

Pathways to Competitive Integrated Employment

Shaun's Story

Meet Shaun, a 33-year-old who is a natural leader and dreams of one day being a Direct Support Professional (DSP). Shaun has a passion for helping others. He has carved a path of growth, perseverance, and determination. His journey from a sheltered workshop to a community-based job shows the importance of having the right people and support in your corner.

Background

Shaun's journey started at a sheltered workshop. He now works at Metronet, where he excels in packing, scanning, and training, highlighting his resilience. For six years, he's found purpose in contributing to customer satisfaction. Despite early setbacks in fast-paced roles at McDonald's and Taco Bell, Shaun's determination, bolstered by support from mentors like Whisper and his current boss, has fueled his growth.

He faces sensory challenges, like strong smells, but proactively seeks solutions, demonstrating his commitment. He values his independence and the sense of belonging his work provides, and dreams of



obtaining his GED to further his goal of serving others.

Finding Purpose at Metronet

Today, Shaun works full-time at Metronet in Evansville, where he has been employed for six years. His responsibilities include packing and scanning internet devices, shredding cardboard, and sometimes even training his coworkers. "I feel good knowing customers can rely on me," Shaun says, highlighting the satisfaction he takes in doing his job well.

For Shaun, the best part of his work is the sense of achievement. "It's the joy of coming in, having a job, and knowing I've accomplished something," he explains. His pride in his role is evident, and though he's not officially titled, his coworkers view him as a leader, which means a lot to him.

For more information: [Center on Community Living and Careers/Employment](#)

Navigating Challenges

Shaun didn't always have it easy. In his earlier jobs, like at McDonald's and Taco Bell, he struggled to meet fast-paced demands and felt unsupported, which led to setbacks. However, he didn't let those experiences define him. "Sometimes, I thought I couldn't do it," Shaun admits, "but I realized I just needed the right environment and support to thrive." With help from his former job coach, Whisper, and his current supportive boss, Shaun found a workplace where he feels valued and respected.

One of Shaun's biggest challenges is dealing with certain sensory issues, such as strong smells. Knowing this might be a barrier to his goal of becoming a Direct Support Professional (DSP), Shaun has already thought of solutions. "If I have to deal with smells, I'll wear something like a nose plug," he says with determination.

Ingredients for Success

- **Self-Belief and Ambition:** Shaun has much to celebrate. Working at Metronet has given him a steady income, independence, and a sense of belonging. He's also proud of his personal growth, including managing his finances, setting goals, and improving his communication skills. When asked about his ultimate goals, Shaun shares, "I want to get my GED and become a DSP. I've seen how caregivers

have helped me, and I want to help others, too. It feels like my calling."

- **Community Support:** Shaun credits much of his success to the people in his life who believed in him. Whisper, his former job coach, and his supportive boss at Metronet have been key players. But Shaun also acknowledges his faith as a guiding force, saying, "If it wasn't for God, I'd have nothing."
- **Resilience:** "Don't give up," Shaun says. It's advice he's lived by and hopes will inspire others. This advice helped him when he faced setbacks in previous fast-paced roles at McDonald's and Taco Bell due to the demanding environment and lack of support, but he chose not to let those experiences define his potential.

Words of Wisdom

To anyone nervous about transitioning from a sheltered workshop to community employment, Shaun has encouraging words:

"Don't be afraid to take a chance. You've got to try if you want to move forward in life." He emphasizes the importance of asking questions and seeking help when needed, especially from supportive supervisors or coworkers.

Shaun also encourages others not to let past failures or doubts hold them back. "People might tell you, 'You can't,' but that doesn't mean you can't try. It's like learning to ride a bike. You fall, but you get back up."



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