



# The Connect

**dbvi** Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
Education • Employment • Independence

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## VIB Employee of the Year

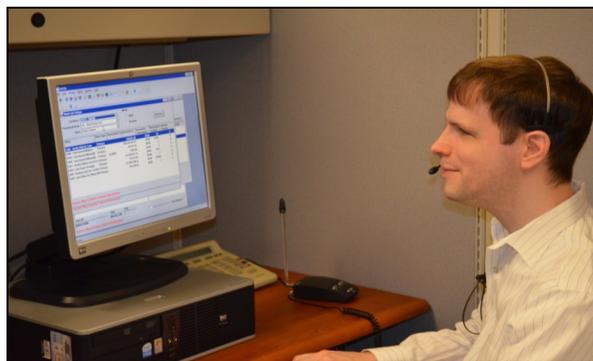
**J**ason Stradone was selected from a field of impressive nominees as VIB's Employee of the Year, competing nationally for the 2012 Peter J. Salmon Award. Jason and his wife, will be honored along with nominees from other affiliates at the October 2012 NIB/NAEPB National Conference in Baltimore. His supervisor remarked that his performance exemplifies the attributes that reinforce a positive image of vocational rehabilitation employment enabling VIB to meet the mission's objectives.

Jason joined the Court Debt Collections Office at the Department of Taxation in 1999. His customer service experience as a Market Research Associate for Circuit City provided a sound foundation for negotiating payment with debtors to collect and resolve delinquent court

debts. VIB employees represent almost one-quarter of the total CDCO workforce that serves 263 court jurisdictions collecting over 33 million dollars in fiscal 2011.

The IT staff at TAX relies on him to test upgrades to their integrated telecommunications and collections systems software. Jason has been recognized by TAX in those efforts by being presented with their Golden Apple award. He is the primary person to resolve JAWS problems and to train co-workers.

Jason's sharp intellect and ability to articulate his personal vocational growth and, the considerable knowledge of CDCO has caused him to be chosen to represent VIB and TAX in presentations. The quality of his work, attitude, initiative, cooperation, attendance, dependability and job knowledge has been described as exceptional. Truly valued by the Court Debt Collections Office, Jason's representation of VIB allows VIB success in creating, maintaining and extending employment opportunities for blind Virginians.



**Jason Stradone**

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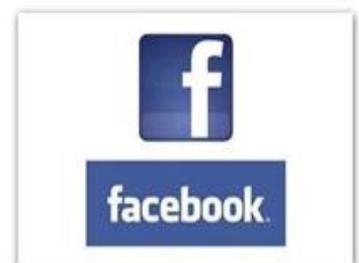
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"Really like how everyone is so welcoming. This is a good environment for my first work experience"- Josh Angelo

"Employees are always happy and nice"-Jonell Floyd

"Good people...I like the job. Would like to work here if I lived in Richmond"- Joseph Benjamin





### Tackling L.I.F.E. head on



**Oscar  
Monteil**



**Joseph  
Benjamin**



**Austin  
Collins**

VIB-R Helps Prepare High School Students for L.I.F.E.

By: Megan O'Toole

Each Summer, new L.I.F.E. is breathed into VIB-R as we partner with the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) as an employment training facility for high school students with visual impairments. L.I.F.E. (Learning Independence, Feeling Empowered) is a four-week residential training program for high school students with visual impairments to prepare for life after high school. The purpose of L.I.F.E. is to provide high school students with direction in making the transition from high school to work or further education by providing information

about the "real world" of work, to help students recognize their responsibility in the process of seeking and maintaining employment, and to begin to develop realistic employment goals through assistance in identifying personal interests and abilities.

Previous participants have commented that the program was the best summer program that they have ever been a part of, and they look forward to a continued relationship with VRCBVI. Other participants enjoyed the classes and how they "get you to think and challenge yourself".

The program will run from July 8, 2012 through August 3, 2012 with employment training at VIB running from July 20, 2012 through August 3, 2012.



