



Living Our Core Values

Steps to Success Luncheon Speech

April 26, 2017

My name is Julie Hoff, and I am the Executive Director of Daily Work. And I welcome all you all to the 5th Annual Daily Work Steps to Success Luncheon. There were many people who helped make this event possible, but I want to make a special shout out to all of our table hosts. Your unwavering support brought us all together today. Thank you.

I also want to give special round of applause to the [St. Stephen's zAmya Theater Project](#). Your performance brought to life our basic human need to better understand each other. Isn't that the power of theater?

In just a few short minutes, you shined a light on our desire to lift above the everyday judgements that trap us in fear and frustration. You demonstrated our strong desire to reach out and form real connections with each other and showed us how being of service to each other is as significant to the giver as to the receiver.

Here at Daily Work we believe in the power of human connection, of community, and most importantly, we believe in the power of daily work. Daily Work is our name. It is our core value. It is what we do.

- Having daily work as a core value means that we value dependable, sustainable work that supports us on a human level.
- It is not sporadic work that barely puts food on the table or work that threatens to dry up the minute the baby is sick or the bus is late.
- It is work that gives us security through paying a living wage, in an environment that promotes diversity, dignity and respect and values us as human beings who have both something to contribute as well as needs that must be provided for.

We all want work that gives us back all that we put in. Work that lifts us up and provides meaning. Work that moves us out of poverty, fear and shame. Work that gives hope, so we can invest more in ourselves, in our jobs and in the companies that we work for.

Take a moment. Think about what your personal, daily work means to you? The role that this one thing plays in your life every day? We have all felt the empowerment of working each day, and this is the single foundation that guides our programs and culture.

Those who embrace the concept of daily work as a core value become our job seekers, our corporate partners, our volunteers and our financial supporters. By rallying around this one value, Daily Work can break through the obstacles that our diverse cultural backgrounds and rationalizing minds are so very good at putting in our way. We can transcend ethnic, religious, socio-economic, educational and political differences that come with the human experience.

We don't ask who is worthy, and we don't focus on criteria. We look for job seekers, corporations, volunteers and donors who value daily work, and we strive to build these connections. It is that simple. And it works.

Daily work has a number. It is 50,000. AT \$50,000 a year, things really start to change for a family of four.

At \$50,000 in income, a family of four begins to move out of poverty, and have significantly better lives. The children in these families typically:

- Complete some type of college
- More than double their average annual wages
- They eliminate their need for food stamps
- The boys are half as likely to get arrested
- And the girls are 40 percent less likely to have a baby before they're married or reach age 21

By making \$50,000 a year, a family of four begins to move out of crisis and into a better future. That is the impact that dependable, sustainable daily work can have on families.

In 2016, Daily Work put 251 people on the path toward obtaining daily work. Nearly, half of these job seekers are supporting families. Some were homeless. Three-quarters were

immigrants from other countries. Half...came to us with no job at all, while the rest were looking for jobs to get them closer to that \$50,000 mark.

However, more than half of the households our job seekers come from are surviving on less than \$20,000 per year. It takes time and dedication to build the skills necessary to get to household incomes of \$50,000 and beyond.

Achieving daily work is a journey... and as much as we want instant, sustained changes, that's just not how life works. Life is not a sprint, it takes endurance and determination to achieve success.

So how does Daily Work work? A key element is that we carefully listen to our job seekers. We let them lead the way, and we mentor their job search process. We help with resume preparation, interviewing skills, making connections to job postings, giving rides to interviews, and providing ongoing professional development. And we do it all for less. The cost for Daily work to turn a job seeker into an employee is about \$1,300, which is less than half of typical jobs programs. Now that's a great return!

Right now, America's HR Departments are in crisis. Companies are realizing that many of our work demands, protocols and processes ignore or flat out neglect the human needs of its workforce. Only 33% of American employees are engaged at work. And it is no secret that when disengagement rates are high, employee turnover is constant and growth and innovation stall.

Companies are discovering that by developing policies and practices that value employees as people, provide for their basic human needs and give them opportunities to live their values, that employee engagement goes up and the bottom line benefits.

So who are the job seekers at Daily Work? What values and skills do they bring to the workplace?

Our job seekers embody fearlessness, loyalty, self-improvement, tenacity, grit and determination. They are people who have faced a spending a night in the homeless shelter so they can achieve daily work. They are people who ride the bus for three hours to achieve daily work. They are people who have left their countries for daily work. People who have sacrificed their egos and their families to achieve daily work.

Yes, many of our clients have accents that are difficult to understand and they do not have polished presentation skills or a deep understanding of Human Resources or Management processes. But these are learned skills that can be mastered over time. A strong work ethic and good ideas can come from anywhere. Often they do not arrive in polished packages, and they are not intrinsic to those with higher education or to those from one ethnic group or socio-economic class. Great people don't arrive fully formed. They are trained, mentored and nurtured in environments that provide for their basic human needs so they can flourish and grow.

Isn't it wonderful to envision an All-In American workforce that lives the values of diversity, inclusion, safety, security and service to ensure that all of people have an opportunity to develop and contribute their gifts? For truly it is by serving others that we serve ourselves, and doesn't that sound like the best anti-poverty program around?

At Daily Work, we see all of these possibilities. We are here, and we are ready. We want to do more and we want to do it better. With your help, we are helping employers better understand the needs of their employees. We are building stronger employer partnerships to hire, retain and develop more job seekers. We, too, at Daily Work are investing in and growing our own staff. More staff leverages more volunteers which means streamlined services to move more people out of crisis sooner.

I dream of doubling the number of people in this room. I dream of expanding our network of volunteers who give advice, who advocate, who give rides, and who donate used furniture and household goods. I dream of growing our partnerships with employers so we can develop a pipeline of successful employees. Thank you all for being here today and for sharing this dream with me. My hope is that you see opportunities to live your values by partnering with Daily Work. Together, we can cut through the noise and make deep, long-lasting connections that serves others and ourselves.

Thank you for joining us today. Thank you for your contributions to each other and to our community. And thank you for making daily work a reality.