



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Anastasia Powell

apowell@ifbsolutions.org, M 336-456-9824

IFB Solutions Honors Employees of the Year, The Winston-Salem Foundation and Community Leaders for Contributions to Non-Profit's Success

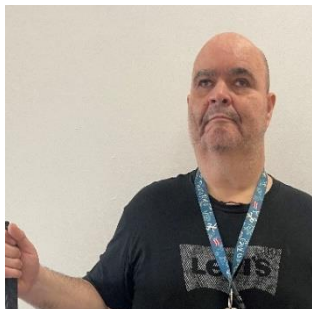
Winston-Salem, NC (May 25, 2022)—IFB Solutions, the largest employer of people who are blind in the U.S., recently recognized its Employees of the Year, partners and volunteers who play a vital role in the nonprofit's mission of employment, training and services.

Luis Quiles of Winston-Salem named overall IFB Solutions Employee of the Year. Luis, who was born with ocular histoplasmosis, began his career at the IFB operations in Puerto Rico. After several years, he decided to move to Winston-Salem for additional upward mobility opportunities. He currently works in the role of Lead Shipper for IFB's optical department. Luis obtained a degree in Business Administration from DeVry College. He is a proficient Spanish/English translator, is involved with the community and has many interests, including being a member of the IFB Solutions bowling team.



Jake Padalino named IFB Solutions Asheville Employee of the Year. Jake has never let his vision loss limit his opportunities or hobbies. He works as a Sewing Machine Operator in IFB's Poncho Liner department and has spent time training and working in almost every department in the Asheville operations. He's also trained as one of IFB's First Responders. Outside of work, Jake enjoys spending time on the river either in his kayak or on a paddle board. His love of the outdoors and infectious personality have made him one of the most popular counselors with IFB's Student Enrichment Experience (S.E.E.) summer camps where he helps lead youth activities.

Wesley Hillman named IFB Solutions Little Rock Employee of the Year. Wesley is passionate about the opportunities created by IFB Solutions for individuals like him who are blind or visually impaired. He joined IFB in 2018 and operates multiple machines in the Paper department. He is especially inspired that so many of IFB's products are for the military. Both his grandfather and his great-grandfather served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and he knows they would be proud of his work at IFB.



Carlos Alicea named IFB Solutions Puerto Rico Operation Employee of the Year. Carlos was born with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), a hereditary eye disease causing progressive vision loss. As he grew older, Carlos took job training courses and secured a position as an Automatic Machine Operator with IFB Solutions working on various sewing machine and textile lines. Recognized as an exceptional team player, he thrives on producing quality work and meeting production requirements.

Melissa Tuttle named IFB Solutions Career Achiever of the Year.

Growing up with low vision caused by nystagmus and cataracts, Melissa focused on her education and a future career. After graduating from Western Carolina University with a major in Computer Information Systems, she worked for several years before joining IFB Solutions in 2011. Today, Melissa is a member of IFB's Supply Chain team and is known for her savvy computer skills and attention to detail.



Mary Hunter of Asheville named IFB Solutions Delmer Wall Outstanding Service Award. This award is given to a sighted employee who has made an impactful difference in the lives of people who are blind or visually impaired. Mary joined IFB in 2015 and is the Human Resources Manager for the Asheville operations. Her inspiring dedication to the IFB employee community goes far beyond her responsibilities at work. She is always willing to lend a helping hand and often provides rides for employees so they can make critical appointments.

Tom Serrin honored as IFB Solutions Commodore Funderburk Visionary Award recipient.

This award is named for the late Commodore Funderburk who was blind, deaf and mute and worked for IFB for 40 years without missing a day. It recognizes the individual or group who has helped solidify a future for IFB Solutions and, more importantly, create opportunities for people who are blind. IFB's mission is personal to Tom. He served in the U.S. Marines and has lived with a vision impairment since adulthood. He has been a member of IFB's Board of Directors since 2015 and is passionate about sharing how philanthropic support to IFB directly impacts the lives of thousands of people who are blind or visually impaired. Tom is the inaugural chair of IFB's Development and Awareness Committee working to raise additional dollars to expand funding for IFB's community programs and low-vision services.



The Winston-Salem Foundation named IFB Solutions Partner of the Year. For more than a century, The Winston-Salem Foundation has partnered with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, and beyond. Through generous funding from the Foundation, IFB has been able to expand its job training programs, purchase and implement new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software and expand its S.E.E. Program for school-age children. Accepting the award on behalf of The Winston-Salem Foundation were President LaTida Smith (pictured right) and Program Officer Charlie Gardner.

ABOUT IFB SOLUTIONS®

[IFB Solutions](#) is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1936 as Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind, and it provides employment, training and services for people who are blind or visually impaired. As the largest employer of people who are blind in the United States, IFB has manufacturing operations in Winston-Salem, N.C., Asheville, N.C., and Little Rock, Ark., in addition to nearly 20 tactical gear and office supply [Base Supply Center](#) stores. Primary business activities include production of military tactical gear, prescription eyewear at the [Twenty200 Optical Lab](#), products for home and business under the [Pinnacle Mercantile](#) Amazon storefront, and call center operations. IFB Solutions funds employee training and services as well as [community programs](#) through grants and private donations, making possible summer camps, afterschool programs and activities for children who are blind. The IFB [Community Low Vision Centers](#) in North Carolina and in Little Rock, Ark., are open to the public. ifbsolutions.org