

INSIGHTS TO SUCCESS

STATLER CENTER

Graduate Climbs Corporate Ladder

If you want proof that Statler Center training can open doors and provide opportunity, look no further than Rehan Ahmad.



In 2008, one year after his graduation, Rehan was hired as a Customer Care Representative at the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in Alexandria, Virginia. By 2010, he received his first promotion to Assistant Supervisor and, today he is a Supervisor of their multi-

channel contact center which provides its customers with a single point of contact along with quality assurance and coaching to its customers.

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Graduate At Work!

Moving across the country can be a daunting experience for anyone. Unless your name is Franklyn Riley, who recently moved from New Mexico, to New York to Virginia, all in the span of one year, and all in the quest for training and employment.



If you met Franklyn you would know that not much scares him or holds him back. Not even a degenerative visual condition that caused him to fully lose his sight in 2011. After not having success in finding a job, he was lead to the New Mexico Commission for the Blind, where his counselor

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The National Statler Center is a Program of Olmsted Center for Sight

Olmsted Center for Sight [OCS] serves over 2,500 clients each year with a wide variety of vision services in the Western New York area. With over 100 years of history in helping individuals who are visually impaired and those with other physical challenges, our goal is to help people achieve their highest level of independence.

www.OlmstedCenter.org



Olmsted Center
FOR SIGHT

Our Statler Graduates at Work

With an enviable placement rate of more than 82%, Statler is very proud of our working graduates. Jobs run the gamut in industries such as hospitality, travel, tourism, customer service, transportation, banking, and telecommunications. Here are a few updates on some of our graduates hard at work!



Brian Persons
Helena, Montana
Hired at Jorgenson's
Restaurant and Lounge



Kirsten Kirby
Dallas, Texas
Hired at Lighthouse for
the Blind



Safa Fountain
Buffalo, New York
Hired at Journeys End
Refugee Services



Michelle Morgan
Lancaster, New York
Hired at the Knights Inn

Recent Statler Grad Shares Her Thanks



To those who helped me at the Statler Center, My name is Samantha Shipman, and I go by Sammie. I'm 26 years old, and I'm blind from Retinopathy of Prematurity. When I was 18, I was also diagnosed with Glaucoma. I recently attended The National Statler Center beginning with the five week Business Fundamentals program, and then on to the Contact Center session for the next 4 weeks.

I definitely had a lot of nerves about going to the Statler Center, but I'm so glad that I did. I met some really great people who I can say are forever friends. During this time I became highly motivated by the anticipation that once I graduated from this program, the world would be my oyster! I was on my way to creating a path for myself to landing my first real job. Having a job means a host of different things. In a nutshell... Independence, financial security, freedom.

After completing the program, Statler assisted me in finding potential employment by sending me job leads. Now here I am, one year post-Statler. I have a job with High Speed 24-7 Delivery in Hayward, California as an Executive Inside Sales Support Agent. I've been with this company since September 12, 2016, and it already feels so rewarding to work here. My hope and goal for this company is to help them continue to grow by being the best sales person that they've ever seen! I know that this will be the start to a whole new world for me and my wonderful and faithful guide dog Mozart. He's a beautiful 65 pound male black Labrador retriever. He fits right in with me in to this job. Everyone just loves him. They say that they're going to make him their mascot for their building.

Thank you to Statler Center for giving me the necessary training and certifications in Business Fundamentals and Contact Center Training that will enable and allow me to do this job, as well as each future business endeavor I shall seek. Most Sincerely,

Sammie Shipman

Admissions Advice

The admissions department is where it all begins! Whether a student is traveling a distance of 9 miles or 9,000 miles our admissions department will serve as the source of information for potential students and help with the admissions process. While every candidate and circumstance is unique, here are some commonly asked questions that may assist you with the application process:

Q. When does the admission processes begin?

A. As soon as we receive your application either online or in hand. While we do require supporting documentation, it's okay for the application and documentation to arrive separately. Waiting to send everything in at once may slow down the process, as the date we receive your application ranks your place in the queue. Remember, admission to Statler Center is a process, and the pace depends on YOU. The more proactive you are, the faster the process goes and you are more likely to attend your session of first choice.

Q. Should I let my counselor know I'm interested in attending Statler Center?

A. Yes! Attending Statler Center is a commitment for three: you, your sponsoring counselor (if applicable) and Statler Center. If you have a counselor, work with him or her and the process will be easy!

