

# Park Slope

Windsor Terrace / Prospect Heights  
A Courier-Life Publication

## COURIER

### RDS Delivers the Goods And Opportunities For the Disabled

A partnership between a Brooklyn social services agency and a prominent Brooklyn-born company that recently received the prestigious Year 2000 Crain's Small Business Award for continuing support to the disabled while developing a growing business, is celebrating its fifth anniversary of service to Brooklyn's disabled people who strive to become independent.

The Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, a voluntary social services agency established in 1866 with 21 sites in Brooklyn, and RDS Messenger Service, with 100 employees, half of whom are persons with disabilities, have worked together to give hope and opportunities for achievement to people who had little to look forward to. RDS provides document storage/retrieval, messenger services and mail management and temporary employees for building owners.

Ask Donna Santarsiero, executive director of the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, what she thinks about Larry Zogby, RDS Messenger Service's president, and she says the Bureau found someone who cares about the health of the community and has made it his business to provide opportunities to be productive for those who have been left behind in society.

Zogby, on the other hand, who was born in Brooklyn, says it's enough for him to know that he and his company are giving back to the community by hiring disabled workers.

Ask Joey Corchado, who has a depressive condition, what he thinks about the Brooklyn Bureau and Zogby and he says, "They gave me a chance. They helped me to be a good worker. Whenever I was discouraged, they were there to support me. They gave me the kind of opportunity I thought I would never have."

Since 1995, RDS Delivery Service has hired disabled workers trained for competitive employment in the Brooklyn Bureau's

training facilities for disabled men and women who desire to enter the world of work and have never had a chance to develop job skills.

They are learning disabled, mildly mentally retarded, or trapped by emotional problems because they've been isolated and deprived of everything most people take for granted, such as respect, money enough to buy food and shelter, and opportunity to be productive.

"They come to the Bureau thinking they'll never be a part of the world of work," Santarsiero says. "In our training programs, they learn they can be employable. And when they're ready for a job, our employment specialists find a job for each that fits their skills. We make sure the placement makes sense for the worker and the employer."

That's where Zogby enters the picture. He found that hiring disabled workers was good business and as well as a good thing to do. Starting in 1995, Zogby began hiring workers trained by the not-for-profit social services agency. His formula for success is simple - "We work one on one with each new recruit, training them for the job they will do at their individual skill level and pace. We find them as productive as any of our employees, and their commitment to excellence on the job is outstanding. After all, this is the first time many of them have been given a chance to work, and they do everything possible to succeed."

This commitment to disabled workers has given new life to those who once thought that life would pass them by. Zogby and his brother, David, who co-owns the firm, have received many awards including the Employer Sensitivity Award from the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, the Recognition Award from New York State's program for people with disabilities, the Employer of Distinction Award from the Metropolitan Chapter of the Rehabilitation



Larry and David Zogby.

Association, as well as the Crain's Small Business Award.

RDS Delivery Service was established in Brooklyn but moved to 436 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan in 1986 to be closer to their customers. The Zogbys are able and willing to tell any employer how hiring disabled persons makes good business sense. As part of his effort to publicize the advantages of hiring disabled people, Zogby has joined the Business Advisory Council of the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, a group of prominent business men and women who

advise on Bureau work training operations and outreach to other businesses in behalf of the Bureau's disabled clients.

At the Brooklyn Bureau, more than 200 employers like Larry and David work with the agency, providing competitive employment opportunities to the Bureau's trainees.

For more information, call Deborah Washington, director of placement services, at 310-5792 or write to her at the Brooklyn Bureau of Community Service, 285 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, New York 11217.