

Ryan's and David's persistence pays off at Good Shepherd Medical Center



Ken Gummer, Ryan Powell, David Andrews and Nancy Gummer

Ryan Powell and David Andrews have several things in common. They were both born and raised in Hermiston, Oregon. They each came to Vocational Rehabilitation wanting to replace their part-time jobs with steady, full-time work that met their needs.

Most important, "They were both very engaged and motivated to find work, and they have done very well at Good Shepherd Health Care System," says their VR counselor, Cary Brock.

The Hermiston Good Shepherd Health Care System hired Ryan and David after on-the-job training (OJT) periods financed by VR.

Ryan visited Human Resources almost weekly to build a relationship and to check on upcoming jobs and make sure they knew he wanted to work there. His persistence paid off. Ryan did a part-time volunteer internship for four weeks. When a position as a janitor opened, VR arranged an on-the-job (OJT) training with Good Shepherd that helped Ryan learn the job, gain experience and retain his job after stabilization. The arrangement worked for everyone.

Ryan has worked in Environmental Services doing housekeeping and janitorial work for two years. Last December, his peers nominated Ryan for employee of the year, as one of only 25 nominated for the honor out of the 670 Good Shepherd employees.

“Ryan is always asking about more opportunities and education. Currently he is learning computer skills,” his supervisor, Environmental Services Manager Ken Gummer, says. “We like his work ethic and personality.”

Ryan found school to be difficult and received support in special need classes. He also qualified for the county Community Developmental Disabilities Program (CDDP) for support and received Supplemental Security Income. After working part-time for a few years and gradually not receiving SSI cash support, Ryan decided he wanted to be completely independent and seek a full-time job with benefits. Ryan is self-motivated and a great role model for others that anything is possible.

David wanted to find year-round full-time employment where he could continue to work in the winters. He previously pulled weeds for the local Parks and Recreation Summer Program — riding his bike to and from his job. He could save some money in the summers, but then his money would gradually disappear by the next summer and he could barely pay his bills. David does have support from the county CDDP program. CDDP is a great partner in helping David have full-time employment and support at home that provides a personal care worker to help David keep his busy schedule.

For the last year, David has driven to work in his own pickup, thanks to his job working in the Good Shepherd kitchen. Ryan’s successful on-the-job training experience opened the door for setting up an OJT experience for David, which led to his current job. He has also moved into his own one-bedroom apartment. VR helped him study for his food handlers’ certificate test, which he passed with flying colors.

“David is pleasant, always happy and helpful to everyone,” his supervisor, Nutrition Services Manager Nancy Gummer, says. His coworkers agree; they recently elected David employee of the month.

Cary Brock is proud and thankful that Ryan and David have found great job matches and gives each of them credit for finding their jobs through persistence and determination. "Both were highly motivated, but hadn't landed the right job," he says. "They are both extremely thankful for the jobs they have and did a lot of the work themselves."