Q. How does a state become a vendor?

A. Vendor status in each state or agency may be found under our legal name the Elizabeth Pierce Olmsted M.D. Center for the Visually Impaired (Olmsted Center for Sight). Remember, the Statler Center is a program of the Olmsted Center for Sight.

Q. Do I need to have a visual impairment to attend Statler Center?

A. No. Statler Center works with students with visual and/or physical impairments.

Q. How do I reach you for questions or inquiries?

A. We love questions, big or small so ask away! Our job is to inform and guide applicants and counselors through the process. We will be with you on the first day you arrive and on graduation day as well. Contact Elizabeth Schmidt:

(716) 888-4638 / inquiries@statlercenter.org

Student Stories



Tim Webster

Tim was leading the good life, living in the town of Sebastopol, in Napa Valley, the famed wine region of California. He was a skilled craftsman, a gemstone cutter and inspector; however that career came to a halt at age 56 when he suffered a stroke which affected his optic nerve leaving him legally blind. He was left with the question "Now what could I do?"

He sought advice from that state agency in California that provides assistance to people who are visually impaired. During a meeting, he mentioned that he always had an interest in the hospitality industry, specifically working in a hotel. His counselor went online and found the Statler Center. Tim applied, was accepted, and shortly after moved across country to begin his training.

As the program was nearing its end Tim completed an intense externship at The Mansion, an exclusive boutique hotel in downtown Buffalo. Through his education at the Statler Center and his hands on experience at The Mansion, Tim and his wife Emily opened their own small Bed and Breakfast in the country they most loved to travel; Costa Rica.

Cómo podemos estar de servicio?
(How may we be of service to you?)

Student Stories



Lonnice Graham

A rhetorical question that Lonnice Graham often posed during conversations with others was: "Who would hire a 56-year

old black woman who is blind and who gets around in a motorized wheelchair because both legs have been amputated above the knees?"

The answer is McGuire Development Corporation where she was hired after a recommendation from the Statler Center and winning the competitive interview process. Lonnice began working in January 2014 as a Building Hostess at Compass East, a large office complex in Buffalo, NY.

"The Statler Center gets all the credit," Lonnice said. "They gave me the training and they convinced me I could learn to use a computer and do the job and after that, they introduced me to the great people at McGuire".

A native of Buffalo, NY she attended Bryant & Stratton; a local college. Legally blind, she has detached retinas and cataracts in both eyes. Before the dual amputation which was due to advanced diabetes, she worked for 14 years as a certified medical assistant at Erie County Medical Center. At Compass East she greets visitors and potential tenants, answers, screens and forwards incoming phone calls, maintains security by following procedures and controls access (monitor logbook, issue visitor badges) and does this all with a smile on her face.

Our Admissions Process

How does the admissions process work? The admissions process begins with an application. Once we receive an application we will reach out to your counselor and admissions folder will be opened for you. In order to complete an application folder we require:

- A completed application
- Counselor support
- An interview (can be done remotely)
- Two letters of recommendation
- A typing test (to establish a 20 wpm minimum)
- Proof of high school completion either by diploma, transcript or GED

Upon completion of the above requirements admission will be either offered or declined. Once you have been offered admission, you are a member of the class. We will work with you and your counselor to achieve the highest possible skills during your training with us.

If you are offered admission but need to defer attendance, you may do so for a six month period; after that period, new applications must be made.

To apply go to:
www.olmstedcenter.org/statler-center/

See page 11 for a Curriculum Outline

Enroll Now!

The Statler Center accepts applications on a rolling basis! Please check our website for specific start and end dates:

Business Fundamentals:

Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall

Telecommunications:

Winter, Spring, Fall

Hospitality:

Winter, Spring, Fall



Faculty Focus: Elhanna Porter



Elhanna Porter has many roles at Statler Center: Technology Instructor, Microsoft Office Trainer, Distance Learning Coordinator and Curriculum Administrator. She has her master's degree, is a New York State certified teacher and has a certificate in JAWS (Job Access With Speech).

Elhanna began at the Statler Center in 2011, where she launched her career as a job coach and job developer. Shortly after, she received training in JAWS and computer applications allowing her to diagnose computer glitches and resolve problems. She also develops and writes

training manuals and teaches JAWS users proper use of hardware and software.

