

STORIES OF WI YOUTH IN COMMUNITY BASED JOBS

Adam's Story

Adam, owner of **AdamCan Recycling**, has carved a niche for himself in the **Stoughton** community where his business has more than 40 clients who in 2012 recycled more than 1 ton of aluminum cans. Adam's business was started with a grant from Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as a micro-enterprise. Now AdamCan Recycling is one of the top recyclers in the Stoughton area (<http://canscount.org>).

Adam's success comes from his enthusiasm for the job and the support he receives from Work Opportunities in Rural Communities (WORC) and his business team. The team has developed a business model, including a marketing plan, to make Adam's business viable and sustainable. Fundraising and sponsorship from local businesses allowed Adam to buy a van to transport him and his inventory from pick up sites to a center where the cans are sorted, crushed, and then delivered to the recycling center to be weighed. Adam crushes the cans by using the "little squeeze," a wireless button. He also uses iPad apps to aide his communication.



Check Adam out on YouTube and Facebook. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c298osJEe80>
<https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/AdamCan-Recycling-SP/152804878131931?ref=ts>

David's Story

High expectations are what led David to his jobs at the Super 8 Motel in **Manitowoc** where he mops, sweeps, waters plants and completes other general maintenance duties. His job at Super 8 was carved out by the general manager who had past success working with students with disabilities. She looked at where they needed the most help and started with what was familiar to David. Then they developed a routine that he could understand. At the same time the team was developing the job for David, his teacher was preparing him to go to work. Her role was not only to provide bus passes but to prepare



him to interact appropriately with his co-workers and work on his shyness. Several months later, David has noticeably more confidence, is much more flexible about his daily routine and is a role model to

his peers at school. After graduation, he wants to continue working at Super 8 because it makes him “feel good.”

David is currently paid by DVR’s Youth On the Job Training Initiative, which funds his wages up to the first 500 hours. Since David has been so successful at his job, Super 8 has agreed to hire him permanently.

David’s mom’s advice to parents is “to expect a lot from your child. They will rise to your expectations, and then on top of that, they’ll surprise you!”

Charlotte’s Story

Charlotte’s dream is to work at the Culver’s in **Manitowoc**, so she is serious about learning food and safety skills at the Blue Devil Grill at UW-Manitowoc. Charlotte is a 2013 graduate of the Let’s Get to Work class at Lincoln High School. Both she and her parents say the LGTW experience completely changed their ideas and dreams for Charlotte’s future. Just last year, her parents thought she would go to day services in a facility just because that’s where they had always expected her to go. A year later, both parents agree that she’s capable of working in the community. She’s doing all the right things to learn job skills – getting involved in her community volunteering at Lakeshore Humane Society and St. Vincent de Paul thrift store.

During her senior year, Charlotte’s parents saw growth in her ability and desire to take on more responsibility. Despite difficult family circumstances, Charlotte asserted herself and showed great determination to go to work and earn money. The support Charlotte received was the result of a collaborative effort from the high school (job coach), N.E.W. Curative (providing and processing timesheets), Goodwill Industries (salary), UW-Manitowoc (supervising teacher), county adult long term services provider Lakeland Care District (bus pass), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and her parents (support and advice).



Charlotte’s first day at the UW-Café Kitchen at UW-Manitowoc was busy. She made signs for the pizza and cookie sales, set up the tables, washed dishes, made pizzas and learned to wash her hands *all the time*.

Stories like these are a glimpse at the shift Wisconsin is making to community based employment for youth and adults with disabilities – even the most significant disabilities. Parents have higher expectations for their children and youth have developed more self-advocacy skills to speak up about their desire to work in their community. Projects like Let’s Get to Work and the Wisconsin Employment First Initiative support families and communities in this effort by raising awareness and providing practical solutions to make it possible. For more information, contact Beth Swedeen, Executive Director, WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities at 608-266-1166, beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov, www.letsgettoworkwi.org/index.php/stories/