

Taking the National Disability Employment Awareness Challenge

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Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, USAWC Commandant and Cpt. Jarod Parker, take the touch and smell challenge at the Disability Employment Challenge, Oct. 29, Root Hall gym

Photo by Megan Clugh

"I just think this is awesome to put yourself in someone else's shoes," said Rhonnda Clark, Medical Assistant, Dunham Army Health Clinic. "Participants learned how hard everyday tasks are when something hinders our ability to tie shoes or throw a basketball," she said.

Soldiers and civilians took the National Disability Employment Awareness Challenge on Oct. 29 in Root Hall gym. At nine awareness stations participants experienced physical limitations in completing specific tasks: Seated one-arm free throw, writing challenge, impaired shoe/jacket challenge, one-hand keyboard challenge, wheelchair challenge, blind walk challenge, identification of items by touch and smell, communication challenge and audio challenge.

"This challenge promotes awareness and education that even though you have disabilities, you can succeed as long as you put forth the effort," said Sgt. 1st Class Rose Menil, Equal Opportunity Advisor.

After taking the blind walk challenge, Sgt. Shaketa Rodgers, Chaplain assistant, said, "I felt like I was going through a crash course, you don't know what is going to happen next."

"Being prior military I have had back and knee injuries and vertigo, so I understand a lot of the things that people take for granted, said Preston Grant with the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security.

"This is the first year this challenge has been held, and it has the potential to grow," said Col. George Patterson, Dunham Army Health Clinic.

"We appreciate all the support from the leadership and community, said Patterson. "It was great having them all come out and participate in the challenge."

Held each October, the National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. For more information visit: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>

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