



David Horton with several of our former Student Enrichment Experience (SEE) students who are now full-time employees. Pictured L-R, Aisha Barnes, Richard Fenner, DeAndre Kellman, Tevin Price, Miracle Brown.

On behalf of the more than 900 employees working at IFB Solutions, I want to thank you for supporting our organization as a customer, vendor, donor and community volunteer.

— David Horton

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, a time to emphasize the critical importance of our mission to provide employment, training and services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. **The unemployment rate for working-age adults who are blind is 70 percent**, meaning that without the AbilityOne program and nonprofit agencies like IFB Solutions, 7 out of 10 of our employees would not be able to find work.

The path to employment for those who are blind can be frustrating, but here at IFB Solutions we are finding innovative ways to make that process better. One way is by preparing young people who are blind to enter the workforce with the necessary skills, independence and confidence.

Our Student Enrichment Experience (SEE) started nearly a decade ago with a small group of school children, and now five of those students are working here at IFB Solutions. These same students also received services through our Community Low Vision Centers.

This month and throughout the year, I hope you'll join us in building awareness for the vital community services and programs offered by IFB Solutions. I truly believe it will be through this continuum of services that we will grow more opportunities both in the workforce and in life for children and adults who are blind or visually impaired.

David Horton
President and CEO, IFB Solutions

From SEE to Employee: Miracle Brown



Miracle first connected with IFB as a young teen at our Community Low Vision Center and is now a full-time employee.

Miracle Brown's parents had never heard of IFB Solutions, then known as Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind, but they knew they needed the services of a low vision specialist who could see their daughter at IFB's Community Low Vision Center. During the appointment, they learned about IFB's brand new SEE (Student Enrichment Experience) program and thought it might be a great opportunity for Miracle, a middle school student, who became SEE's very first participant.

What started as a little-known address, would soon become Miracle's second home as she regularly attended SEE's afterschool programs and summer camps. Years later, as Miracle prepared to enter her senior year of high school,

she talked about her future plans with IFB employee Chris Flynt who encouraged her to consider a work-study path that would enable her to learn valuable job skills while completing her high school degree.

With those skills, Miracle was then able to apply for, and land, a job in IFB's marker department in 2010. She worked in that department for several years while also learning how to become a sewing machine operator.

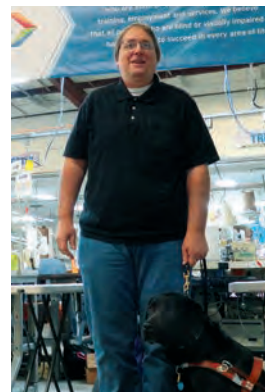
Now 25 years old, Miracle works full-time as a sewing machine operator in the Ripstop Airman Battle Uniform (RABU) department. She still participates with the SEE program as an adult mentor encouraging the students to try new things just as she did more than a decade ago.

Proud to Have Veterans Working at IFB



Air Force Veteran Billy Trout is a Fixture in Little Rock

Billy Trout is a veteran of the United States Air Force, where he served as a military police officer. With IFB for eight years, he has worked in many facets of the facility – paper goods, sewing T-shirts, folding T-shirts, building shipping boxes and more. While other employers wouldn't give him a chance due to being legally blind, Billy is thankful to IFB for continuing to work with him to adapt his position to accommodate for his condition. At 81 years old, his family constantly pushes him to retire, but he said ***"I love to work. It's something I can get up every morning and come to and be happy with. I don't know what I'd do without IFB."***



Army Veteran Jim Davis works in Asheville Impulse Merchandising

Jim Davis, with IFB for four years, works in IMP where he barcodes, bags and seals merchandise that ships to commissaries worldwide. An Army veteran, he's happy he can help other service men and women and their families by providing these products. Jim is legally blind and only sees shadows. His dog Dudley, a four-year-old black lab, gives him his independence, companionship and unconditional love. ***"Working here feels very good; it's like working with a family,"*** he said.

An Advocate for Employment & Opportunity

A perspective on employment from David Hampton, IFB Vice President of Human Resources.

IFB Solutions is the country's largest employer of people who are blind or visually impaired, and we are a national leader in recruiting and retaining this group. We recruit throughout the country and go to great lengths to assure our employees are successful.

