

# GCE·Xpress

As we step into 2025, a new president and administration will be leading our nation for the next four years. This transition will bring with it different perspectives on disability employment and services, which we are anxious to learn about once engagement begins and the foundation is laid.



**Lori Kain**  
Senior Director of Government  
Affairs and Advocacy

As we do with Congress in Washington, D.C. – including the White House – we collaborate and offer our expertise to achieve collective goals. Together, we will embrace new challenges and opportunities, ensuring that GCE continues to thrive and make a positive impact in our communities across the country and on Capitol Hill with congressional offices and leaders.

While leadership changes can present challenges, they also offer opportunities for growth and transformation. We are adaptable and open to innovative ideas to continue achieving our long-term success, creating expanded opportunities for meaningful employment for people with disabilities. I ask each and every one of you to remember, **YOU HAVE A VOICE**. If you do not like what is happening in local, state or the federal government, reach out to your mayor or city council, state representatives and of course, your federal congressional members in the Senate and House of Representatives. All have local offices you can go to, email or make a phone call to and speak with someone directly.

You can make change happen, but you need to **use your voice and advocate for yourself, your team and others in your community**.

NASA's SEWP VI contract introduces an exciting new avenue for GCE to expand its support for federal agencies and further its mission to create meaningful employment for individuals with disabilities. This 10-year Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) aims to streamline access to cutting-edge IT, communication and AV solutions across federal agencies, including NASA, while enhancing mission-focused IT capabilities.



**Mark Kessler**  
Vice President of Innovation  
& Business Development

*continued on next page*

*FY24 is in the books, and I am happy to say that we met or exceeded all our Performance Accountability Report goals! One of my proudest accomplishments was exceeding our measure for hiring persons with disabilities. The goal was surpassed by 142 hires, 50% above goal. That is what it means to advance our mission!*



*Dwight Davis*  
GCE President

*From our financial position to our stance on safety and quality, GCE had an amazing year. Our growth goals are also advancing at a rapid pace. GCE added five new contracts or subcontracts to our portfolio: base support services in Los Angeles, California; housekeeping and labor services in Anchorage, Alaska; base custodial services in Montgomery, Alabama; Benefits Coordination and Recovery Center as a subcontractor to General Dynamics Information Technology; and food services for MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.*

*Our Project Search team implemented a new site at Santa Rosa Medical Center and received the 100% Employment Outcome Award during the National Conference. Our Community Employment Services placed 17 adults into competitive, integrated employment with 100% successfully achieving 90 days of employment.*

*Our own Lori Kain, senior director of government affairs and advocacy, was recognized as a Pinnacle Award winner by 850 Business Magazine. The state of Florida recognized GCE as the 2023 Exceptional Employer for hiring people with disabilities, and GCE recognized Senator Rick Scott of Florida and Representative Mike Ezell from Mississippi as AbilityOne Champions.*

*Overall, this has been a great year! I look forward to what the next will bring as we head into 2025. Stay safe!*

Organized into three primary service categories — general IT solutions, strategic enterprise-wide services and mission-focused support — SEWP VI allows federal agencies to tap into an extensive range of IT products and services that meet evolving needs and promote seamless interoperability within the government’s IT infrastructure.

A groundbreaking aspect of SEWP VI is its AbilityOne subcontracting requirement, which mandates that contractors engage with AbilityOne providers, like GCE, for relevant orders in designated IT and support service areas. This commitment is part of NASA’s vision for inclusivity and employment accessibility, creating numerous opportunities for GCE to serve in key roles such as IT help desk support and end-user services. GCE has already partnered with over 100 prime contractors, and with more than 1,100 prime contractors expressing interest in SEWP VI, new partnerships are expected to emerge, opening doors for greater collaboration and expanded employment pathways for individuals with disabilities. The contract’s delayed proposal submission window — anticipated in early 2025 — also ensures that these partnerships can be thoroughly prepared to meet the program’s high standards.

For GCE, SEWP VI represents a strategic and impactful opportunity to bring its expertise to a larger federal audience. By joining this government-wide initiative, GCE is poised to play a key role in delivering top-quality IT services while advancing our mission of “helping people.”

### Montgomery, Alabama

GCE is excited to announce the launch of a new AbilityOne custodial contract at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama.

Welcome to our newest GCE team members. We are happy that you are now a part of the GCE family. Let’s make this journey together a successful one with our military customer! We appreciate you hitting the ground running and have already received wonderful feedback.



### Tennessee Employer of the Year

GCE was nominated and WON the Employer of the Year for region 5 in the state of Tennessee. This was made possible by John Johnson, Tennessee vocational rehabilitation career training coordinator (VR) and Sellitia Johnson, department of human services supervisor (DHS), who nominated GCE for this award.

GCE was nominated due to our recruiting and outreach efforts to include the number of vocational rehabilitation clients hired at our Tennessee contract sites. Region 5 covers middle Tennessee, which includes Nashville and surrounding communities.

