

Assurant Employee Benefits Recognizes Perseverance, Contributions of Workers with Disabilities

Employees Join in Events Celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness

Strength. Courage. Perseverance.

While those words are of particular importance during [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#), observed in October, disability awareness is always top of mind for [Assurant Employee Benefits](#).

“Assurant Employee Benefits believes it’s important to support people and help them find the strength, courage and perseverance to rise above disabilities or injuries and return to work,” said Heather Yows, second vice president of Corporate Communications at Assurant Employee Benefits. “And, all year round, through major sponsorships and employee participation in community events, we recognize those who find the strength to succeed despite physical or emotional challenges.”

Assurant Employee Benefits was a key sponsor of “Ability Quest: Run, Walk, Stroll or Roll” event last month that celebrates the progress children and adults have made after a disabling injury or illness. Among those participating was Sonya Spearman, an Assurant Employee Benefits claims analyst in Kansas City, Mo. who found the courage to persevere after a potentially fatal illness.

Just four months after giving birth to her first child, she was diagnosed with [neuromyelitis optica \(Devic’s syndrome\)](#), which affects the optic nerves and spinal cord.

“I was told I’d never walk or work again,” she said. She also was cautioned that her life expectancy would be only three to five years.

But Spearman proved the medical experts wrong, teaching herself to walk again, using a cane and walker. She also learned to drive again. Two years after her diagnosis, she was hired by Assurant Employee Benefits, where she recently celebrated her 15th anniversary. And, on Oct. 11, Spearman completed the “Ability Quest” course using her walker. “Sonya is an inspiration to everyone around her,” Yows said. “She demonstrates perseverance everyday through her consistent focus on what she can do, not what she can’t. This motivates all of us.”



Sonya Spearman (above) and other Assurant Employee Benefits employees take part in “Ability Quest”, an event that celebrates the progress kids and adults make following a disabling injury or illness.