The unemployment rate for working adults who are blind is 70 percent, so finding a job is extremely difficult. We provide competitive salaries and good benefits for all employees. For many of our employees, working here is a life-changing experience.

“For those who are blind or visually impaired, we will make an opportunity available for them. Our focus is finding a place for everyone.”

Our HR team is top-notch, and we use many creative recruiting strategies to locate potential employees who are blind. Some of those include working with schools for the blind, employment counselors, personal contacts and references from employees and others. We also go out into the community to create greater awareness of our mission.

We offer more than jobs for people who are blind or visually impaired; we assist with living arrangements and offer excellent training and job modifications to accommodate each person's needs. Most employees also find a cherished social network once they join the organization—this leads to an encouraging community of friends and helps create more independence.



David Hampton (L) spends a few minutes catching up with Optical Lab technician Chris Palmieri.

Chris Palmieri is a great example of living out our mission of changing lives through employment. He came to us from Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts. Our HR team partners with the school to offer coaching, mentoring and opportunities to showcase job opportunities. Chris was eager to learn more about IFB, so he and his mom traveled to Winston-Salem and toured our facility. Soon thereafter, Chris accepted a job and now works in the IFB Optical Lab making eyeglasses for military veterans. Outside of work, he enjoys the freedom of having his own apartment and is active with a local church choir. Chris is making his mark in our community thanks to a job opportunity that never saw his lack of sight as a limitation.



IFB Blind Veterans Support Group Meets NASCAR Legend Richard Petty

IFB employees who are part of the Blind Veterans Support Group joined NASCAR legend Richard Petty for the Randleman Lake Top Shelf Fishin' Festival earlier this summer. The annual event was hosted by the Petty Family Foundation and sponsored by IFB Solutions. Volunteers supplied boats, equipment and a fishing license for the day so wounded warriors and disabled veterans from across North Carolina could enjoy a special day of fishing and recognition.

This fall, the Blind Veterans Support Group will once again sell specially-designed T-shirts to benefit The Wounded Warrior Project. The last sale raised more than \$1,000. (Additional information is available on the IFB Solutions Facebook page.)

Making an Impact *in Our Communities*



Jobs Created by Extreme Weather Outer Layer (EWOL) Jacket and Poncho Liner Contracts

Our Asheville and Little Rock facilities are partnering to produce more than 1,000 EWOL jackets each month for the U.S. armed forces. This jacket is the most complex sewing operation we have implemented to date, with more than 200 manufacturing steps involved in each piece. In Asheville, a new order of more than 90,000 poncho liners for our troops is creating more jobs for people who are blind.

Durham Community Low Vision Center Now Open

The IFB Community Low Vision Center (CLVC) that opened this fall in Durham, N.C., is our largest CLVC footprint. It includes meeting space available to community organizations that work with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Lynn Shields, IFB Solutions low vision technician, is staffing the new Durham location.



Bingo for Bags

The IFB Solutions facility in Little Rock hosted its second annual Bingo for Bags fundraiser on September 21. Presented by Allison Ball Allstate Insurance, the event welcomed almost 200 guests at Next Level Events. Guests enjoyed a high-energy evening filled with delicious food, a silent auction, and 10 rounds of bingo with winners scoring luxury designer handbags donated by the local community, including the grand prize - a Louis Vuitton tote.

New SEE H2O Abilities Summer Camp Hits Lake Norman

The rosters were full for this year's SEE (Student Enrichment Experience) Summer Camps, including several participants from outside North Carolina who learned about these unique programs for young people who are blind or visually impaired. The students had a blast hiking, ziplining, rafting, swimming, paddle boarding and more in the mountain-based SEE Adventure Camp and the new H2O Abilities Camp at Lake Norman.



IFB First to Use 3D Printer for Specialty Eyeglass Lenses

IFB and Luxexcel of Belgium have signed a contract to produce 3D print ophthalmic lenses in the Winston-Salem Optical Lab. This new technology means that we can deliver specialty lenses needed by people with low vision in a matter of days. The Luxexcel technology will be operated by employees who are blind or visually impaired.

