

# GCE·Xpress

This is a good time to outline the AbilityOne program and its impact across the country.



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

The AbilityOne program, in which GCE is a participating nonprofit organization, creates employment opportunities through federal contracting. The program is administered by the AbilityOne Commission. The program is one of our nation’s largest sources of employment for people who are blind or who have significant disabilities. The Commission has designated National Industries for the Blind and SourceAmerica as central nonprofit agencies to help administer the program. The Commission consists of 15 presidential appointees, including representatives from federal agencies and one private citizen representing people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

There are approximately 39,000 people with disabilities that make up the AbilityOne program workforce. There are 400 nonprofit program participants who represent every state across the country by providing services and/or products. The AbilityOne program also brings 2,500 wounded warriors and veterans into the U.S. labor force.

GCE employs more than 1,650 team members currently, including 1,060 with a disability. One more interesting fact is that we have 59 people who work for GCE that are 69 years old or older. This just shows that age is only a number and does not define anyone.

The work you do every single day is so important to our customers, both military and non-military – and you do all of this with a smile, thank you or other kind words. Your dedication and exceptional customer service help us maintain contracts at sites across the country.

Thank you for being a member of our GCE family!

**A spring safety message**



Dwight Davis  
GCE President

*As I am writing to you about the coming spring, I cannot help but remember that recently on Jan. 21, Pensacola saw around eight inches of snow that shut down the city for over two days. Not since 1894 had this area seen more than two inches of snow stick to the ground. For those of you residing in northern climates, this would be just another day. But for us here in Florida, this was a significant and emotional event!*

*I bring this up to highlight that we can find ourselves in extreme weather anytime, anywhere – from tropical storms, cyclones and severe spring storms that spawn tornadoes to extreme dry conditions that bring fires or drought. We cannot let our guard down on Mother Nature. With spring break and the onset of warmer days ahead, I encourage you all to pay attention to weather conditions and have a plan for safely enjoying outdoor fun.*

*Continuing to explore the topic of safety as spring settles in, let’s not forget that those spring-cleaning chores are also an area to watch. As you head up that ladder to clean gutters or windows, ensure you practice basic ladder safety. Be mindful when handling yard tools as well as good safety hygiene when operating yard equipment.*

*I know that safety and weather are not often interesting or inspiring topics. But any chance that I can get to emphasize how much this topic is important to GCE and the continuing drive to a safety culture, I will take it!*



We are proud to announce our Team Member of the Quarter Mikala January. Mikala not only excels at her role as project manager at Fort Johnson in Louisiana, but she goes beyond the expected performance by taking the reins whenever or wherever needed at GCE. She leads by example and inspires us all. Advocate, leader, compassionate team player – the list can go on and on about who Mikala is personally and professionally.

Mikala fosters team morale and community engagement, encouraging GCE participation in the Leesville, Louisiana, Mardi Gras parade and even helping organize a GCE float. Her ability to inspire, uplift and go the extra mile for her team and organization makes her an invaluable part of GCE and LifeView Group.



During GCE's Leadership Conference in Pensacola, Fla, team members shared "mission moments," highlighting the importance of work for those who have a disability. Three awards were presented to outstanding team members.

- Performance Excellence Award: Loni Enos, project manager at Naval Air Station Newport Rhode Island Food Services.
- Living the Mission Award (2 winners): Ben Rhodes, director of operations for food services. A second winner will receive their award at our April Next Generation Conference in Pensacola, Fla.
- President's Special Recognition Award: Jeremiah White, quality program manager on the Organizational Management Services team.

Team members from around the country came together to share best practices, celebrate awards and discuss the future of GCE. We celebrated the many accomplishments of 2024 and have hit the ground running for 2025.

Your dedication, compassion, expertise and teamwork were on full display!



Gregory Enyeart, shift leader III at Naval Air Station Pensacola Food Services, presents a "mission moment" of his personal story, highlighting the importance of work.



Theresa Wohlfarth, project manager at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton, Florida, at the Official Mail Center Services, presents a "mission moment" - her personal story of the significance of GCE's work opportunities.

The GCE team at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska were knee-deep in their annual evaluation for our food service contract in early February. The team had their Hennessy inspection for their DFACs on Feb. 10 and 11.

