

## TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### Meet some of our team members at GCE



Tonia Vaughn Schumacher

I'm a single mom with three children. My kids and I lost our home due to environmental mold issues in April of 2017. At that same time, I received an email from GCE offering me a position on the EITS contract. We were elated as a family that I would be working because this would enable us to find another home quickly, in an area where the cost of living is expensive and continuously increasing.

I have been with GCE as a Business Analyst for almost three years now, and my employment remains the anchor/rock of our life here on the Central Coast. I have an office that is quiet, dark, safe, and healthy. I am not required to attend non-essential meetings, and my memory loss and brain issues are understood. Incremental goals and to-do lists protect me from too much work-related stress and give me the time I need to pay attention to health issues on an as-needed basis. I am also afforded as-needed daily breaks in the surrounding nature preserve, and there is always a veteran supervisor or DOD civilian supervisor available to me. Both are extremely supportive. My work is methodical and goal-driven and takes my mind off other work/life matters.

My coworker and frontline supervisor are also veterans who understand me, where I come from as a veteran, and what we have all been through collectively. It is good to have that level of understanding and trust from the very beginning of any work relationship. I know that connection and trust will endure through time. There also are other non-veteran employees/supervisors from GCE and other contracts or civilians within DMDC who show kindness, care and concern and have also helped me transition back to work after seven years.

I do not believe I would have been able to re-enter the workforce at all in meaningful employment with the multiple issues I sustained while in the military without the knowledge and backing of GCE. The GCE team is very forgiving, understanding and accommodating and I am forever grateful to them for giving me – a veteran of the Persian Gulf War – employment and support.

## A NOTE FROM XAN

*GCE pays close attention to the impact we have on our team members, customers and communities. What makes us unique is that we and our partners actively pursue the same Mission at multiple locations across the country: Helping People throughout Life's Journey. There is no single playbook because each contract site and each customer is different with a specific set of challenges that are forever changing. Yet we remain agile and focused.*



Xan Smith, GCE President

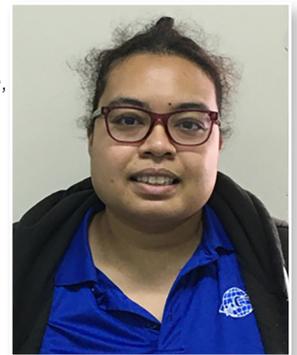
*It could be said that we help people throughout life's journey, and strive to show that all "abilities" provide limitless opportunities and possibilities. Each person with a disability has goals and aspirations to be self-sufficient and obtain meaningful employment. Our customers' expectations of us are to be dedicated to the safety and health of their teams. Therefore, we commit to do our part by living our Values: excellence, compassion, service, ownership, and integrity. We understand that their confidence in our organization is not a given, and we strive to earn their trust.*

*GCE and our customers (partners) know that people are our most important resource. Embracing diversity and harnessing talent is key to accomplishing our mission. Our partnerships with the Department of Defense, hospitals, and businesses are key to supporting the strengths and values of individuals with disabilities. GCE team members play an important role in the health and safety of our nation. We must give everyone the opportunity to succeed and support them as they advance their careers and goals on their journeys in life.*



Rebecca Terrell

Rebecca Terrell began her journey with GCE in July 2006, as a food services worker in the dish room. She suffered from deep mental depression and bipolar illness, which led to her struggle with drug addiction that lasted eight years. In 2004, she hit rock bottom. Realizing she did not want to live that way or continue down that path any longer, she decided to take responsibility for her actions. Although she knew overcoming addiction would be difficult, she also knew it was possible. Rebecca went to live in a transition house, where she was willing to do whatever it took to get her life back. She knew she needed to gain employment so she could soon start supporting herself and her family. "I'm very grateful GCE gave me the opportunity to work five days a week and be able to continue attending NA meetings," Rebecca said. In 2008, she became the dish room team leader. During her employment with GCE, Rebecca's life changed tremendously. She has learned to accept change. Later in 2008, Rebecca's son was shot in the head. He now lives in a nursing facility. Every day she witnesses the shifting transformation in his life and body. Rebecca is very thankful that GCE team members have been there to support her and her son. In 2011, she decided to expand her knowledge and leadership role, applying for a higher position as a food services supervisor. Since filling that role, Rebecca has worked in several buildings at the Armed Forces Retirement Home. She has goals outside of GCE too. Rebecca is in the process of becoming a licensed mental health coach. She works part time in a women's mental health facility, helping women with addiction. Rebecca has said, "No one wakes up and says, I am going to be an addict; but there is one choice you can make: how long are you going to stay sick? Addiction is not a choice, but recovery is! Choosing GCE was a big part of my road to recovery!"