IFB also received good news in our fight to preserve jobs for our optical employees when the Court directed the VA to continue all current IFB contracts until the appeals process is resolved.

National Blind Idol Winner also a Former SEE Camper

Jordan Scheffer, 18, of Asheville, NC, won the national Blind Idol singing competition in August. Jordan performed songs by Adele and Asa in her semifinal competition and two songs by Jimmy Cliff in the finals. Jordan has participated in IFB's SEE camps since they began a decade ago. She received a grand prize package valued at \$3,000, including recording time in a professional studio.



N.C. Labor Commissioner Presents Safety Awards

Commissioner Cherie Berry awarded IFB the North Carolina Gold Safety Award for the seventh consecutive year and presented a special plaque for one million hours without a lost time accident from November 2015 – December 2016. She also toured the plant with Safety Committee employees to learn more about how IFB maintains its long-standing safety record, and participated in Sensitivity to Blindness activities.

2017 Honors and Awards



CLAYTON SANDERS

Winston-Salem Employee of the Year

South Carolina native Clayton learned about IFB while attending a computer class at the SC Commission for the Blind. In 2009, he started at IFB as a sewing machine operator, a position he enjoys today. He chairs the IFB Transportation Committee, representing 100+ IFB employees who use the local para-transit system. An enthusiastic bowler, he's a member of the Forsyth Blind Bowlers.



GRANT WEATHERS

***Asheville Employee of the Year
and Milton J. Samuelson
Career Achiever Award***

Grant, a former golf professional, became legally blind quite suddenly in his 20s and was unable to work. After two years, he discovered IFB and was hired in the Impulse Merchandising department. He was promoted to Low Vision Technician at Asheville's Community Low Vision Center. Today he manages the retail store helping clients use low vision technology to maximize their vision.



HEATHER HOFFMAN

Little Rock Employee of the Year

Joining IFB in 2009, Heather initially worked in the Bandoleer and Paper Departments. She is currently a sleeve machine operator in the T-shirt department where she sews more than 3,000 T-shirt sleeves each day. A loyal and flexible employee, she also fills in as the Little Rock facility receptionist.



TIMOTHY PAYNE

***Delmer Wall
Outstanding Service Award***

A member of the Winston-Salem facilities team and a first responder, Tim is closely involved with safety, inspections and employee transportation for off-campus activities. He joined IFB in 2009 working on machinery and then in the Mattress department prior to facilities. He is often recognized for his care and compassion in maintaining his co-workers' safety and well-being.



HANNAH AINSWORTH

***Kathryn W. Garner
Volunteer of the Year Award***

A dedicated IFB volunteer, Hannah is especially passionate about the IFB Community Low Vision Center. She helps the Low Vision team at the Winston-Salem location and assists with special events. Hannah is a student at Wake Forest University.



W. ROBERT NEWELL

***Commodore Funderburk
Visionary Award***

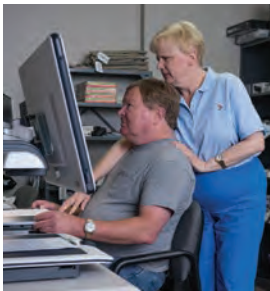
Bob is CEO of Franklin Street Partners and former President of Wachovia Trust Company. He was instrumental in helping IFB grow for 15 years. He chaired the capital campaign to expand the Winston-Salem facility and guided IFB through the Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind acquisition. He's served many terms on our Board of Directors, including Chairman, and as a member of the Investment and Finance committees.

OUR MISSION

IFB Solutions provides opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired in need of training, employment and services.

We believe all people who are blind or visually impaired have the right to succeed in every area of life.

**Community Low
Vision Centers**



**Student Enrichment
Experience (SEE)**

**Training & Upward
Mobility**



Employment

IFB Solutions



ifbsolutions.org

WINSTON-SALEM FACILITY
7730 North Point Drive
Winston-Salem, NC 27106
336.759.0551

ASHEVILLE FACILITY
240 Sardis Road
Asheville, NC 28806
828.667.9778

LITTLE ROCK FACILITY
6818 Murray Street
Little Rock, AR 72209
501.562.2222

