- ✓ Two consumers obtained individual, community-based employment from the Work Readiness Program during this review period and four began a paid internship placement
- ✓ One hundred percent of consumers placed in the Work Readiness program expressed satisfaction with DHE's services, as did 100% of the customers utilizing the off-site hab crew service.

Community Employment Services: Supported Employment - Individual Placement

- ✓ A total of 2.6 individual placements were achieved for the first half of the year for consumers seeking community employment and two began a paid internship placement.
- ✓ Hourly earnings exceeded minimum wage with an average of \$15.90 per hour for consumers in individual placement.
- ✓ Once consumer transitioned into follow-along status this review period, while another one moved into competitive employment.
- ✓ Consumers within active job search averaged 2.0 months of job seeking for the job of their choosing.
- ✓ One hundred percent of responding consumers placed in program expressed satisfaction with DHE's services, as did 100% of employers responding to the survey.

Day Training Activity Services: Project Independence

- ✓ Fourteen percent of consumers in the DTAC program achieved individual ISP/IPPP goals.
- ✓ No (0) consumers transitioned from the DTAC program into the Work Readiness Program this review period.
- ✓ There were 147 community outings in the review period, including trips to the LA County Fire Department, the Museum of Art and History, Dry Town Water Park, Barber Family Farms, Vasquez Rocks, and The Getty Museum.
- ✓ Twenty-six percent of consumers in the program demonstrated skill acquisition and retention in a key area.
- ✓ One hundred percent of consumers placed in program expressed satisfaction with the services offered.

NEW COMMUNITY CONTRACTS Antelope Valley

The following companies and corporations have recently contracted with DHE for the listed outsource services within their business:

Employment Skills Training Contracted Opportunities Antelope Valley

- ✓ **Avenida Crossings Apts** Grounds Maintenance
- ✓ **Cambium Aerospace Co** Janitorial/Custodial Crew
Demolition/Disposal Wall Partitions
- ✓ **EAFB - AECOM** Weed Abatement
- ✓ **EAFB Civil Engineering** Weed Abatement
- ✓ **Farris Tarazi Realtor** Grounds Maintenance
- ✓ **LAMAR Advertising** Bush Trimming and Disposal Crew
- ✓ **Lockeed Family Event** Janitorial/Custodial Crew
- ✓ **NASA Armstrong Resrch Ctr** Weed Abatement
- ✓ **RD Properties**
The Courtyard Janitorial/Custodial Crew
- ✓ **Solari Enterprises**
Courson Arts Colony Apts Janitorial & Grounds Maintenance
Longhorn Pavilion Grounds Maintenance
- ✓ **VFW Post 3000 (Quartz Hill)** Janitorial/Custodial Crew

NEW COMMUNITY CONTRACTS Santa Clarita Valley

The following companies and corporations have recently contracted with DHE for the listed outsource services within their business:

Employment Skills Training Contracted Opportunities Santa Clarita Valley

- ✓ **College of the Canyons** Janitorial/Custodial Crew
- ✓ **Solari Enterprises**
Sherman Village Apts Janitorial/Custodial Crew
Sylmar Court Apts Janitorial/Custodial Crew

DHE PRESENTS:



Check out DHE's Latest Training Video
On YouTube

Featuring our very own Michael Jeffery

Learn the proper and safe techniques for mopping
from our resident expert.



STATE OF THE STATE

California State Budget Update

Following a few years of plenty, the State Legislative Analysts Office has projected a deficit of some \$68 billion in the 2024-25 budget cycle for the State of California. The primary reason for such is associated with the state's having conformed to federal tax filing extensions and not knowing that state tax collections would come in at some \$26 billion below budget act estimates. Obviously, this unprecedented prior-year shortfall has created a very unique and challenging situation for the Legislature. Further, the state entered an economic downturn in 2022 with a rise in unemployment from 3.8% to 4.8% and year-over-year declines in inflation-adjusted incomes for five straight quarters.

While the situation, indeed, is daunting, the Legislature does have some tools available to address the budget problem, at least in this coming year: \$24 billion in reserves; options to reduce spending on schools and community colleges that could address nearly \$17 billion; reductions to one-time spending that could address nearly \$10 billion; and cost shifts.

The greater concern will come in subsequent years, with multi-year deficits projected at some \$30 billion per year, at least through 2027-28. In those years, the Legislature will have fewer options to address these deficits and the LAO suggests that the Legislature exercise caution in these years when deploying tools like the use of reserves and cost shifts. Reserves will likely not be sufficient to cover these multi-year deficits and, in fact, the LAO suggests that the state preserve at least one half of the reserves to provide a helpful cushion in the future. Unfortunately, these deficits will likely require and result in ongoing spending reductions, revenue increases, or both. In all likelihood, challenging times await all Californians...and as history within the state has demonstrated over and over again...not the least of which are some of the state's most vulnerable, persons with I/DD.

DHE CELEBRATES DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH

In honor and recognition of the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law on July 26, 1990, Disability Pride Month is an annual celebration of the passage of this landmark legislation that broke down barriers to inclusion in society for persons with disabilities.



For years and generations, people with disabilities have been misunderstood, maligned, marginalized, and mistreated. Attacks on their basic human rights have been commonplace and the history of treatment of persons within and throughout the disability community is marked by segregation, discrimination, and unspeakable atrocities. The ADA banned discrimination based on disability in all aspects of public life. As a result, persons with disabilities could no longer be denied access to jobs, schools, or transportation. Further, the law also includes protections in private places generally open to the public, such as restaurants and movie theaters. The ADA was, indeed, life-changing and most definitely celebration-worthy!