Alyssa Twine

My name is Alyssa Twine and I began working for GCE in 2019. In the past, I worked for other employers who did not understand my seizure disorder, and I was insulted and even fired. Since working for GCE, I have learned to have compassion for others and teamwork. GCE understands my medical condition and allows me breaks when needed, time off and a flexible schedule. Everyone has a disability and a story to tell. My job at GCE allows me to pay my bills, student loans, and medical bills. I no longer have to use other agencies for help.

## GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

What is advocacy? In its simplest definition, advocacy is standing up for something you believe to be right. Disability advocates believe that individuals with disabilities should have the opportunity to live independently and have access to meaningful work. Advocates also believe that people with disabilities can spark positive change in the communities where they live.

Self-advocacy is the act of speaking up for yourself and the things that are important to you. It's asking for the things you need and desire, and sharing your ideas with people such as congressional leaders to improve access to those needs and desires. Self-advocacy is how you fight for your rights and make change happen in local, state, and the federal government. You have a say in decisions that impact all areas of your life, including public policy decisions that affect you.

Recently, team members who work at Fort Campbell, Fort Knox and on the GCE Defense Health Agency (DHA) contracts have been instrumental in fighting for their rights, reaching out to congressional leaders and making sure their voices are heard. They have written letters, and they've verbally shared their stories about their work at GCE. They've also called local, state, and federal offices to share their stories. Make no mistake, you are being heard, and we are proud of each and every one of you. The GCE leadership team continues to do the same to advocate with you and for you. Our goal is to ensure your voices are heard and rights upheld to transform legislation now and into the future. In doing so, we strive to protect our team members and the work you perform.

## UPCOMING EVENTS / WHO KNEW?

The impact of COVID-19 on our health in 2020 cannot be ignored. Many of us learned throughout 2020 that perhaps we may not be as healthy as we thought we were. Maybe you ignored yearly visits to the doctor for routine wellness appointments.

The world in which we live presented an abrupt and scary awakening in 2020. We must practice self-care and always strive to improve our well-being and health. One place to start is to have a primary care doctor you can see when you're sick, instead of going to an emergency room. A wellness visit to your primary care physician includes: checking your weight and blood pressure, completing a physical exam and having any screening tests you may need. These visits can alert you to health issues before they are emergent or life-threatening. For example, there are ways to prevent diabetes and your doctor can provide education on that health topic. Wellness visits are a great preventive measure that keep you healthy and happy. Your health is important so please don't take it for granted.

## QUALITY WITH STEPHANIE COOPER

### **Why Are Certifications Important?**

An organization certification (e.g., CIMS-GB, ISO 9001:2015) or individual certification (e.g., ServSafe, CHEST, PMP) adds value and credibility to our services, while increasing marketability. In today's world, we must strive to set ourselves apart from our competition. GCE does this by pursuing organization certifications like CIMS-GB and ISO 9001:2015. These certifications provide third party oversight to our internal processes and operations. This external oversight gives our customers, and potential customers, confidence in the services we provide.



**STEPHANIE COOPER**

This summer GCE will undergo two recertification audits. Our custodial and health care environmental services lines of business will recertify to the CIMS-GB standard, and our IT line of business will recertify to ISO 9001:2015. Everyone plays a role when we undergo an audit. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Know about and be able to locate company policies and procedures.
- Understand the organization's procedures.
- Maintain customer focus, and report customer feedback to your senior leadership.

