

NEW GCE PRESIDENT

A. Dwight Davis is the president of Global Connections to Employment (GCE). He works at the Pensacola, Florida office location.

Prior to joining GCE, Dwight served as director of operations for The Rockhill Group. He joined Rockhill in 2018 after retiring from a 26-year career in the U.S. Air Force. As director, Dwight was responsible for the execution of Department of Defense, Federal Aviation Administration, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Services contracts across 37 locations nationwide and overseas.



Dwight Davis

Prior to his retirement from the Air Force, Dwight served in multiple leadership roles that included command of a Special Operations Squadron, Operations Group, and served as Chief of Staff for a two-star Joint and Interagency Task Force combating illicit trafficking from Central and South America. Dwight is a combat veteran with multiple deployments in support of operations in Bosnia, South Korea, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Dwight received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration Operations Management from Auburn University in 1991 and a Master of Aviation Science with Distinction from Embry Riddle. He was a Distinguished Graduate from the U.S. Air Force Air Command and Staff College and was awarded a Master of Military Operational Arts and Science. Dwight was selected for a National Defense Fellowship at the Naval Postgraduate School where he earned the Military Officers Association of America Advanced Joint Warfare Award.

Dwight is from Marietta, Georgia. He and his wife Nancy Davis, a local artist, have a son, Andrew, and daughter, Catherine. The family resides in Pensacola, Florida.

A NOTE FROM ALLISON

As 2021 draws to a close I want to take the opportunity to look back on a year that turned out much differently than anyone could have imagined. For an organization like Global Connections to Employment (GCE), the holiday season is the perfect time to reflect on the past year, celebrate successes and plan for the future. We take pride in our collective efforts and the impact we make on hundreds if not thousands of people in multiple states.



Helping people with disabilities find meaningful employment continues to be our focus and mission. We rely on you and all of our GCE family members to help us frame our future and achieve new partnerships with community businesses and the government. We seek new opportunities for those who are searching for a diverse and inclusive work life, which we offer at GCE.

It has been said that "adversity does not build character, but reveals it" and this year, just like in 2020, I believe this still holds true even now as we move in 2022. The commitment to our core values and our ability to thrive, evolve and handle tough situations with leadership, grace and steadiness is nothing short of amazing.

As we continue to manage constant change, the reality is that it will probably take a little longer before things settle down. Some things are within our control and others are not. So, I want to thank you for all the hard work and commitment you've shown over the past year. Our combined strength is what makes us a successful organization through the toughest of times.

I want you to know that you are a huge blessing to me and so many others. Moving into the New Year, you and I must remain focused on a lot of things to achieve our Mission of Helping People throughout Life's Journey including: fiscal responsibility, excellent service, open communication, and teamwork to name a few.

As your leader, I appreciate the trust you put in me. I don't take it lightly because our work is important. It touches lives. I'm inspired by your belief in the miracles we can bring to life by making small positive impacts every day.

With love, Allison

TEAM MEMBER OF THE YEAR - ALAN GARRONE

Alan Garrone was born with a learning disability that impacts his comprehension. It takes him longer to learn some things, but he's learned a lot at GCE. Alan started working at GCE 11 years ago after he graduated from high school. He transitioned into a janitorial role with GCE working at Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Florida. Alan was responsible for trash removal in a 255,000-square-foot building.

"I worked at the hospital for about 7 years, but I was interested in changing jobs so I could learn something new," Alan said. "I like working outside." About three years ago, a grounds maintenance position came open on the Lakeview Center campus and Alan fit right in doing landscaping, edging, weeding, moving furniture, and always jumping in to help with anything else a team member needs. He works on equipment and drives a van that pulls a 25-foot trailer. He is learning how to trim trees and has applied for the next position up from groundskeeper. His job gives him purpose in life – a regular schedule and a great job to report to. His best friend at work is his boss, Bryan.

Whether Alan is working to make extra money to help pay bills at home, coaching a young surfer for the Special Olympics or going behind a team member to help with a project at-hand, he is always helping in some way. "I like my job. What I like the most is getting to know people and working like a team."

Go to [GCE.org/videos](https://youtu.be/c1LQ8bb1TJU) to hear Alan's story - <https://youtu.be/c1LQ8bb1TJU>.