The Hennessy inspection is an annual evaluation of Air Force food service facilities and the people who work there. The inspection is named after John L. Hennessy, who was a leader in military food service during World War II. The inspection covers kitchen operations, serving and dining, personnel training, sanitation and overall management. The Hennessy Award is given to the top dining facility after all site inspections have been completed. Site leaders noted, "So far, our GCE team in Alaska after day one are doing great! Huge compliments to our team who have already received pats on the back for an exceptionally clean facility,



Pictured are two of the Hennessy inspectors and the GCE day shift team at the Two Seasons dining facility.

an awesome salad bar, as well as wonderful food presentation. We still have more to come, but we are having a blast and of course working hard and showing off this great team!" This is an exceptional team, dedicated and always taking great care to provide only the best service to the military men and women at Eielson Air Force Base.

*"We still have more to come, but we are having a blast and of course working hard and showing off this great team!"*

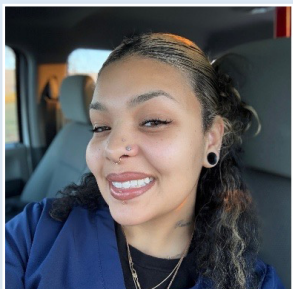
## Contract site news

### Fort Knox promotions



#### **Irvin Alvarado**

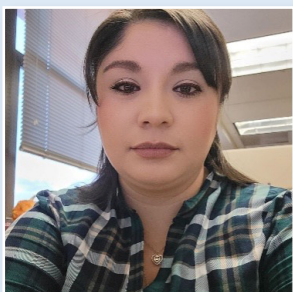
Congratulations to Irvin Alvarado on his recent promotion to VA Clinic team lead on the GCE custodial contract on base. Site leadership noted that he takes great pride in his work for the veteran community. Irvin doesn't shy away from difficult tasks. He takes action and does so with enthusiasm.



#### **Khalani Moise**

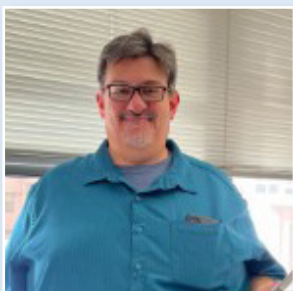
Congratulations to Khalani Moise on her promotion to shift lead II at our Fort Knox custodial contract site in Kentucky. GCE site management notes, "Khalani is super adaptable to any needed changes and can excel in any work environment. She is always optimistic and positive, which is appreciated by everyone on the team. Khalani believes in best-in-class customer service!"

### Fort Carson promotions



#### **Angel Romero**

Congratulations to Angel Romero on her promotion from quality monitor to supervisor at Fort Carson in Colorado! Site leadership noted that Angel's hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence have truly set her apart, and this new role is a testament to her outstanding contributions to the team. We appreciate the passion and integrity she brings to her work!



#### **Mike Lopez**

Congratulations to GCE team member Mike Lopez on his recent promotion to team lead. Site leaders note that Mike consistently demonstrates a high level of engagement with patients, their family members and his co-workers. He takes initiative on projects and approaches any challenges with a strategic and can-do attitude. As a trainer of new hires, his people skills and patience are exceptional and greatly appreciated.



#### **Ariesa West-Gaylor**

Congratulations to GCE team member Ariesa West-Gaylor on her recent promotion from PAS technician to team lead. Site leadership praised her comprehensive understanding of her role, while consistently applying in-depth expertise to tackle the most complex tasks and provide key solutions. She is a valuable resource to her fellow team members, highly motivated and a super positive individual. The team appreciates her ability to train new hires by passing on her skills so they are able to hit the ground running.



### **Massimiliano Caruso**

Congratulations to Massimiliano Caruso on his promotion from PAS technician to scheduling assistant for GCE. Site management noted, "Massimiliano has acquired significant knowledge regarding information analysis and productivity software, which is crucial to his new role. He has great compassion for the military men and women, to include their families, when scheduling their medical needs. Patient needs are always taken care of quickly and with the utmost care."



### **Mika Schlafli**

Congratulations to Mika Schlafli on her recent promotion from patient appointment tech to shift lead. Site leaders noted this new role will give Mika the opportunity to make an even bigger impact on her team, as well as the military patients and family members served. She is always looking for ways to help the organization and her fellow team members. She provides exceptional service and dedication to her role at GCE.



### **Kristin Hall**

Congratulations to GCE team member Kristin Hall on her recent promotion from patient appointment tech to quality monitor on our Fort Carson, Colorado, patient access services contract. Site leaders shared that Kristin is a highly motivated team member who can quickly adapt and learn new skills. She is dedicated, compassionate and wants to make a difference every single day at work. Everyone greatly appreciates her can-do attitude and service to our military customer.

