

Governor Markell Visits the DVI Instructional Material & Resource Center

The Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Instructional Materials and Resource Center (IMRC) in Wilmington were honored to have special visitors on June 1, 2015. Governor Jack Markell, Department of Health & Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf and founder of Specialisterne Thorkil Sonne stopped by to see Brett Reilly at work and take a tour of the facility.



Figure 1: Group tour of Material Center

Specialisterne (which translates from Danish as “The Specialists”) is a social business concept originally founded in Denmark in 2004. The objective is to create one million jobs worldwide for people on the autism spectrum, using an assessment and training model unique to their program. After reading about the Specialisterne initiative in the New York Times, Governor Jack Markell invited the Specialist People Foundation to meet local stakeholders in Delaware to discuss the opportunities for Specialisterne in Delaware. Governor Markell chaired the meetings and the result was a strong commitment among stakeholders to support the establishment of Specialisterne in Delaware as a hub for the Mid-Atlantic region and the US.



Figure 2: Governor Markell & Thorkil Sonne

Brett Reilly is alumnus of the very first Specialisterne class in Delaware which launched in June 2013. Brett’s unique attention to detail and ability to learn quickly made him an excellent candidate for the program. Not long after completing his training, Brett became an employee of DVI and has been at the IMRC ever since. According to DVI Director Daniel Madrid, “Brett is an essential part of the services we provide to

people who have visual impairments and to the community.” Brett is part of the IMRC production team that converts books and publications into Braille and other accessible formats. He also assists with maintaining the inventory of books and equipment which are housed within the IMRC library. This multi-step process requires a great deal of focus and attention to detail. Properly converting materials is essential to the education of students who are blind or severely visually impaired. Once converted, the accessible instructional materials are provided to educators who work with students in kindergarten through twelfth grade students throughout the State of Delaware. “It’s an important role that requires a lot of computer work, attention to detail and highly-developed organizational skills.” states Madrid, “We are lucky to have someone as dedicated and talented as Brett.”

Director Madrid arranged for the Material Center visit so Governor Markell and Thorkil Sonne had the opportunity to witness first-hand how the partnership they created has benefited Brett who is just one of many Delawareans who have unique talents and a lot to offer employers.