VETERAN TEAM MEMBER OF THE YEAR - EDDY CRUZ CRUZ

At the end of 2010, Ediberto "Eddy" Cruz Cruz, an infantryman in the United States Marine Corps, deployed to Afghanistan. By January 2011, he was in armored military vehicle that hit an improvised explosive device (IED). Eddy walked away with hearing loss, back pain, tinnitus and eventually depression.

Transitioning to civilian life with a disability was challenging, but with a lot of hard work, he landed in a great place. He graduated from California State University Monterey Bay with a degree in computer science with a concentration in computer networking. When he found the Global Connections to Employment (GCE) Information Technology Training Program (ITTP) in Monterey, California near his home. He signed up, graduated and entered the GCE workforce as a Trainee II. Under the supportive guidance of his project manager, Joel Johnson, also a Veteran, Eddy is now a software developer.

Working at GCE alleviates stress found in most corporate IT jobs because the Mission is to help people – that includes anyone with a disability. "Recently, Eddy was able to be a part of the U.S. military transition out of Afghanistan. As a developer on the non-combatant Tracking System team he was a key player that helped to support the recent civilian evacuations in Afghanistan. He was recognized by the United States Northern Command with the quote: "thank you for the support from Eddy Cruz Cruz and other GCE team members."

Eddy noted that the recognition received from Northern Command was greatly appreciated and that people with significant disabilities can continue to serve our great country.

Go to [GCE.org/videos](https://youtu.be/k-oql1YbqOQ) to hear Eddy's story - <https://youtu.be/k-oql1YbqOQ>.



GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

It Starts with you!

Each of you has a story to share about the struggles of finding work. Finding an inclusive and diverse work environment where you are not made to feel “less than,” and where accommodations are available, is not easy to find. That workplace where you and your abilities are celebrated, and the focus is not on your disability, is at GCE. Many people do not understand your work life and personal struggles, but they make decisions on your behalf in Washington D.C. and on Capitol Hill without your input or input from your team members. Let others know how organizations such as Global Connections to Employment and the AbilityOne program changed your life. We will share your stories, and also encourage you to be active with congressional members in the state where you live. You can contact Senators or House Representatives through their websites. Call their offices in Washington D.C., or a local district office in your community. GCE can help you create your message and walk you through the entire process, so that you are prepared to be heard and your unique message meets your personal needs. If interested, please contact Lori Kain, GCE governmental affairs director, at Lori.Kain@gce.org, or ask your project manager to set up a meeting with you and Lori.



Lori Kain, Director of Government and Community Relations

We will continue to invite members of Congress and their staff to visit our work sites across the country so that they can better understand the work you do, your needs, and as tax payers, why your opinion matters.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

We would love to hear about your volunteering efforts in the communities where you live. Please ask your supervisor or project manager to send a picture of you volunteering along with information that explains where you volunteer, what you do to help, and how long you have been assisting the organization. Remember, if people are in the picture with you, ask for their permission to publish the photo in our newsletter.

Looking ahead to 2022, take some time to think about where your GCE team can volunteer in your community. Last year we held the food drive, so perhaps this year we can do something different. Please speak with your project manager, and send your ideas to Lori.Kain@gce.org.

WHO KNEW

- Who knew that in fiscal year 2021 (October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021) we would help 322 people with a disability find a job either on a AbilityOne military contact site or in the communities where they live. In 2020 we placed 270 people and that was during the COVID-19 pandemic!
- That our site safety would be 97.49%, out of 100%. That is truly exceptional, and you should be very proud of that.
- **National Disability Employment Awareness Month was a success for October!** (see celebration photos on the next page)



Samsung Quad Camera
Shot with my Galaxy A71 5G

Positive Attitude Toward Safety

Why is it important to remain positive about safety at work?

Can maintaining a positive attitude toward job safety prevent on-the-job injuries?

We all have days when our work attitudes could be better. Admittedly, there are days when you or I might have a poor attitude. Turning that around and becoming more positive can have valuable effects on your life at home and work.



JONATHAN BROUSSARD

There are many reasons to maintain a positive attitude. It can improve your overall mood, make you more enjoyable to be around, and improve your overall health. Possible benefits of a positive attitude include:

- Increase overall life span.
- Lower rates of depression.
- Lower levels of distress.
- Improve immune response.
- Improved psychological and physical well-being.
- Reduce risk of death from cardiovascular disease.
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress.
- Decrease the probability of being injured on the job.

