

Employment First

Success Story

Taran Tyler

Taran works full-time at Palm Harbor Homes

"I got my own car and, and now I'm happy, you know? That's what my mom and dad wanted me to do for the last seven, eight years. I'm realizing what they always wanted for me."

Taran Tyler loves the freedom that comes with a paycheck.

He enjoys traveling, and attending NASCAR events, and his paycheck allows him to do that.



"I've looked everywhere and if I wanted to go to big vacation places like, NASCAR, you know, different things like that, I would have to find a job good enough," Taran said.

In January 2019, Taran found that job with the support of Darcy McCullough, job developer with provider Home Life and Kelly Noble, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Taran had been working about 10 hours per week cleaning for the Lebanon Fire Department. He wanted more hours and a

job that fit his skills. Darcy contacted Freddie, Human Resources Recruiter with Palm Harbor Homes in the Albany area. The company hadn't hired anyone with an intellectual or development disabilities before, but Freddie agreed to meet with Taran.

"I told Darcy, well, let's just try this," he said. "I said, 'You send me your best interview that you think would interview best and I will interview, and we'll see where it goes from there,' with the intention of hopefully getting the person into a sweeping position."

Taran started working at Palm Harbor Homes at about 30 hours per week in a position doing sweeping. Palm Harbor makes manufactured homes and generates a tremendous amount of sawdust that needs to be constantly swept off the production floor.

After just a few months, Freddie started discussing the possibility of promoting Taran to work on the production line at 40 hours per week.

"We got together as a team to figure out how we could support Taran to make that transition to more hours and more responsibilities," Kelly from VR said. "For me personally, as a Voc Rehab counselor, when Taran is speaking his needs, it's my job to support that. And we talk about how you're going to be successful in that and what does that look like for you long term, and how do we, what do you need for us to support?"

Taran is now part of a team that builds interior walls for the homes. Taran's job is "routing," or using a tool that smooths out the sheetrock.

"It's hard to find good employees," Freddie said. "Taran has a positive attitude and a good work ethic. He's got great attendance, and I'd put an emphasis on that, a good attitude and sense of humor and he's not afraid to, you know, to speak up and ask questions. That's a big success. Some people are afraid to ask questions and that's not a problem for Taran."

Darcy added: "Taran has great self-advocacy skills. He knows how to communicate what he needs to be successful."

Darcy and Kelly said another big success for Taran is that after months of his mother driving him to work at 6 a.m., Taran worked hard and eventually got his driver's license. He beams with pride at the mention of this.

"The test was so hard for me 'cause I can't focus straight, you know?" he said. "But now, I got my own car and, and now I'm happy, you know? That's what my mom and dad wanted me to do for the last seven, eight years. I'm realizing what they always wanted for me."

Taran's employment team includes: Personal Agent Dana Kropf of RCO; Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Kelly Noble, Job Developer Darcy McCullough with Home Life, Job Coaches Krista Garrison and Jim Newby with Home Life and Emma Levert with the Work Incentives Network provided benefits counseling.

Taran's story is also featured in the [Employment First Podcast](#).

