

October 10, 2017

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Re: Employment First: Mid-Columbia Recognition Event

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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Note: A full photo slideshow from the Mid-Columbia Employer/Employee Recognition Event is online at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsm6uwbEc>



Jonathan Marvel (left) and his employer Brent Clapp were two of the keynote speakers at the Mid-Columbia Employment First Employer/Employee Recognition Event, held Oct. 3 in Hood River.

Photo: Angela Yeager

On October 3, the Mid-Columbia Employment First team held “Working in the Gorge! Mid-Columbia Employment First Employer/Employee Recognition Event,” to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

This was the first employer/employee recognition event held by the local Employment First team. An innovation grant from the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services/Employment First helped create the event.

More than 120 attendees, including employees and employers from Hood River, Cascade Locks, and The Dalles, celebrated Employment First accomplishments in the area.

Robert Crooks from Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living served as the emcee for the evening. The keynote speakers included Jonathan Marvel and his employer Brent Clapp, with Brent Clapp Media/Anything 2 Digital; Ashley DeRushe, employee with Mid Columbia Medical Center, Kurt Cochran, an employee with two jobs in the local area including Beachwood Eatery and the Wasco County District Attorney’s Office, and Eric Nisley, District Attorney for the Wasco County District’s Attorney’s Office.



Eric Nisley with the Wasco County District Attorney's Office talked about employee Kurt Cochran.

Photo: Angela Yeager

Kurt Cochran works in two community jobs, as a dishwasher at Beachwood Eatery and as an office assistant at Wasco County District Attorney's Office.

"I believe in contributing to my community and earning a paycheck," Kurt said. "I've got one blue collar job and one white collar job so I like to say that together, I am sky blue."

Kurt's employer said his work is highly valued.

"Kurt arrives early and stays late," said Eric Nisley. "His work ethic is incredible."

Awards were presented to both employees and employers to recognize local accomplishments.

Mid-Columbia Employment First Employer/Employee Recognition Event
Awardees:

Large Employer of the Year: Safeway, Hood River

Small Employer of the Year: Thunder Island Brewing, Cascade Locks

Longevity Award (employer): Best Western Hood River Inn

Longevity Award (employees): Brad Divish with St. Vincent DePaul in The Dalles and Ashley DeRushé with Mid Columbia Medical Center.

Best New Employer: Wasco County District Attorney's Office and [Aromé](#)

Dream Job: Kurt Cochran with Beachwood Eatery and Wasco County District Attorney's Office.

Most Dedicated Employee: Sierra Bigelow, with Aromé

Most Resilient Employee: Brandy Riggs, with the Hood River Hotel.

Congratulations to all the employers, employees, providers, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, service coordinators, personal agents, educators, families and others who are working to improve employment outcomes in their local areas. We appreciate your efforts.

~ Acacia