A special thank you to Jim Beasley, GCE recruiting and outreach coordinator, for his hard work and dedication to our mission. This nomination was in large part due to his efforts with our partners at VR and DHS in Tennessee.



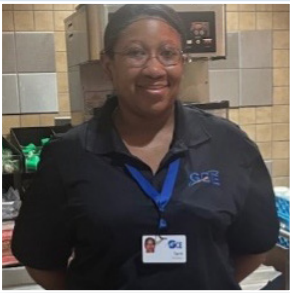
## Team member promotions

### Eglin 7th Special Forces Food Services



#### Justin Kelley

Justin was promoted from shift leader to supervisor based on his willingness to motivate other team members and his personal motivation to acquire new skills to reach his career goals. This achievement is a testament to Justin's talent, dedication to the team at 7th Special Forces, and commitment to GCE's mission and values.



#### Terri Richardson

Congratulations to Terri on her recent promotion on our Eglin Air Force Base 7th Special Forces food services contract. Terri has been a member of the GCE family for 13 years and was promoted from shift leader to assistant project manager. We are excited to see how Terri will excel in this new position and help lead the food services team to success at the dining facility. Her hard work, leadership and exceptional customer service skills are key to her recent selection to fill this critical role.



#### Sonya Watts

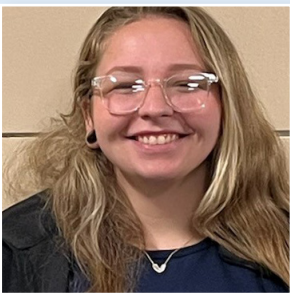
Sonya was promoted from food service worker to cook I. She has been a member of the GCE family for eight years. Keron Williams, GCE project manager at the 7th Special Forces food services contract site, notes, "We are forever grateful to see her strive for greatness and to never settle, but to always expand her knowledge and skill set." Sonya is a wonderful team member doing great things for her team and our customers.

### Fort Knox news



#### Ockehemia Banks

Congratulations to Ockehemia Banks on her recent promotion! Ockehemia recently was promoted to Shift Leader I at Fort Knox in Kentucky on our GCE custodial contract. GCE leaders on site noted that she always stays calm and composed even in the most stressful of situations. She is empathetic and compassionate to her team members, truly living the mission and values of our organization. She is truly perfect for this role, and we look forward to seeing her shine in her new role.



#### Michelle Daisy Dowell

Congratulations to Michelle "Daisy" Dowell on her promotion to Shift Leader I. Site management noted that she loves being challenged and is selfless in every situation that arises on base with the team. She is super collaborative and always interested in new ideas from the team to help grow the relationship with our customer.

## Congratulations to GCE Team Member of the Quarter!

Congratulations to Liberty Hoekstra, GCE team member of the quarter (4th Quarter). Liberty works on the GCE food services contract at Eielson Air Force Base. She was nominated by Aaron Oeth (nomination below).

Liberty is a living testament to the core values of LifeView Group and GCE. As a mother of four, Liberty knows how to be the trusted partner to all team members within the operation. No matter their personal situation, Liberty is the calm leader that employees trust. In realizing that our team members do amazing "little things" every day that go unnoticed, she developed unique ways to let her people know that she cares through encouragement and small token rewards such as keychains, lanyards, thank you cards, etc. It may be a small gift, but it reminds team members that leadership sees them and appreciates their contributions to our mission. Liberty leads our team members with mercy and compassion, but also with appropriate standards. Liberty never settles – and never lets our team members settle – for less than their best. She instills a sense of self-worth through accomplishment in every person she encounters.

Liberty was recently faced with one of our team members being medically evacuated to a location seven hours from home. Without hesitation, Liberty put together a gift from the team to help get through a scary time in their lives. Not only did she instinctively do this, but she also involved others to lead them to a path of compassion towards others. Liberty is also using this incident as a catalyst to develop a meal train program for any team member in need in the local area. Liberty has led with the motto of, "When you invest in people, it never returns void." She is a leader and is actively recruiting followers. Our team is better because she is on it.

Congratulations, Liberty, from your GCE family!



## Emergency procedures

No one expects an emergency or disaster. However, emergencies can strike anyone, anytime or anywhere. You could be forced to evacuate your work location when you least expect it to occur.

There are many different types of emergencies that could occur in a workplace. They include weather, presence of chemicals, explosions, civil disturbances or violence at the location. The best way to protect yourself and your workplace is to prepare before it occurs. Most people will not think clearly in times of crisis. Thinking through your actions in advance will allow you to consider the appropriate actions.



**Jonathan Broussard**  
Safety Program Manager

Use the emergency action plan for your location to find the following information:

- Method for reporting fires and other emergencies
- Where fire alarm stations are for your location
- Evacuation policy and procedures
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments (may be in the form of a map secured to a wall in the building)
- Always know the location of at least two exits in case one of them is blocked.
- Know the assembly location where you will report in the event of an evacuation.
- Know your duty if you have been assigned tasks such as assisting a team member with special needs or performing a headcount at the assembly area.

