Educating, employing, and empowering children and adults with disabilities

The Viscardi Center
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When Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. founded the earliest incarnation of The Viscardi Center in 1952, it broke new ground as one of the first organizations in the world staffed primarily by people with disabilities and wounded veterans.

Dr. Viscardi, Jr., who himself wore prosthetic legs and acted as a disability advisor to eight U.S. presidents, sought to enhance the quality of life for those in the disability community and inspire inclusivity in the public sphere through equal access to education and employment.

Today, The Viscardi Center is a hub for leading edge approaches to education and employment. Our multidisciplinary team of more than 350 professionals continues Dr. Viscardi’s vision while solving existing challenges and eliminating barriers that people with disabilities face in the classroom and the workplace every day.

We prepare nearly 1,900 people with physical, cognitive, and developmental disabilities to become economically secure, active participants in our communities each year.

What we do
- Educate medically fragile students with severe physical disabilities, from pre-K to age 21, and position them for success in college and employment
- Collaborate with local school districts and companies to prepare adolescents with developmental and intellectual disabilities for a smooth transition from school to the working world
- Improve attendance and graduation rates for at-risk youth through career counseling and comprehensive vocational tours
- Ready thousands of adults with a range of disabilities for in-demand jobs through hands-on training, coaching, and placement each year
- Partner with thousands of companies around the country to shift corporate attitudes in favor of diversity and inclusion
- Narrow the digital gap with assistive technology and document remediation services
- Provide the keys to self-sufficiency and financial independence

Our Yearly Impact
- 170 pre-K-12 students receive a high-quality education at the Henry Viscardi School instead of at home or in a hospital setting
- 11,000 hours of therapy and nursing provided by the Henry Viscardi School
- 1,700 adolescents and adults benefit from employment-focused programs and services
- 300+ local and national employers work with The Viscardi Center to hire, retain, and advance people with disabilities of all skill levels
Access to quality education leads to personal growth and employment success. We blend challenging academics, vocational training, and adapted learning environments with an emphasis on community integration and leadership development. The result is an individualized learning experience that nurtures the unique needs and abilities of every student.

**Strong Academics in an Adapted Learning Environment**
The Henry Viscardi School offers a traditional education setting for children with severe physical disabilities, combining an accredited curriculum, assistive technology, medical care, and therapies.

- Accredited and Enriched Academics — Kindergarten to age 21 — including Advanced Regents, Regents, and Local Diplomas, as well as CDOS* and SACC* credential options.
- National Honor Society chapter, college-level courses, and student ambassador programs encourage students to achieve academic excellence and pursue higher education after graduation.
- R.A.M.P. (Reaching All My Potential) enables students up to age 21 to complete graduation requirements and hone independent living skills.
- Extracurricular activities, field trips, adapted sports, and weekend overnights foster personal growth and socialization.

**School-to-Work Transition and Attendance Retention**
Youth Transition Services — including the PROSPER (People Reaching for Opportunities to Succeed Personally, Educationally, and Realistically) program for at-risk high school students — specialize in an array of supplemental or alternative education programs designed to instill adolescents and young adults with an understanding of the value of education as it relates to the world of work.

*Career Development & Occupational Studies (CDOS) and Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential (SACC)*

**MEET JIMMY**
Jimmy is a Henry Viscardi School alumnus living out his passion as an archivist and graphic assistant at CBS Sports. He credits extracurricular programs, like hockey and student council, for igniting his interests and preparing him for college at St. John’s University.

“Viscardi truly helped me find my place in the world by interacting, socializing, and developing relationships with others my age. I was able to fully participate in all things pertaining to the schooling experience while gaining a stringent education and an unabated work ethic that would lay the foundation for future collegiate success and full-time employment in my field of study.”
EMPLOYMENT
SETTING A CLEAR CAREER PATH

Navigating today’s competitive job market requires careful planning. Our valuable programs and services prepare adults, including veterans, of all ages and experience levels for workforce entry or re-entry. We tailor our approach to employment preparation and placement based on individual interest and need, providing on-going support and guidance throughout each step of the work-readiness process.

Individualized Training, Counseling, and Placement
- Intensive vocational and work-readiness training programs immerse students in realistic work environments that build soft skills for in-demand jobs.
- Job Placement Specialists streamline the job search process by helping individuals identify their work preferences, assess current labor market trends, and strengthen interview techniques.
- Job Coaching and Supported Employment programs aid individuals before, during, and after the job search to ensure proper training and confidence in responsibilities.

Workforce Diversification Resources
- The National Business & Disability Council (NBDC) at The Viscardi Center directs Fortune 1000 companies and government entities toward diversity and inclusion best practices in compliance with stringent federal regulations.
- NBDC’s Emerging Leaders Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities places exceptional college students into selective internships in his or her chosen industry.

“My internship was one of the best things I have ever done. I gained new skills and learned to work under pressure in a team environment. It was a life-changing experience that was completely out of the box.”

MEET NIRATH
Nirath was completing grad school when she jumpstarted her career with a 10-week internship at a top consulting firm in Washington, D.C. through NBDC’s Emerging Leaders Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities. After earning her master’s degree, she received a job offer at the firm and accepted a permanent position as a senior consultant.
EMPOWERMENT
PROVIDING THE TOOLS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Rich education and employment opportunities lay the groundwork for independence at every stage of life. With a nuanced support network and a facility equipped with the latest technologies, people with disabilities and their families are building sustainable futures rooted in self-advocacy and financial efficacy. Together, we continue to create stronger communities and influence the next generation of disability pioneers equipped to take on new challenges.

Eliminating Barriers to Integration and Accessibility

- A world-class assistive technology laboratory levels the playing field for people with disabilities, and trains professionals to use the latest equipment and meet national standards.
- Case Management and Medicaid Service Coordination links individuals and their families to vital supports and services, ensuring a full understanding of needs and a clear course of action for the future.
- Adapted Driver Education places inexperienced and aging drivers, as well as those with a newly acquired disability, on the road to freedom with instruction in modified and traditional vehicles.
- An on-campus Adapted Independent Living House immerses students in essential daily responsibilities, from budgeting to cooking.
- Accessible Technologies and Services — including a multimedia conference/production facility; Document Accessibility Remediation; closed captioning; and live webinars and training sessions — provide a range of resources that promote inclusion.
- Henry Viscardi Achievement Awards honor exemplary men and women with disabilities from around the world.

MEET MARIAH

Mariah started at the Henry Viscardi School in kindergarten and graduated salutatorian in 2016. She now studies at Marist College, where she aims to pursue non-profit management in hopes of motivating other young people with disabilities — an interest that blossomed during her time as a student ambassador in high school.

“Not only did Viscardi help prepare and guide me toward a future in higher education, it gave me the fundamental characteristics I need to succeed. I gained skills in effective communication, advocacy, and most of all, confidence in myself.”
OUR HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
For over 65 years, The Viscardi Center has offered revolutionary programs and services that enhance the lives of people with disabilities.

1952
Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. founds Abilities, Inc. out of a small West Hempstead garage, later expanding to a facility in Albertson

1962
The Henry Viscardi School opens for students with physical disabilities

1975
Dr. Viscardi influences the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

1982
Job training and work readiness programs are introduced

1990
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is passed; The Viscardi Center begins consulting businesses on disability best practices

2011
John D. Kemp, renowned leader in the disability rights movement, becomes President and CEO

2014
U.S. Department of Labor awards The Viscardi Center a cooperative agreement for the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN)

2018
Project Accessible Oral Health forms as a global initiative to address the disability community’s need for equal access to oral health care

2019
The National Center for Disability Entrepreneurship launches to empower innovators to self-employment success