In contrast, a negative attitude can lead to the following:

- Carelessness
- Complacency
- Taking Shortcuts
- Distraction from task at hand.
- Result in unsafe behavior.
- Incidents
- Injuries which could result in long term consequences.

Methods we can use to improve our attitudes:

1. **Recognize it** – The first step to improvement is recognizing when there is a problem. Analyze your attitude and evaluate why it's in that state. Think of something you have to be grateful about. It is difficult to feel grateful and negative at the same time.
2. **Why are you feeling negative?** – Evaluate the source of the attitude problem. Is it a coworker, a leader, a situation from home? Take note of the things causing you to be negative.
3. **Address the issues** – Take time to address the issues you are having at work. Have a conversation with the person you feel is the root cause of the problem. It doesn't have to be a negative conversation. You could ask them if they are having a bad day and offer to help. Sometimes people just need someone to listen. Consult with your project manager if you feel you are unable to resolve the issue.
4. **Remain Aware of your Attitude** – Do a daily self-check of your attitude. It is easy to become negative as the stress of daily living begins to increase. The faster you can turn it around to a positive attitude, the better you will begin to feel.

Remember to keep all safety interactions positive. Think about how many people changed your mind or behavior by a negative interaction ... don't be that negative person. Be positive!

Cryptocurrency

Cryptocurrency is a form of payment that can be exchanged online for goods and services. Many companies have issued their own currencies, often called tokens, and these can be traded specifically for the good or service that the company provides. Think of them as you would arcade tokens. You'll need to exchange real money for the cryptocurrency to buy the goods or service.



JOHNNIE ZIMMERMAN

Cryptocurrencies work using an online ledger (blockchain) with strong cryptography to secure online transactions. Part of the appeal of this technology is its security. Much of the interest in these unregulated currencies is to trade for profit, with speculators driving prices upward – or crashing them making the cryptocurrency market a very volatile one.

Cryptocurrencies appeal to people for many reasons. Here are some of the most popular:

- Some see cryptocurrencies as the currency of the future and are racing to buy them now, presumably before they become more valuable.
- Some like the fact that cryptocurrency removes central banks from managing the money supply, since over time these banks tend to reduce the value of money via inflation.
- Some like the technology behind cryptocurrencies, the blockchain, because it can be more secure than traditional payment systems.
- Some like cryptocurrencies because they can go up in value very quickly and then possibly be sold off in the same manner. In other words, get rich quick!

Cryptocurrencies may go up in value, but many investors see them as mere speculation, because cryptocurrencies generate no cash flow, so for you to profit, someone has to pay more for the currency than you did.

If you're looking to buy cryptocurrency, read the fine print in the selling company's prospectus for the following information to better protect yourself:

- Who owns the company? An identifiable and well-known owner is a positive sign.
- Are there other major investors who are investing in it? It's a good sign if other well-known investors want a piece of the currency.
- Will you own a stake in the company or just currency or tokens? Owning a stake means you get to participate in its earnings (you're an owner), while buying tokens simply means you're entitled to use them, like arcade tokens.
- Are the goods/services already developed, or is the company looking to raise money to develop it? The further along the product, the less risky it is.

But beyond those concerns, just having cryptocurrency exposes you to the risk of theft, as hackers try to penetrate the computer networks that maintain your assets. One high-profile exchange declared bankruptcy in 2014 after hackers stole hundreds of millions of dollars in bitcoins. Those aren't typical risks for investing in stocks and funds on major U.S. exchanges.

Researching your options and knowing your personal tolerance to a more volatile market is the key to understanding cryptocurrency. Happy Hunting!

LIVING OUR VALUES (value coin recognition)

Ownership: accountable, engaged, stewardship, responsive, committed

Integrity: honest, principled, trustworthy, transparent

Compassion: empathetic, merciful, sensitive, kind, giving, forgiving, hopeful

Excellence: safety, quality, distinguished, learning, improving

Service: welcoming, attentive, humble, respectful, exceeds expectations, collaborative



GCE Value coins are given out by managers and supervisors to recognize team members for consistently living one of our Values every day. When a team member earns all five Value coins he or she will receive a Value pin, coin holder and plaque with certificate.