**Veronica  
Gaspa**



**Jonell  
Floyd**



**Ravern  
Turner**



**Josh  
Angelo**



## Striving for a better life

In 1985 seeking a better life for his family, **Santos Flores** left El Salvador setting out for America

Twelve years later he had lost most of his vision to Glaucoma. A cook for 26 years, Santos was sad to leave Gino's Pizzeria (known for its spaghetti ala Gino, chicken Stromboli and pepperoni pizza sub). He entered a three month work evaluation at VIB and quickly displayed the hard work and dedication that had served him so well as a cook.

He always makes the extra effort at VIB and prides himself with perfect attendance. As the end of his evaluation period approached, VIB asked him to stay on while his DBVI counselor continued working with him in search of employment.

Learning writing instrument assembly, glove and spice packaging in Richmond during the day, Santos was studying American history and political system at night. One April day Santos asked for a day off. On April 18, 2012 in a for-

mal ceremony at the Federal Courthouse in downtown Richmond, he received his American Citizenship.

Recently, a position has opened-up in the Spice Department. Santos has entered into training as a Spice Filling Machine Operator. A camera and computer screen is being set-up to accommodate his level of vision. The portable camera can be moved from one filling machine to the other. He can now check machine setting using a 24 inch monitor allowing him to set-up and make adjustments.

VIB congratulates Santos on his tenacity and welcomes him to our diverse American Family!



**Santos Flores**

## 212 Pounds!!

The members of the VIB-C Employee Committee has asked me to send their thanks for your support in making their first food drive a success. All total they

collected 212 lbs of food for the Thomas Jefferson Area Food bank. Helping the people in our community is another way of helping VIB to get their

message out; Our people not only make great products, they make good neighbors too. Thanks again for your support.



**Left to right:**  
**Diane Hawkins**  
**Jeff Barksdale**  
**Peggy Parks**  
**Ronan Little**

## Summer Camp visits VIB Charlottesville

On July 11, 2012 VIB Charlottesville plant was visited by a group of summer campers. These campers were from the surrounding areas.

This was many of the camper's first time seeing people with disabilities at work, and many were very excited about the opportunity. There were tours and eating a snack with blindfolds.

After the visit, the campers were asked to express their thoughts and what they experienced thorough art. They drew images of VIB on the Expression Wall on the mall in Charlottesville.



**Campers at VIB**



**VIB C**

1102 Monticello Rd  
Charlottesville VA 22902  
434-295-5168



[www.vibonline.org](http://www.vibonline.org)



**VIB R**

1535 High St  
Richmond VA 23220  
804-786-2056

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Service Division is recruiting for the following;

Working under a service agreement at the Dept. of Taxation in the Richmond Court Debt Collections Office, the **Collections Specialist** provides resolution of delinquent Court Debt accounts utilizing an integrated telecommunication and automated collections system. Research activities through the use of multiple databases requires excellent computer skills. Exceptional accuracy and attention to detail required. Good communication skills and able to work as a part of a team. Must pass security clearance. \$22,143 - \$28,283

**Contract Specialists** positions are available in the Richmond metro area and anticipated in northern Virginia in the fall. A security clearance is required prior to employment. Must be accepted into the NIB Contract Specialist training program and complete Defense Acquisition University on-line courses. An associate degree or comparable experience with extensive experience in MS Word, Excel, Power Point Outlook and Internet Explorer is required. \$ 34,078 – \$46,533

To be considered for these opportunities, submit a state application to VIB, R C Bohrer, 1535 High Street, Richmond, VA 23220.

[Richard.Bohrer@DBVI.Virginia.Gov](mailto:Richard.Bohrer@DBVI.Virginia.Gov)

**Displayed products**

The next time you're at the VIB headquarters, plan to stop by and visit the new product showroom located inside the Charlottesville plant. Designed to showcase the items manufactured at both the Richmond and Charlottesville facilities, the displays show the many products

manufactured and assembled by VIB employees. The walls are covered with pictures of employees doing their job in making the great products that represent VIB.

The showroom has been visited by customers, school groups, and has been used as a background for several media interviews.



**New display area in VIB  
Charlottesville plant**