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**Please Return to:**  
**DISABILITY NETWORK/ LAKESHORE**  
 426 Century Lane  
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[www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org)

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## Events

**2011 Annual Campaign is in progress.**  
 Affirming our commitment to fostering  
 a diverse community.

## Dancing Wheels

February 4, 2011  
[www.dnlakeshore.org/events.html](http://www.dnlakeshore.org/events.html)

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## Join Us on the Web

Disability Network/Lakeshore is on Facebook,  
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THE INITIATOR  
 DECEMBER 2010

MORE than you think.

“WE WANT PEOPLE TO SET THEIR OWN GOALS, BUT WE CAN HELP THEM DEVELOP A PLAN TO GET THERE AND IDENTIFY THE STEPS TO ACCOMPLISH THOSE GOALS.”

—RICK DIAMOND

Disability Network provides support to employers and individuals, including education and awareness training, ADA assessments, job search support, networking, coaching and mentoring.

A Newsletter by Disability Network/Lakeshore

# ROLLING OUT A RIB BUSINESS

Brigitte Wooten is the owner of the small business Jus' Ribs & More located in Holland, MI. But before she connected with Disability Network/Lakeshore, she nearly missed the opportunity to become an entrepreneur.

Rick Diamond, Director of Employment Services, says, "When I met Brigitte, she was selling barbeque from a concession wagon. Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) had referred her with the intent of helping her find full-time employment, but as we got to know her, we realized she had a passion for business. With support and mentoring, we knew she could turn what she already had into a way to make a living. She convinced MRS that this should be her vocational goal."

Wooten is now making plans to grow her concession into a take-out business, complete with employees of her own. Through regular meetings with Disability

Network, she's been developing a formal business plan and making connections with the local Chamber and business development groups.

"It's not like we had to sit down and figure out what she wanted to do," explains Diamond. "It's more like figuring out how we can implement her goals. Brigitte is driving her own plan. She knows what she wants and is really the one moving this forward. Instead of telling her what to do, we're discussing options. I'm part of her sounding board as she brainstorms and asks for feedback. She really owns her goal and holds herself accountable."

Wooten is excited about the new direction her future is taking. "This is something I've wanted for several years," she says, "and I thought, why don't I take the next step? I do have some fears, but I can run them by Rick, and he walks me through them. He

gives me feedback and suggestions and allows me to make the final decisions. He's like my mentor now—a great support for the business and me personally."

Diamond considers this relationship a great example of what Disability Network can do. "My role is to coach, mentor, collaborate, and network," he says. "We want people to set their own goals, but we can help them develop a plan to get there and identify the steps to accomplish those goals."

Wooten has also offered to share her experience with other individuals who are interested in small business development. "She's been there, done that, and is more than willing to pay it forward when she's in the position to hire or share what she knows," says Diamond.

Brigitte explains, "I strongly believe in being involved in the community and think it could be a great asset if I could hire someone else with a disability. It may seem difficult, but if we just continue to put one foot in front of the other, we can accomplish the full picture. I feel great about what I'm doing now."

**Do you have business expertise to share with a future entrepreneur? Disability Network would love to hear from you. Contact Rick Diamond [rick@dnlakeshore.org](mailto:rick@dnlakeshore.org).**



"I strongly believe in being involved in the community and think it could be a great asset if I could hire someone else with a disability. It may seem difficult, but if we just continue to put one foot in front of the other, we can accomplish the full picture."  
-Brigitte Wooten

**At Disability Network/Lakeshore, we believe everyone can participate, contribute and belong. To build a community where this is possible, we need you. Please include Disability Network/Lakeshore in your charitable giving this year.**

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