Elhanna Leads Distance Learning Classes

Currently, Elhanna oversees the distance learning component of the program. Statler Center's Learning Management System (LMS) allows students from across the country to attend classes remotely. Elhanna manages the development and delivery of e-Learning resources, performs quality reviews and continuously seeks out new technologies to provide support to remote students. Technology is a critical element of distance education: our LMS offers audio-lectures, provides access to quizzes, tests, reading material and has live office hours where instructors are available to assist students with their class work in real-time.

Students that enroll via LMS join the more than 270,000 students around the country that are earning their degrees via distance learning. LMS allows our instructors to individualize learning objectives for all students, track benchmarks and let students work at their own pace.

LMS was successfully piloted in September 2016, providing training to students who were blind or visually impaired in Winston Salem, NC.



Statler Guide Dog Graduates!

40 Dogs have Received Honorary Degrees from the National Statler Center

These guide dogs work alongside their owners and help them throughout the entire Statler Center program. We honor our guide dog graduates with honorary degrees for helping their owner to successfully complete the program!

Statler Center Graduate Now a Successful Business Owner

It is a common misconception that individuals who are blind or visually impaired are less capable than those with full sight. Karen Moore is a successful example that those who are blind or visually impaired have just as much to offer as their fully-sighted peers. Karen is a small business owner who employs eleven individuals. She is also a proud graduate of the Statler Center programs.



Karen came to the Statler Center in 2011 after working for many years in the mortgage and banking industry. She began to have difficulty reading text on her computer screen, and after a visit to the eye doctor she was diagnosed with Diabetic Retinopathy. Karen quickly became despondent, unsure of how she could continue in her career. The condition made it impossible for her to return to her job or do the work that she loved. "I just didn't think I had anything else to contribute", she said. But her counselor at the New York State Commission for the Blind referred her to the Statler Center, and her whole life turned around.

During her time at the Statler Center, Karen received comprehensive training on a multitude of technology platforms, including programs such as Zoomtext and JAWS (Job Access With Speech) that allow individuals who are visually-impaired to navigate a computer effectively. But according to Karen, the technology training wasn't the most valuable part of her Statler Center experience. "The staff at the Statler Center taught me that I still have value as a person. They were there with me every step of the way, helping me through my training and showing me that I still have so much to contribute."

After graduating from the Statler Center and winning a prestigious award for entrepreneurs, Karen launched Innovative Back Office Solutions LLC. Innovative Back Office Solutions, located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, offers a broad spectrum of administrative services such as payroll, human resources, credit counseling, advertising, and media management to start-up companies and small businesses. "My advice to those contemplating coming to the Statler Center: stop contemplating and come! It will be the best decision you will ever make. The staff at the Statler Center are professional, knowledgeable, sensitive, and will work hard to help you reach your goals."

Thank you to the Foundations and Agencies that Support Statler

The Statler program would not be possible without the generosity of several Foundations and the support of many State Agencies

ACCES-VR

Allene Reuss Memorial Trust

The Baird Foundation

Bannerot-Lappe Foundation

Commission for the Blind

Conrad N. Hilton foundation

The Garman Family Foundation

The Gibney Family Foundation

Grainger Foundation

Grigg Lewis Foundation Inc.

Hearst Foundations

Henry E. Niles Foundation

Ingram Micro, Inc.

Johnson Scholarship
Foundation

Kyrias Foundation, Inc.

Lavelle Fund for the Blind

National Fuel Gas
Company Foundation

WNY Regional Economic
Development Council

James J. Scibetta, M.D.
and Richard A. Scibetta

Stanley Hooper Foundation

Statler Foundation

Rahan Ahmad *continued from page 1*

Rehan and his team consistently exceed industry standards in the areas of employee attrition rate and call quality metrics. Under Rehan's supervision, new hires are trained in the areas of:

- Inbound/outbound support
- Help Desk support
- Order and claims processing
- Switchboard Operations
- Customer Service
- Mystery shopping

"The Statler Center gave me a huge step-up and was a game-changer", says Rehan. "The program polished and enhanced my skills and increased my confidence. I also appreciated the professional environment as well."

As a supervisor, Rehan is one of Statler Center's biggest recruiters hiring three Statler Center graduates so far! Rehan is an indisputable example that with the Statler Center's proven training record, combined with a graduate's aspiration for success, will lead to a prosperous and remarkable career.