*continued on next page*

In the event of an evacuation, report to the assembly area and remain there until you are advised by your manager to leave. A team member will be responsible for taking a head count and ensuring everyone has made it safely out of the building. No one should re-enter a building. Notify emergency responders if you feel someone remains inside and did not evacuate.

Preparing your actions in advance is the key to safely responding in the event of an emergency. If there are any questions regarding the proper response to emergency situations, contact Jonathan Broussard, safety program manager.

### **Happy (and healthy) New Year!**

The entrance of a new year typically brings with it resolutions of all kinds. Many of those New Year's resolutions revolve around creating a healthier lifestyle, often by starting some sort of exercise routine. I am a group fitness instructor at a local YMCA in Pensacola, and my classes consistently grow in size every January and February.



**Carol Duke**  
Vice President of Administration

Physical activity is very much needed for good health, and I am (obviously!) a huge advocate of exercise. But I'm here to tell you that the number one thing to create a healthier body is to make sure what you put in your body is the right stuff. The "Standard American Diet" (SAD) is indeed just that... sad. So much processed food, so much sugar and so few vegetables and fruits. Change this, and you are well on your way to a healthier, happier you!

There are five primary things you can do to create a healthy, feel-good life. And remember to start small, stick with it and build from there.

The number one action is to fuel your body with healthy things. This includes the food you eat, the beverages you drink, the drugs you take and anything else you ingest. Clean water is the best beverage to drink, and whole, unprocessed foods are on the top of the list to eat. And no, fast food and packaged treats are not whole, unprocessed foods!

The number two and number three factors to creating optimal health are exercise and getting enough good sleep at night. Exercise does not have to mean hitting the high intensity kickboxing class every day of the week. Just moving your body is good. Go for a walk, play with the kids, walk down to the mailbox, climb the stairs... just move! When choosing your activity, know that the best exercise for you is the one you'll continue to do. Also, make sure you sleep a minimum of seven hours each night. Sleep is so important for physical health, brain health, mental health and immune health. We know how good it feels in the morning when we've had a great night's sleep!

The number four and five factors are to minimize your stress and make sure you have a community to be part of. Some stress can actually be good for you. But when the stress is continuous and doesn't let up, problems arise. (Did I mention that exercise is a great de-stressor?!) Community could mean a group of friends, a church community, sports teams, work friends, any social outlet where you feel connected, valued and supported.

We all know that when we have and do these things, we feel great. And isn't that the goal – feeling great, both physically and mentally? And wouldn't we all like to live longer, while enjoying a high quality of life?

Know that you are free to choose, but you are not free from the consequences of your choices, so make good ones! And when you feel like quitting any of your healthy choices, just remember the reasons you started.

We are considering assembling a "healthy living" Employee Resource Group (ERG) here at LifeView Group and GCE. Please let me know if you'd be interested – contact [Carol.Duke@GCE.org](mailto:Carol.Duke@GCE.org).



On September 30, GCE had its stage 1 external audit for ISO 9001. This audit is a readiness check to ensure that we can continue towards registration. In this audit, there are some differences than what occurs during stage 2 and subsequent surveillance audits, which are based on conformity to the standard; this audit only highlights observations, concerns and major concerns. We walked away with one observation and one concern. This is great news, as those items were quickly handled after the audit.



**Jeremiah White**  
Quality Program Manager

On November 11 and 12, we had our stage 2 external audit focused on standard conformance. This audit can result in major nonconformities and minor nonconformities. Our auditor called out only one minor nonconformity and recommended GCE for certification! This is fantastic news, as we will work on this one item over the coming months to ensure our quality management system is working to the standard. Once the registrar accepts our corrective action plan for this minor nonconformity, we will become certified in ISO 9001:2015! We expect to receive our certificate in January, so more to come soon.

One thing to note going forward with this certification – it is not a finish line! It is a never-ending process of continuous improvement. We should live our value to “never settle” for status quo but continue to improve our processes as needed to be successful in our mission!

Thanks for all you do!

Many of our team members experience unforeseen financial hardships. That is why we established the Helping Hands program. This employee-assistance program provides emergency assistance to those in need. Money comes from donations by fellow team members throughout the year. It can be just a dollar from your paycheck bi-weekly to help. Donations have helped team members experiencing needs like car repairs on the primary car used by a team member to get to work, a medical condition or complex illness, funeral expenses for a spouse/child/parent, unexpected home repairs, food assistance, and support when a team member must take an unexpected leave from work without pay. Ask your supervisor or project manager for more information.

The Individuals with Great Abilities (IWGA) Employee Resource Group (ERG) is looking for your participation. The IWGA ERG was created to help cultivate an engaged and inclusive work environment through team member connections, by promoting diversity awareness, and through advocacy and collaboration. We are currently looking for new members as well as ideas/suggestions on topics and activities you would like to see from the group. Please share your thoughts and recommendations on how we can best support you in the workplace by emailing [LGIERGIWGA@lifeviewgroup.org](mailto:LGIERGIWGA@lifeviewgroup.org).

Keep up with GCE stories and recognition by following us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

