

For National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), the Employment First Task Force is reaching out to all of its partners and friends to organize participation in the second year of #HireMyStrengths. The campaign, started by the folks at Tennessee Works, encourages anyone and everyone (with a disability or not) to think about what they're good at. The campaign encourages people to take the focus off what they can't do or where they're limited and put it on their strengths. No matter what it is, if you're good at it, there's an employer who wants what you have to offer.

The "social" part of this campaign is where you come in. As an advocacy group, disability service provider, business owner, educator, mentor, parent, sibling, friend—whatever role you have that brings you in contact with people with disabilities, we're reaching out to you to help us organize and energize people about employment, NDEAM, and #HireMyStrengths. Here are the easy steps to create content for social media and get others involved.

1. [Download and print the .pdf file at this link](#)
2. Identify a strength and write it in big bold letters.
3. Take a picture and post it to your social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) with the hashtags #HireMyStrengths and #NDEAM
4. Surf your favorite social network and look at/share the other #HireMyStrengths posts!

It really is that easy to participate, but you have to make sure you include the #HireMyStrengths hashtag in your posts. The hashtag is the key to getting your posts seen and shared by more people. It allows anyone, whether they follow you or not, to quickly see all the posts for a given topic. It also allows the organizers and other participants in the campaign to quickly identify the #HireMyStrengths posts and retweet or share them on their social media to increase exposure. Here are a few sample posts:



TN Sarah's biggest strength is enthusiasm! No matter the job, she's motivated!
#HireMyStrengths #NDEAM #InclusionWorks



Who's in this photo?

1 Tweet

TN Mike has lots of strengths, but he cares about everyone he meets!
#HireMyStrengths #NDEAM #InclusionWorks



Who's in this photo?

11 Tweet

Each one of those posts featured a different person (with or without a disability) who had a simple, one word strength (joker, enthusiasm, caring) written on their paper. Each post includes the person's first name, something conversational but quick about their strengths, and the #HireMyStrengths hashtag. I also included #NDEAM and the 2016 NDEAM campaign hashtag: #InclusionWorks. Your posts can get a little busy with all of the different hashtags, especially on Twitter, so don't feel like you have to include every single one for each post. If you need more characters or want to simplify, you might use one or two but not all 3.

The next example is from the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. They took it to the next level with a picture of a person working and a quote from the person about their strength. Not everyone has the capability to produce something like this, but you can see how good it looks:



For agencies and larger groups: If you have several people at your agency or organization who are interested in participating in #HireMyStrengths, you can work with the group to write out their strengths and take pictures at the same time—and save them to post throughout the month. That way we can maintain momentum and increase exposure for everyone involved. On Facebook, you can also create an album for “Hire My Strengths” and post a new picture tagged with #HireMyStrengths in the album every couple of days. One note about Twitter and Facebook—if your Twitter feed is set up to tweet every time you post something on Facebook, you’ll want to independently post the content to Twitter. It’s very common for Facebook posts to be too long for Twitter, and the hashtags get cut off. Remember: No hashtag = fewer eyeballs!

If you have other content (videos, pictures, articles, news stories, letters to the editor, etc.) that features people with disabilities working in the community, those can also fit the #HireMyStrengths campaign. Here are 3 examples from 2015:



Tennessee Works via **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center**

October 22, 2015 · 🌐

Hey, we know those guys! Will and Daniel are Next Steps at Vanderbilt - Vanderbilt Kennedy Center graduates who have both gone on to find work with great visibility in the community by working hard at the Vanderbilt University Barnes & Noble bookstore. Postsecondary education is a fantastic stepping stone to finding meaningful employment after school. #HireMyStrengths #NDEAM



Positive Attitude, Positive Impact - Next

The Next Steps program works to increase employment opportunities for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

NEXT.BNCOLLEGE.COM

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



👍 12



Tennessee Works via **Special Olympics Tennessee**

October 13, 2015 · 🌐

This month is National Disability Employment Awareness Month! Check out this great video by Tennessee Works which highlights the transferable skills from sports to employment. #NDEAM #HireMyStrengths Get involved at www.tennesseeworks.org/hiremystrengths



👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



👍 5

1 share



If you're looking for additional resources or ideas for NDEAM, the USDOL Office of Disability Employment Policy has some great resources:

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/resources.htm#SocialMedia>

To summarize:

1. The picture campaign is a great way to generate content for your social media outlets, empower the people you support, join the conversation, and gain exposure for your group.
2. Make sure to use the #HireMyStrengths hashtag in your posts—hashtagged posts are more likely to get attention: shares, retweets, likes, etc.
3. All “employment” related content is good to share with the #HireMyStrengths hashtag. If it features a person with a disability in the community, use the hashtag!
4. Keep the momentum going! If you have a group of people that's excited about sharing their story, spread the pictures and other content throughout the month.
5. Be social! If you see other people/agencies/groups posting #NDEAM or #HireMyStrengths content, give it a like/share/favorite/retweet!
6. Have fun!

The last one isn't mandatory, but it really is fun to be a part of a campaign like this and see how much attention it generates for such a worthy cause. It's exciting and inspiring to think up new content and see how well it does on social media.

So what's the next step? Inside of your group or organization, start talking to people about employment and about NDEAM. You can start building excitement for October now and start thinking about ways you can showcase what you're doing in the realm of employing people with disabilities. In September, you might start gathering your media—print off some of the sheets, get people to take pictures, and collect any kind of internal releases/consents/permissions you might need before posting on your social media. And then in October, you can join in the sharing!

If you want to receive updates from the Employment First Taskforce on our social media efforts for NDEAM, send your contact info to matthew.parriott@tn.gov. You can also contact him if you have any questions about social media or content creation, now or anytime.