GCE also encourages team member development by providing access to training platforms and certification study modules. Team members have access to Cornerstone and the SourceAmerica Academy. Cornerstone is GCE's learning management system (LMS), and the program houses training modules developed by our organization. The SourceAmerica Academy is SourceAmerica's LMS which includes Skillsoft Training modules. The SourceAmerica Academy contains more than 9,000 learning assets, from customer service to computer programming/cloud development, and includes many certification exam prep courses. In addition, Lori Webster, quality and training specialist, conducts instructor-led certification classes for certified health care environmental service technicians (CHEST). Please let your leader know or contact GCE's talent development team at [GCE-TalentDevelopment@gce.org](mailto:GCE-TalentDevelopment@gce.org) if you would like additional information about these development opportunities.

## SAFETY WITH JONATHAN BROUSSARD

### **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 types of emergencies that can 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 workplace is to prepare before an emergency occurs. Most people don't think clearly in times of crisis. Thinking through your actions in advance will allow you to consider the appropriate actions.

Each location should have an emergency action plan. You may have to ask the building owner or the military for the document. Use your location's emergency action plan to find the following information:

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

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 until cleared by emergency services. Notify emergency responders if you believe that 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 professional.



**JONATHAN BROUSSARD**

## SECURITY WITH JOHNNIE ZIMMERMAN

### **WeChat? What? Choose your messaging app wisely.**

WeChat is an app that gained popularity, in part, from being a controversial service worldwide. Several debates have taken place concerning the security of WeChat, and the United States is currently trying to ban the app—although the final verdict is being decided in court at this time.

WeChat is a messaging, social media, and electronic payment application that is owned by the Chinese company Tencent. The app has more than one billion users worldwide, including users in the United States. WeChat automatically harvests information from its users to provide the People's Republic of China access to Personally Identifiable Information (PII) belonging to U.S. Citizens and Chinese nationals in the U.S.

Censorship is one of the main problems with WeChat. Like all services in China, it is under constant government surveillance. Pictures, comments, and blog posts are subject to heavy censorship, with undesirable opinions disappearing quickly from the platform.

Although WeChat only censors users with phone numbers from mainland China, its surveillance is far-reaching. WeChat does not offer end-to-end encryption, a privacy feature that users expect from most messaging apps. The app has backdoors that



**JOHNNIE ZIMMERMAN**

allow third parties to read the messages you send and receive, which greatly affects data security. The information WeChat collects must be stored somewhere, and users do not know what security measures are set in place to protect it, or where the data might end up.

Since WeChat operates under Chinese laws, the app can be a potential threat to the national security of countries where it's being used. Under Chinese law provisions, the government can access a user's messages and contacts at any time. The app also uses keyword filtration and blockage. This means some keywords will be blocked or filtered and the message not sent properly, or its meaning changed. This type of filtration is solely at the discretion of Chinese law provisions. As such, a few countries in addition to the United States have called for a ban on the app.

As you may now realize, WeChat has some serious security issues. With all the different ways to communicate in today's world it is important to choose wisely.

## LOB SPOTLIGHT: VETERANS INITIATIVE

The Veteran's Initiative was created by GCE's senior leadership team. We wanted to honor, but also support Veterans as they transition out of military service. What better way to help the transition process than to hire Veterans on GCE contracts. With more than 30 years, doing business predominantly within the department of defense, our leadership knows that when we hire a Veteran, we gain a loyal, team-oriented employee with job-ready skills, tested leadership abilities and a strong, mission-focused work ethic.

We know that Veterans are typically highly educated, have transferable certifications/licenses, and most possess the "soft skills" that enhance not only our organizational culture, but also our customers' overall experiences.

We recognize the tremendous contributions of the men and women who serve our country, and we are grateful for not only the service members, but also their families, who have committed their lives to keeping our nation safe.

Most Veterans with disabilities face significant challenges as they transition back to civilian life or seek to balance their careers with continued service in the National Guard or Reserves. We want them to know that we are here for them.

To help deploy the Veterans Initiative, we hired a Veteran Program Manager and two Veteran Liaisons. The program manager is focused on finding new opportunities for Veteran partnerships at the local, regional, and national levels. The Veteran liaisons are providing Veteran services that are designed to support and assist Veterans as they navigate the GCE employment cycle either as an applicant or as an existing team member. In addition, a core team was established to provide guidance and oversight for the Veterans Initiative. This team meets monthly to identify needs and areas of focus for our Veteran team members and to ensure the Veterans Initiative is meeting the needs of internal and external Veterans as intended.

