

Alan is making a DIFFERENCE

A CONVERSATION WITH JHL RESIDENT, ALAN HUBBARD



Alan Hubbard

Meet *JHL* neighbor, Alan Hubbard, the Chief Operating Officer at National Telecommuting Institute (NTI).

About 10 years ago when I was the EVP of Products at KANA Software in Manchester, my commute on Monday mornings was to Logan airport. I generally came home on the red-eye on Saturday mornings. One Satur-

day morning after a red-eye from California I was in my home office checking my email. My nine year old daughter, Katie, came into my office and gave me a big hug. After a couple of minutes catching each other up on the week's activities she asked me something I didn't expect. She said, "Daddy what to you do for work?" I looked at her a little surprised and said, "Katie, you know what I do for a living. I build software and sell it to companies to help them run their businesses." She said, "No. What do you 'do' for work? All I ever see you do is read email and talk on the phone."

Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather. I thought I was a pretty big deal! I was a million mile flier on United Airlines, I had over 250 people working for me all around the world, but my daughter thought all I did was talk on the phone and read email.

I went on to other companies and jobs but the comment stayed with me. It wasn't till I met Dr. MJ Willard, founder and Executive Director of NTI that something changed. Dr. Willard was one of the pioneers of the work at home model for call centers. Except she didn't do it just to reduce costs or provide an employment perk. She did it so that Americans with severe disabilities, many of whom couldn't even leave the house had an opportunity to work. I was hooked. Here was a company that needed my technical and operational skills. A company that helped people who often had no other employment options and were forced to live on SSI and/or SSDI payments. The money they receive from SSI and SSDI is barely above poverty income level.

Today, I probably still spend as much time on the phone and reading email as I did at KANA. But at the end of the day there are 700-800 people who wouldn't have jobs without NTI's assistance. Hopefully, with some hard work on our part it will be 1000 this year and more the year after. At Christmas this year Katie (now a 19 year old college sophomore) and I reminisced about this story. When we finished she laughed and said, "Daddy I know what you do now is important."

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Mark is a Solution Advisor for NTI. He is visually impaired and almost completely blind. He interviews candidates and provides job coaching and mentoring.

How long have you worked for the organization? I have been at NTI for 5 years.

Tell us a little more about NTI: NTI was founded in 1995 as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, NTI pursues a mission to identify and develop work-at-home jobs for home-based Americans who are physically disabled. Since that time, NTI has provided trained work-at-home employees to some of the largest U.S. government agencies, Fortune 500 companies and to smaller businesses who want to outsource customer service and technical support operations in order to reduce costs. We continue to look for new ways to find employment for our applicants. In 2012, NTI opened two new divisions: LandAjob and The Staffing Connection. These two divisions are aimed at assisting and placing Americans with Disabilities in obtaining on-site jobs.

NTI provides training, job placement and job coaching services to Americans with Disabilities. Over 56 million people (1 in 5) are considered disabled in America. The unemployment rate for the disabled is over 14% and many of the people NTI trains and places have not worked in over 4 years. Our services are 100% free

to the job candidates. All of our costs are covered by our client fees and our partnership with the Social Security Administration.

How long have you lived in the neighborhood? We're going on our tenth year on King Rd. I grew up in the inner city. The first time I walked into our back yard and looked out all I could say is, "I could own a pond!" I was hooked.

To learn more about NTI, visit www.nticentral.org

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