

5-16-14

To: Employment First stakeholders
From: Statewide Employment First Coordinator Mike Maley
Re: Employment First: Darci's Story
(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

Three days a week, Darci Harris takes the bus to her job in downtown Eugene. Darci has an office cubicle decorated with her favorite things, including a photo of her dog.

Darci currently works in the Lane County Developmental Disabilities Office. She works about nine hours per week putting together packets, collecting recycling, and shredding confidential paperwork. Darci experiences a developmental disability, as well as physical disabilities.



Darci Harris.

(Photo: Lightflies)

“I like the people here a lot,” Darci said. “My favorite job is highlighting. I like to take the highlighter to make the words appear more.”

Darci got her first job out of high school in the 1990s through Alternative Work Concepts. In the past, she worked part-time doing office work at a bank and a hospital. In 2011, she took a break from working, but recently, Darci expressed interest in working again.

“She said she wanted to work in an office,” said Liz Fox, executive director of Alternative Work Concepts, a Eugene nonprofit that helps people with significant disabilities find employment. “She has been in her current position since November.

We just went out for pizza recently to celebrate how well she is doing.”

A friendly woman who wears stylish purple glasses, Darci enjoys interacting with a wide range of people at her job.

“I collect the recycling at everyone’s desks so I get to meet and talk to everyone,” she said. “I also clean the conference rooms, but not when people are in a meeting.”

Her supervisor, Andrea Muzikant, said Darci has become an invaluable addition to the office.



Darci Harris at her job at Lane County. (Photo: Lightflies Photography)

“Darci does packets for case managers, and this work has really added value to our office,” she said. “On top of that, she is just a wonderful person. She is so enthusiastic and works really hard.”

Andrea said she is looking to add more duties to Darci’s schedule, which may increase her hours.

“We’ve got plenty of work for her,” Andrea said.

Thank you all for your continued involvement, support, and advocacy for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon. If you have comments or other questions, please email them to employment.first@state.or.us.

~ Mike

- More photos from the Employment First’s recent trip to Eugene to visit with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at work can be found at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dhsoregon/sets/72157644056678210/>