For more information go to: [www.gce-vets.org](http://www.gce-vets.org)

### Core Veterans Initiative team members:



Stephen Carter – Veterans Program  
Employment Manager



Lisa Bloodworth – Director of Transition  
and Support Services



April Millender – Director Recruiting  
and Employment Services



Dawn Smith – Marketing/Business  
Development Specialist



Jeovanni Alicea Astacio, Veteran Liaison  
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850.418.5829



Dacardo King, Veteran Liaison  
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850.418.5778

## 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 (December 2020 - February 2021)

**Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach, FL – Custodial Services:** Eric Draper, Chance Eudy, Arle Ferguson, Brenda Griffith, Jordan Hoover, Quellan Jones, Dison Kilafwasru, James McTear, Keshia McTear, James Parsons, Joseph Ponce, Mariana Provenciano, William Schrader, Randall Schreiner, Becky Smith, Sherry Thompson, Brandon Trainor, Gregory Weeks, Jackie Williams, Karl Williams, Yvon Yardley, Thomas Dooley, Harvey Ferguson, Virginia Fuller, Richard Johnson, Lloyd Sanders, Corey Wolf

**Baptist Towers, Pensacola FL – Custodial Services:** Shirley Rankin

**Fort Polk, Vernon Parish, LA – Food Services:** Brenda McCarter

**Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Tacoma WA – Food Services:** Chong Anderton, Helen Archie, Sun Asher, Christine Barrick, Sharon Johnson, DJ Rideout, Nashya Taylor, Hans Gregory, Megan Pruette, Tong Harms

**Operational Management Services – Pensacola, FL:** Lori Schumann, Lori Webster

### Value coin recipients (December 2020 - February 2021)

#### **Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach, FL – Custodial Services:**

Allyn Carter, Kayla Fletchers

#### **Joint Base Lewis McChord, Tacoma, WA – Food Services:**

Rafietou Agoro, Kevin Beleau, Kamille Burnett, Jonna Guist, Robert Johnston, Brendan McGinty, Linda Robinson, Kathryn Savage, Yong Sim, Madison Taylor, Elizabeth Webster

#### **Fort Polk, Vernon Parish, LA – Food Services:**

Jonathan Falke, Heatherlee Martin-Minion, Eric Wallace, Jerry Williams, Angelica Squires, Patricia McCalin, Sharolotte Cossey, Jimmie Williams, Patricia Redman, Christopher Bailey, Isaiah Vallaire

#### **DMDC, Lorton, VA – IT Services:**

Troy Hamill

#### **DMDC, Monterey, CA – IT Services:**

Sylvia Calderon, Sergio Mejia, Edna Vantran, Cliff Cummings, John Brooks

#### **Fort Knox, Fort Knox, KY – Custodial and Facilities Maintenance:**

Kim Barlow, Brenda Barnes, Jacob Bell, Will Castellano, Rachel Dougherty, Cheman Evaro, Frank Gainer, Kendra Gillespie, Heather Hodge,

Velkis Isakson, Stanley Keith, Brittany Killebrew, Dominic Ledbetter, Christa Lewis, Samantha McKellar, Richard Myldy, Eric Remsburg, Joey Renfrow, Rose Renfrow, Gloria Rodriguez, Sara Rodriguez, Pam Sifritt, Carolyn Staley, Mark White, Cheryl Wood, Chester Anderson, Jeffrey Cusimano

#### **MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, FL – Custodial Services:**

Dana Jedrick Jonathan Broussard, Lori Webster, Casey Durrstein

#### **US Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, Clearwater, FL – Custodial Services:**

Miquel Negron

#### **Gulf Breeze Hospital, Gulf Breeze, FL – Custodial Services:**

Chris Massey

#### **Organizational Management Services, Pensacola, FL:**

Shirley Carey

#### **Armed Forces Retirement Home, Gulfport, MS – Food Services:**

Stephanie Livermore