Statler Grad Opens Own Hotel



While many Statler Center students travel long distances to attend the program, none have come as far as Tigran Pirumyan, a native of Yerevan, Armenia, who graduated from the Statler Center in 2005 after successfully completing

training in hospitality. After graduating from Statler, Tigran returned to Armenia where he worked for a large computer company; recently, Tigran put his knowledge of the hospitality industry to use by opening his own hotel in the country of Georgia! The Du Vin Rouge is located in the heart of Tbilisi, Georgia's capital and largest city.

If you're ever travelling through Eastern Europe, make sure to stop by and say hello to Tigran!

Student Stories



Greg Beback

Work is mostly fun and games for Greg Beback who is a Consumer Service Representative at Fisher Price in East Aurora, NY. After training at the Statler Center he was interviewed by the toy company and hired to handle phone calls and e-mail inquiries from customers. "I really like my job," Greg said. "It is an interesting place to work and I especially enjoy it because some of my favorite toys growing up were from Fisher Price."

Greg, 27, is not visually impaired; he has epilepsy, which is controlled with medication, as well as cerebral palsy, which affects his gait. He is a native of Lancaster, NY and a graduate of Lancaster High School. He also has an associate degree in business from Canisius College.

Prior to his current job, Greg worked for three years manning the front desk at the Canisius College Tutoring Center. "The training and coaching I received at the Statler Center were so important in teaching me job skills and building my self-confidence making me the person I am today".



Cecil Stepp

Statler Center is honored to offer training to those veterans who have served our country.

Veteran Cecil Stepp is 63, served in the US Navy and was stationed in Japan. Although Cecil does not have a visual impairment, he suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) where he was receiving assistance from the Veterans Administration Hospital.

His VA counselor suggested he apply to the Statler Center. Soon after he was accepted, he began the program. During his time at Statler he excelled in the classroom and on his externship and was seen as a natural leader by both staff and peers. At graduation Cecil was presented with the James J. Scibetta, M.D. and Richard A. Scibetta Memorial Award.

Cecil describes his time at Statler as "a life-changing experience," adding: "the classes helped me develop my self-confidence and my ability to interact with people. I've improved and I continue to improve."

After graduation Cecil enrolled at Bryant & Stratton where he studied commercial art, all while working in a call center operated by M & T Bank. Someday Cecil hopes to open his own art studio.

NIB Partnership



The Statler Center has a strategic partnership with National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in Alexandria, Virginia. Through this partnership, NIB fills vacancies in their contact center with graduates of the Statler Center who are interested in pursuing a career in telecommunications.

To date, four Statler Center graduates are currently employed at NIB: Franklyn Riley, Rehan Ahmad, Steve Bacon, and Jessica Diaz. They are all excelling in their new positions and utilize the skills they learned at the Statler Center to be exceptional Call Center agents.

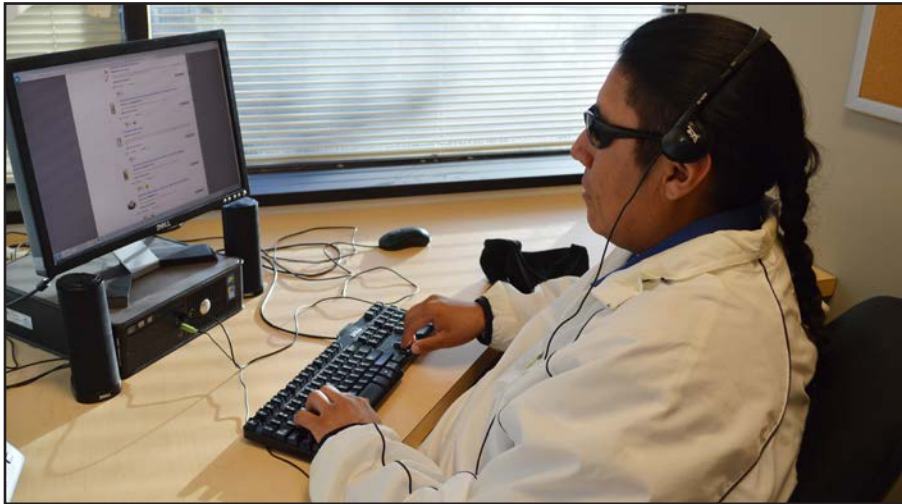
A Statler Love Story



Crystal and Joel met during their time at Statler Center in 2014, where they got to know each other in the classroom and quickly became inseparable. Since graduating from the program they have married, had a beautiful baby boy named Joel Jr. (aka JJ), and both currently work at IFB Solutions in North Carolina!

