



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPENDENTS SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, EUROPE
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September 22, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR DODDS-EUROPE EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: National Disability Employment Awareness Month - October 2006

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This annual observance, designed to recognize the contributions of workers with disabilities, began in 1988 with the Presidential Proclamation of Public Law 100-630 (Title III, Sec 301a). This law replaced "National Employ the Handicapped Week," which had been celebrated annually since 1945 during the first week in October.

The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, on behalf of the DoD, publishes themes in conjunction with national observances. This year's theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month is *American with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce*.

Although several regulations exist to protect the rights of Americans with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is perhaps the most well known. When this Act was passed, it represented a promise that the nation would no longer underestimate the abilities of disabled Americans. The ADA contains employment provisions to protect workers with disabilities from discrimination and mandates that all businesses employing more than 15 workers make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. This law has played a critical role in helping to secure a future of enhanced opportunity and new freedoms for workers with disabilities.

Thanks to the ADA, we are aware of the energies and talents of millions of Americans with disabilities. We have seen evidence of progress in improved access to employment, public places, commercial facilities, information technology, telecommunication services, housing, schools, and polling places.

Please join me in acknowledging the contributions DoDDS-E employees with disabilities make toward accomplishing our mission to support student achievement. As an education institution, we play an important role in paving the way for children with disabilities to be successful in any society and know no limitations. I encourage all employees of DoDDS-E to observe this month by recognizing employees with disabilities for all their talents, skills, and dedication; they are such a vital part of our workforce. Let us all do our part to ensure that no American is denied access to employment, education, cultural activities, or community life because of a disability.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diana J. Ohman".

Diana J. Ohman
Director, DoDDS-Europe