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## **Armed Forces Retirement Home news**



### **Susie Baumunk**

We are excited to announce the promotion of Susie Baumunk to director of operations at the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) in Gulfport, Mississippi. GCE holds three contracts at this specific site. Bill Dietz, senior operations director, notes, "Susie's decades of experience in contracting have been a cornerstone of her success and have made her an invaluable asset to our team. Her deep understanding of operations, combined with her unwavering dedication to excellent customer service, has consistently driven positive outcomes for GCE and the residents at AFRH Gulfport. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Susie exemplifies GCE's culture and values. She has been a true ambassador, fostering collaboration, integrity and commitment to excellence. These qualities were pivotal in her selection for this vital leadership position." In her new role, Susie will oversee all operational aspects of our AFRH Gulfport food, custodial and property maintenance contracts, ensuring that we continue to deliver exceptional service and uphold our reputation for quality and professionalism.

GCE has partnered with The FedCap Group to provide a new resource for GCE team members, clients and their families. Single Stop is a platform building pathways out of poverty by leveraging partnerships and technology to connect people to existing resources, all through a unique one-stop shop. GCE is utilizing Single Stop to assist



**Katrina Simpkins**  
Senior Director of Community  
Employment Services

families with identifying financial programs to achieve their personal goals. Through the Single Stop platform, families could have access to up to 21 federal and state resources based on household eligibility after completing a 15 minute or less screening process! Single Stop locates organizations in your area that can assist you with food and housing. In addition, financial resources are provided with opportunities for education, counseling, training and support.

For additional information regarding Single Stop, please contact Robin Bivins at 850-495-2633, Robin.Bivins@gce.org or Talethia Shakes at 850-495-3097, Talethia.Shakes@gce.org.

Slips, trips and falls are among the leading causes of workplace injuries. Many of these accidents are preventable with simple awareness and proactive measures. This month, we are focusing on tripping hazards – what causes them, how to prevent them and what to do if you spot one.



**Jonathan Broussard**  
Safety Professional

Common causes of tripping hazards:

- Cluttered walkways: Tools, boxes, cords or loose materials in walking areas.
- Uneven flooring: Loose carpets, rugs or floor tiles that create an unexpected step.
- Poor lighting: Dimly lit areas make it hard to see obstacles.
- Unmarked hazards: Steps, slopes and wet floors without warning signs.
- Cords and cables: Unsecured extension cords or power cables crossing walkways.

Prevention tips:

- Keep walkways clear: Store materials properly and remove obstructions.
- Fix flooring issues: Report uneven surfaces, broken tiles or torn carpets.
- Ensure proper lighting: Replace burned-out bulbs and improve visibility in dark areas.
- Use signage: Mark temporary hazards like wet floors or step changes.
- Secure cords and cables: Use cord covers or route them away from walking paths.
- Wear appropriate footwear: Choose slip-resistant shoes with proper support.

What to do if you spot a hazard:

- Report the issue immediately to the safety team or maintenance.
- If possible, remove the hazard yourself (e.g., pick up items, close open drawers).
- Warn coworkers until the issue is resolved.

Safety reminder:

A simple trip can lead to serious injuries. Stay aware of your surroundings and take action to eliminate hazards before they cause an accident.

Stay safe and stay aware!

On Dec. 31, 2024, GCE received ISO 9001:2015 certification through National Quality Assurance (NQA)! It was an arduous road, but we made it. Our next surveillance is scheduled for Oct. 8, 2025.

Speaking of surveillance, this is a great time to discuss the ongoing part of this certification. Some folks would describe getting certified as a finish line. This is not the case. We are now qualified for the "marathon," and we must show continuous improvement to maintain our certification. As we continue to improve processes and procedures, please know that your input is valuable. We want to hear from you if you have ANY ideas to improve our processes and make your life easier.

During the coming months, we will be preparing to audit our processes internally and work with our consultant to continue growing our Quality Management System. For those of you wondering how this will look, we guarantee that you are doing exactly what you should! Our organization is full of team members who care for one another and want to succeed in this mission.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me directly at: [j.white@gce.org](mailto:j.white@gce.org).

Thanks for all you do!



**Jeremiah White**  
Quality Program Manager

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).

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