

Geraldine Wallace Annual Report Profile

Geraldine Wallace has confronted many challenges on her path to a brighter future. She struggled early on as a result of being born with congenital glaucoma and yet she was never discouraged. She lost her right eye in 1973 which led her to seek services through the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BVISI). That's when Geraldine's path led her to VGS.

With limited eyesight in her remaining eye, Geraldine knew that she could not give up and that she did not want to rely on others to take care of her. She started in Sewing Training and Manufacturing Training programs at VGS. She was hired at VGS, working in the contract shop manufacturing Doby pads. She was eventually laid off due to the loss of the contract. Geraldine refused to give up. She volunteered at several organizations throughout the city during her time away from work. But that wasn't enough. She got back in touch with VGS and was able to return to work in the contract shop. "I liked working at VGS," said Geraldine. "I wanted to come back because I knew that I could work and I wanted to work at VGS."

Geraldine's commitment and determination has helped her to overcome barriers on her pathway to success and employment in the VGS Sewing Department.

Geraldine has participated in the success of several AbilityOne sewing projects; including the production of Armed Forces dress uniform slacks and skirts. She is also proficient on the surging machine and is currently working in the packaging area where she folds the garments and places them into storage bags to be packed and shipped. She has to rely on touch and feel to perform her job.

Inspirational people should not go unnoticed. Geraldine won the 2008 NISH North Central Region William M. Urdane Award. This award recognizes an individual with a severe disability who has exhibited outstanding achievement and exceptional character within the AbilityOne workplace.

Because of her dedication, Geraldine has flourished in an environment where there is consistent change of procedures and techniques. She never complains. She only tries her best to learn her duties and then get the job done. She is always willing to cross-train whenever needed. Despite her barriers, she truly believes that all skills are attainable.

Geraldine is in the process of getting her GED and she still finds time to volunteer at a local hospital and an area food bank. Geraldine has a bright spirit, and although at first may seem shy, she believes in helping others. She presents herself as an example of what individuals with barriers can do. Geraldine has worked extremely hard to overcome circumstances that would have discouraged anyone else. And above all, she keeps going, despite the fact that her eyesight and hearing are failing. She doesn't see her disability as an insurmountable challenge. She merely looks at it as a hurdle she must overcome on her pathway to a brighter future.