Franklyn Riley

continued from page 1



pointed him in the direction of the Statler Center. Always up for a challenge, he eagerly enrolled in the training and relocated to Buffalo for 10 weeks, even though he had never been east of Texas! Franklyn had an interest in working in the customer service field, which prompted him to enroll in the Business Fundamentals and Contact Center curriculums.

Once enrolled in the program, Franklyn realized that he held

strong communications skills and took quickly to learning and using Microsoft Office and JAWS (Job Access with Speech), a program that assists those with vision loss navigate a computer effectively. "Before losing my sight I was extremely tech savvy, but since going blind my tech skills began to diminish," says Franklyn. "I didn't know how to use JAWS, Excel, or how to do much of anything on a computer. Now, everything I do at work, I learned at the Statler Center. Every time I pick up a telephone, my time at the Statler Center comes back to me."

Currently, Franklyn works at the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in Alexandria, Virginia, where he works along with several other Statler Center graduates as a Customer Care Representative in their contact center. His job includes assisting customers with shipment problems, order statuses, offering price quotes, and various other duties related to e-commerce. If not for his training at Statler Center, Franklyn would not have the knowledge to do this job. "I love all the staff that trained me at the Statler Center. They taught me the computer training and soft skills I needed. You have to come prepared, but you will benefit greatly from the experience."

Statler Foundation Plaque



To recognize the mission of the Statler Foundation set forth by Ellsworth M. Statler in 1934, we pay homage to the Statler Foundation and trustees for their steadfast support of our program.

This dedicatory plaque is seen by all who enter Olmsted Center for Sight, and commemorates the generosity of the Statler Foundation who bestowed the first grant almost twenty years ago allowing for the first class to begin in September 1998.

Student Stories



Michael Bruneer

Michael Bruneer now calls Keystone, Colorado home. He is the Food and Beverage Manager at the Alpenglow Stube, an upscale resort where guests may ride a gondola to a mountaintop hide-away offering fine dining with breath taking views. Michael finds it most gratifying to manage the restaurant that prides itself as the highest AAA Four-Diamond rated dining establishment in the United States.

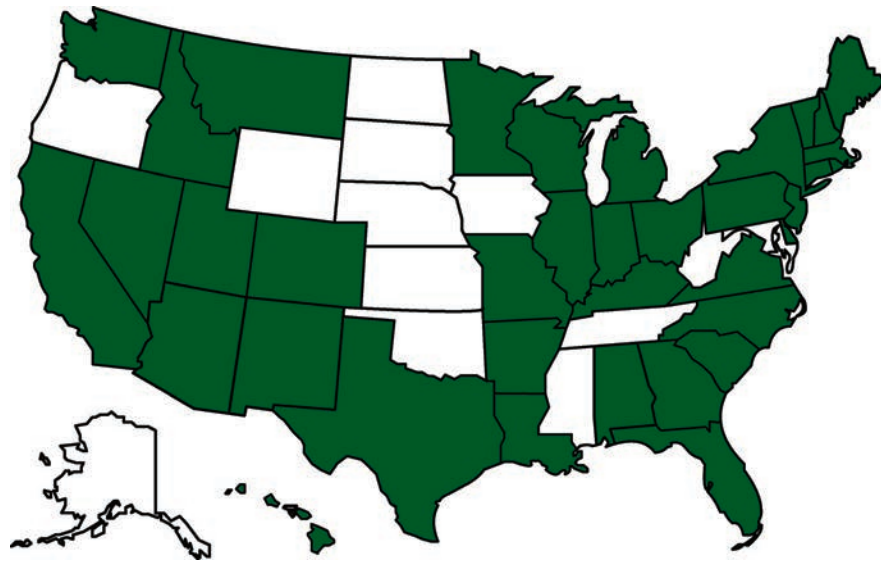
Before accepting an offer with Alpenglow Stube, you could find Michael heading food and beverage operations at the Crater Lake Lodge in Crater Lake National Park Oregon, the Jenny Lake Lodge in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and the Furnace Creek Inn located in in Death Valley National Park, California.

Born in California, Michael became legally blind due to macular degeneration which limits his sight to peripheral vision only. After his limited sight began to affect his employment, Michael sought direction at the California Department of Rehabilitation where a counselor, knowing of Michael's passion for hotel and restaurant work, referred him to the Statler Center.

Michael attributes his career to the training he received at the Statler Center. "They helped me immensely" he said, "with hands-on training and the development of a positive attitude".

