

12-2-6

**To: Employment First stakeholders**

**From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator**

**Re: Employment First: New employer outreach testimonials**

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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I am pleased to announce a new feature on the Employment First website: employer video testimonials. The web page to view these new testimonials is:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/EMPLOYMENT/EMPLOYMENT-FIRST/Pages/employer-info.aspx>

As part of ongoing employer outreach efforts by Employment First to help increase job opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we have been traveling throughout Oregon to interview employers and talked to them about their experiences hiring people with disabilities.

In their own words, employers tell us about the value that workers with disabilities bring to the workforce every day. They have told us about the hard work, loyalty, determination and positive attitude that they have witnessed in people with disabilities that helps motivate their entire business to do better. As Jacque Gerdes with Alternative Work Concepts stated at the October Disability Employment Awareness Event, “There are large jobs and small tasks out there that everyone can do, and that the business community desperately needs to be done by a reliable and dedicated worker.”

Our first [video employer testimonial](#) is by the Waterford Grand in Eugene. Waterford Grand provides memory care and assisted living in an upscale environment for seniors. Waterford Grand employs several individuals with disabilities, Natasha and Destinee, in their dining services. Waterford Grand works closely with Lane Specialized Support Services to make sure the employees in DD services have the tools to be successful on the job.

The video features Dining Services Director Shawn Wagner and Dining Supervisor Jennifer Henry speaking of their experience employing people with I/DD. The video is on the [Supported Employment playlist](#) of the DHS Youtube page as well as on the [new employer testimonial web page](#).

Please share these testimonials with employers and help increase opportunities for people with disabilities in the workforce.

If you have comments or other questions, please email them to [employment.first@state.or.us](mailto:employment.first@state.or.us).

~ Acacia