Disability Pride was first celebrated in 1990, the year that the ADA was signed into law. That same year, the first Disability Pride Day was held in Boston. The first official celebration of Disability Pride Month occurred in July 2015, in recognition of the 25th anniversary of the ADA. Since that time, Disability Pride Month has been celebrated annually in cities across the country.

The original Disability Pride flag was created in 2019 by writer Ann Magill, who has cerebral palsy. Issues with the initial design that triggered symptoms in individuals with visually triggered disabilities, prompted a redesign to the present day flag, as seen above. Flags can raise awareness and serve as a symbol of solidarity, pride, and acceptance and the Disability Flag is no exception. In fact, every aspect of the flag has meaning, representing an aspect of the disability community and their struggle to against ableist violence and abuse and to have access to and to be recognized and included within their community.

Each stripe represents members of the disability community:

Red - Physical disabilities

Gold - Neurodiversity

White - Invisible disabilities and disabilities not yet diagnosed

Blue - Emotional and psychiatric disabilities, including mental illness, anxiety, and depression

Green - Sensory disabilities, including deafness, blindness, lack of smell, lack of taste, audio processing disorder, and all other sensory disabilities

The faded black background represents the mourning and rage for victims of ableist violence and abuse, while the diagonal band of colors cuts across the walls and barriers that have separated persons with disabilities from inclusion within their communities, also representing light and creativity cutting through the darkness.

EXEMPLARY CONTRIBUTORS HONORED BY NEOTECH



Two Desert Haven consumers were honored by Neotech Products for their contributions in helping the production department meet its mission critical goals. In a ceremony that included the employees located at the Valencia site, Neotech President Craig McCrary presented DHE consumers Irene Nellis and Vivienne Miranda with certificates of Special Recognition in thanks and appreciation of their extraordinary efforts in supporting the team.

Both Irene and Vivienne are known for their daily “can-do” attitude, their commitment to a quality job well done, and doing whatever is required to assist the production team in accomplishing its very important goals. For more than 30 years, Neotech Products has been a leader in the production of high-quality, medical products and devices commonly used in pediatric intensive care units, children’s oncology, and home health markets.

Pictured above from left to right are Neotech President Craig McCrary; DH Consumer Irene Nellis, DH Consumer Vivienne Miranda, DH Hab Crew Trainer Alejandra Ramirez; and Neotech Production Manager Netta Garcia.

THE PARTY CONTINUES



After four very long years, Desert Haven once again returned to the dance floor for the 2023 Snowflake Ball. Attendees enjoyed a fantastic meal and partied the night away to tunes spun by DJ Kevin Dobbs and the Global Spinners during a night of great festivity at the University of AV Ballroom. See the Desert Voice for additional details and pics.

THANK YOU “GIVING TUESDAY” SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all those who contributed in support of the mission of Desert Haven Enterprises during the Giving Tuesday event, sponsored by Meta on Facebook. All told, DHE received gifts of nearly \$1,000.



Created in 2012, Giving Tuesday is a global philanthropic movement that occurs on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

Check out DHE’s Facebook page next November for details.

NEW JOBS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

The following employers have recently hired consumers into regular jobs within their business:

Individual Placements

- ✓ **The Whole Wheatery** Dishwasher/Food Prep
- ✓ **Superior Grocers** Utility Clerk

Please show your appreciation to these businesses for supporting persons with developmental disabilities in achieving their career aspirations.



Desert Haven Enterprises
43437 Copeland Circle
Lancaster, CA 93535

**CELEBRATE
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The International Day of People with Disability is a United Nations-sanctioned day, celebrated annually on December 3rd. It aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life. The theme for 2023 is "United in action to rescue and achieve the sustainable development goals for, with, and by persons with disabilities."

As we celebrate this very important day, may it serve as a reminder that each of us brings something of value to the table and each of us has a valuable contribution to make to our world.

To that end, Desert Haven shall work to ensure that the hopes, dreams, and rights of persons with disabilities are made possible in a world that is inclusive, accessible and sustainable for all.



CARF ACCREDITATION

DHE currently holds a 3-year accreditation, demonstrating the highest level of achievement possible.

DHE last participated in the CARF accreditation survey process in December 2021, receiving a three year accreditation and ZERO recommendations.

Interested persons may review the most recent CARF survey report by visiting Desert Haven's website at www.deserthaven.org and clicking on "About", followed by clicking on "Accreditations".

DHE's next accreditation survey will likely occur sometime in March/April 2024.

**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS IN
VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND
COMMUNITY-BASED EMPLOYMENT**



Desert Haven Enterprises thanks its partnering employers within both the Antelope and Santa Clarita Valleys who make it possible for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to realize their hopes and dreams for a lifetime of independence, success, and fulfillment in the job and employment setting of their choosing.

PAID INTERNSHIP (PIP) PLACEMENTS

The following employers have recently brought on board consumers into internship positions within their business:

Internships

- ✓ **Walgreens (East Lancaster)** (3) Retail Stocker Positions
- ✓ **Uptown Cheapskate** Retail Associate Position
- ✓ **C-CAT Computer** Technician Apprentice
- ✓ **Department of Rehabilitation** Office Assistant

Please show your appreciation to these businesses for supporting persons with developmental disabilities in achieving their career aspirations.

Mission Statement

Desert Haven Enterprises, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to developing, enhancing, and promoting the capabilities of persons with developmental disabilities.

The primary objective of the agency is to empower and equip persons served to become independent, self-sufficient, fully-integrated participants within their community in keeping with their individual hopes, dreams, aspirations, and choices.