Statler Students Come from All Over!

Statler attracts students from all over the United States as well as the Caribbean, Canada, Europe and Asia. Our graduates in partnership with our placement department are successful in finding jobs back in their home towns. Here is a look to see where our students come from!



- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Alabama | Kentucky | North Carolina |
| Arizona | Louisiana | Ohio |
| Arkansas | Maine | Pennsylvania |
| California | Massachusetts | Rhode Island |
| Colorado | Michigan | South Carolina |
| Connecticut | Minnesota | Texas |
| Delaware | Missouri | Utah |
| Florida | Montana | Vermont |
| Georgia | Nevada | Virginia |
| Hawaii | New Hampshire | Washington |
| Idaho | New Jersey | Wisconsin |
| Illinois | New Mexico | |
| Indiana | New York | |



Armenia



Canada



Jamaica



United Kingdom

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Curriculum Outline

The Statler Center offers three distinct curriculums: Business Fundamentals, Telecommunications and Hospitality. All programs take place at our facility within Olmsted Center for Sight's Campus in Buffalo NY.



Business Fundamentals: This baseline five-week program students are trained in Microsoft Office Suite, business-related internet use, transactional math skills, written and oral communications, conflict resolution, networking, and interview skills, self-advocacy and soft skills needed to help be successful in the workplace. This program has proven valuable as a prerequisite for our students who continue on to advanced training or as a stand-alone option for those returning to the workforce or considering college. Once the Business Fundamentals course is completed a student may decide to enroll in college, look for a job or continue on into our Telecommunications or Hospitality programs.

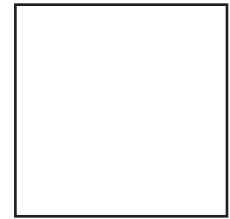
Telecommunications: This is a four week program that covers telephone techniques, business etiquette and key industry content for data mining, business-to-business calls, sales, human services and customer care. Students receive hands on instruction in learning how to manage incoming and outgoing calls, work with scripts, multi-task and the use of dual input headset technology (access to the phone and a screen reader simultaneously). Learning in a live contact center environment using industry specific software and current Q&A metrics to analyze performance are part of the program.

The contact center generates industry trained graduates who are able to apply for competitive employment opportunities either at an on-site location or as part of a sales force working remotely from home. Olmsted Center for Sight has both on-site and remote employment opportunities in addition we partner with other blind industry partners such as the Winston-Salem Industries for the Blind for employment opportunities.

Hospitality: This is a five week program where training is focused on acquiring customer service skills that help lead to employment in the hospitality industry. Transferable skills, such as instruction on a property management system database, sales and marketing, customer service and venue management are taught. Students will also participate in a externship for firsthand experience. Our guest speaker series hosts invitees from national companies to discuss their roles in the industry whether it be health care, tourism, lodging, business, food services etc.

Distance Learning: Statler Center's Learning Management System (LMS) allows students from across the country to attend classes remotely. The program offers audio-lectures, provides access to quizzes, tests, and reading material and has live office hours where instructors are available to assist students with their class work in real-time. Students that enroll via LMS join the more than 270,000 students around the country that are taking their first degrees via distance learning. LMS allows our instructors to individualize learning objectives for all students, track benchmarks and allow students to work at their own pace. LMS was successfully piloted in September 2016, providing training to students who were blind or visually impaired in Winston Salem, NC.





ADDRESS
SERVICE
REQUESTED



Olmsted Center
FOR SIGHT

**Helping people
achieve their highest
level of independence**

Early Education Program

Low Vision Clinic

Vision Rehab Services

Manufacturing Facility

Contact Center

Assistive Technology

Housing

National Statler Center

Congratulations to the 52nd Statler Hospitality Program and 20th Contact Center Graduating Class!

Pictured L-to-R

Top Row:

Bilal A.
Ronia M.
Dominick P.

2nd Row:

Jessica M.
Katherine H.
Susan B.
Janell S.

Bottom Row:

William M. and his
guide dog, Brit;
Joe Duggan and
his guide dog,
Dewey.



The National Statler Center is a program of Olmsted Center for Sight, a not-for-profit agency committed to helping blind, visually impaired and disabled individuals achieve their highest level of independence.

For more information:

t: +1 866-882-1025 (toll free)

f: +1 716-878-0540

e: info@statlercenter.org

web: www.StatlerCenter.com

National Statler Center
1170 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14209