Five Coin Recipient Value Plaques (September, October, November 2021)

Fort Rucker, Fort Rucker, AL – Mail and Records/Publication Services: Wendy Henderson, Wanda Tye, Crystal Baxter, Jennifer Johnson, Bradley Conley, Toni Albanese, Jill McQueen

U.S. Army 7th Special Forces Group, Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach, FL – Food Services: Justin Kelley, James Woods, Tyshawn Walker, Michelle McLemore

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Tacoma, WA – Food Services: Nifateus Bradley, Nicole Boatner

Gulf Breeze Hospital, Gulf Breeze, FL – Food Services: Moses Cross, Angela Mace, Faith Manning, Michael Pruette, Nifateus Bradley, Nicole Boatner Christian Wilkerson

Baptist Hospital, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services: Melissa Dortch, Brandon Holiday

Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach, FL – Custodial Services: Cynthia Trainor, Tracy Douglas

Naval Air Station Pensacola, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services: Amy Noble

Naval Air Station Pensacola, Pensacola, FL – Food Services: Kathy Erwin

Fort Campbell, Fort Campbell, TN – Custodial Services: Ken Manson, Linda Schadegg, Dexter Young

Barksdale Air Force Base, Barksdale, LA – Food Services: Melani Laffitte

Lakeview Center, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services: Louis Jones, Jayvaris Rathel, Carrie Miller, Johnny Kidd, Willie Holiday

Value coin recipients (September, October, November 2021)

U.S. Army 7th Special Forces Group, Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach, FL – Food Services:

Christopher Bennett, Michelle McLemore, Amber Limes, James Johnson

Gulf Breeze Hospital, Gulf Breeze, FL: Custodial Services

Chris Massey

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Tacoma, WA – Food Services:

Amy Buckler, Linda Robinson, Ki Sun Weaver

Naval Air Station Pensacola, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services:

Betty Wells, Carl Stallworth

Fort Campbell, Fort Campbell, KY – Custodial Services:

Michael Hammonds, Victoria Loveless, Carson Nanney, Jodi Bryant, Frances Chester, Cody Whitfield, Irma Candelario, Vernon Babb, Ashley

Ferranti, Alex Icheke, Francisco Valle, Lauren Milne, Aaron Cooper, Nelly Rivera, Emmanuel Roman, Eli Winans, Eddie Campbell, Justin Harmon, Mark Rushing, Dustin Waikel, Patrick Rose, James Tafolla, Alyssa Hilber Cortopassi, Stacey Bowen, Shawn Stanger, Cathy Fentress

IT Services, Seaside, CA:

David Santa

Baptist Hospital, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services:

Andrew Hinkle, Skylar Wilson, Robert Baker, David Swafford, Angelic Gratton, Leo Deason, Melissa Dortch, Patricia Dallen, Donnell Hurry, Garrett Todd, Sam Richardson, Loretta Crenshaw

Pensacola Federal Courthouse and Arnow Federal Building Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services:

Tavarus Brown, Yvette Bridges, Shrell Grey, Robert Malden, Ricky Reeves

Eglin Air Force Base, Ft Walton Beach, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services:

Charles Allen, Cristain Arzuaga, Eun Chun, Chris Coltman, Sherry D'onofrio, Tracy Douglas, Robert Hammen, Amanda Henderson, Jordan Hoover, Quellan Jones, Wanda Muse, Morissa Reado, Randall Schneider, Serless Stokes, Cynthia Trainor, Gregory Weeks, Larry White

Lakeview Center, Pensacola, FL – Custodial Services:

Brian Coleman, Brenda Robinson, Derrick Posey, Keon Lipscomb, Deborah Long, Sharon Cunningham, Damon Henry, Jonathan Garner, Austin Clark, Scotti Phillips, Tracy Godwin, Cleo Spencer, Gynn Salter, Thomas Greathouse, Derick Stokes

Barksdale Air Force Base, Barksdale, LA – Food Services:

Tracy Bethel, Elpedia Cezar

Fort Campbell Schools/Dept of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Fort Campbell, TN – Custodial Services:

Aaron Shelton, Elaine McLaughlin, Vielka Allen, Barry Thomas, Lisa Walpole, Dennis James, Aijalon Davis, Bernardo Ruiz-Sotomayor, Roger Harris, Matthew Gallaway, Melody Watson, Tony Bell, Shantel Baldwin, James Woodward, Sherry Wilson, Anthony Edwards, Betty Shaw, Genie Alvarez, Foster Rogers, Theresa Blakely, Nekescha Oliver, Cassandra Taylor, Delon Gray, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Neomi Colon, Joseph Shaler, Mathew Cameron, Rachel Hunter

GCE Administration, Pensacola, FL:

Russ Schreiner