

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN BC



With support, knowledge, choice, and understanding, everyone can work.

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Institute

families supporting families

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone can be successfully employed if they are well supported and working within areas that interest them. In today's society employment is normal and achievable for people of all abilities and there are options available to make employment for all a reality. However, the notion of employment for people with disabilities can be complex for families to understand, navigate, and in some cases, accept. Familiarizing and educating oneself with the information and options available is key to creating a successful employment situation for all individuals with disabilities.

Having a disability can offer many challenges throughout life and the path to employment is no different. The Family Support Institute is an organization which provides information, guidance, and support to families with members with disabilities through its vast network of experienced volunteer parents. Families supporting families is at the cornerstone of building strong resilient families capable of advocating for their loved ones and sharing their strength through their stories of success. Networking with other families reduces stress, builds capacity, and offers opportunities for friendship.

The goal of this booklet is to provide information to families about the workforce for people with disabilities, to describe the types of supports available during employment, and to illustrate how to access these services. By taking a person centered approach to employment and focusing on the individual - not the job - employment for all becomes more attainable. With supports, knowledge, choice, and understanding, people of varying abilities can achieve full citizenship and inclusion in community by doing meaningful work for fair wages.

IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment is essential to the health, happiness, and social well-being of all of us. Benefits to employment are:

- Learning new skills and abilities
- Earning one's own money, greater financial security
- Exploring interests and pursuing a career
- A place to make friends, social gatherings
- Building confidence and self esteem
- Having a sense of belonging and making a contribution
- Providing for their family
- Increasing independence

Erin's Story

Erin Thom, 36, has two jobs! Ten years ago her mother, Joanne, helped her get a job at Staples. She started off as a cleaner, but was eventually trained to put together the office desk chairs that came in. Since Erin enjoys technical things, this was a great fit for her. Now she can assemble most any type of chair that comes her way. Her coworkers say that Erin has really blossomed over the past few years and even helps around the front. Erin works at Staples every Tuesday for 3 hours. She loves her job and the staff consider her a big asset to the company.

Last year, Erin got a second job at the Home Depot through a job fair. Once again, Joanne was instrumental in facilitating a connection between her daughter and the employer. Since Erin is very friendly and likes to be helpful, this job capitalized on those qualities. Her duties include assisting customers to their cars with their purchases, collecting the carts, and helping with general tasks around the front of the store. The Home Depot trained Erin themselves since no specific supports were needed. If Erin needs some help or guidance during her workday, she asks her fellow workers. The staff at Home Depot are very supportive of Erin and are happy to have her as part of the team. Erin has been working at the Home Depot for the past 4 years.



PERSON CENTERED APPROACH

The successful matching of a job to an individual begins with taking a person centered approach. This method puts the person with a disability in control of their own life by making their own choices, regardless of the opinions and ideas of people around them (however well-intentioned they may be). With respect to employment, having a person centered approach means finding employment based on the specific interests, passions, curiosities, and aspirations voiced by the individual. This method allows for a better understanding of the individual without labels or diagnosis. The role of the family is integral at this stage as they are often the key drivers and advocates for ensuring the individual's choices are being respected. Keeping a person centered approach means that the planning goals and strategies are not solely based on the placements and services that are available.

Some planning tools that can be used to envision employment for an individual are PATHs (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) and MAPs (Making Action Plans). These are useful and powerful tools in which an individual's hopes, dreams, and life goals are identified by the people closest to them and then visually organized and illustrated. They combine the best elements of a number of vision-building and future planning tools, and are great for listening, planning, and community-building. More information on PATHs and MAPs can be found at inclusion.com or spectrumfriends.ca

TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Employment supports can be complex for families to understand. Because of this, it is important to learn how they may be used as options. By using a person centered approach, many strategies to employment are available to individuals with disabilities.

a) Supported Employment

Supported Employment refers to a method of employment in which a service provider works with an individual to obtain an existing job. The role of the service provider is to work with the employer to make modifications to the job which will allow the individual to be successful in their position. The service provider works alongside the individual as long as needed and can gradually fade their involvement as the individual becomes more independent, secure, and confident in their new role. Over time, natural supports within the workplace (usually provided through co-workers or supervisors) may replace funded employment supports.

Some examples of job modifications are:

- special equipment or assistive devices
- tools to increase independence, such as tasks lists and specialized instructions
- flexibility in the amount of hours worked
- support of a job coach to assist in learning the job

- support from co-workers and supervisors, such as having someone the individual can ask if they are not sure about something
- support from family or the individual's network (rides to work, safeguards against vulnerability, etc)

These modifications are provided as needed and will remain in place until the individual feels comfortable enough to do the job without help. This may be a short period of time for some, longer for others. Some individuals will require ongoing supports.

Employment supports are a funded service most often provided by a service provider who has experience and expertise in the area of employment. They can be accessed through Work BC or through CLBC if the individual is eligible for CLBC services. (In some cases, an individual may be able to access the services from both agencies as long as the goal of the specific service provided is different.) Regardless of which route is taken, the service provider will assist the family and the individual in making a plan about employment as well as discuss what type of supports may be needed. It is essential that throughout this process the person centered approach is not compromised and that the voice of the individual is heard at all times. More information about supported employment is available at www.employmentforall.ca

Kevin's Story

Kevin lives with developmental disabilities. Communicating his wants and needs, and dealing with the perception of others are daily struggles for him, and he can get frustrated when he's not understood. Prior to landing his current job at Burger 55, Kevin worked at the Penticton Paper Shuffle where he recycled and shredded paper. He also volunteered at the Salvation Army filling food hampers, and at the Community Centre where he cleaned tables and chairs. Kevin does a variety of tasks at Burger 55, including portioning food, washing dishes, and breaking down boxes for recycling. All of Kevin's work is done side by side with his job coach, Tracy, who works for Okanagan Inclusion.



“Tracy is there to help me. She communicates my needs and wants. She sets up tasks so I can complete them successfully. She assists and guides me through challenges,” Kevin tells us. “Tracy is my advocate; she ensures my safety on the job, and she explains and listens while I communicate with others.”

“I have money to buy things I couldn’t afford before. I am very proud; I feel better and have improved self-worth. Chris, the owner is awesome. I feel that I am a valuable employee,” shares Kevin.

b) Customized Employment

Customized Employment refers to a method of employment in which a service provider begins by first getting to know and understand the individual in a deep and meaningful way through a process known as Discovery. Discovery uses a person centered approach to develop a profile of the individual by getting to know them and their unique skills and abilities rather than focusing on what jobs are available in the competitive job market. The process focuses more on observation and less on evaluation and assessment. For this reason, Discovery does not take place in the office but rather in the individual’s home, preferred places, social settings, and community. The individual’s family and network are engaged early and often, and the focus is on what a person can do, not on what they can’t do.



Some questions a service provider may ask during the Discovery phase are:

- What can this person do?
- What chores does this person do?
- Does this person like busy environments?
- Do they do well with noise, or do they like it quiet?
- Are there limitations to the length of time they can work?
- What are they good at and what do they enjoy?
- Are they good at manual labour, or do they want office work?
- What are they drawn to?
- What makes them happy?

Employers require many different skills sets from their employees. The role of the service provider is to explore these needs and develop a job which is of value to the employer and a good fit for the individual. Similar to Supported Employment, the service provider works closely with both parties to ensure that the individual is well supported and successful in their job. With time, supports can be faded and replaced with natural supports within the workplace.

Customized Employment does not rely on competitive employment and instead seeks to place an individual in a job that is carved out specifically for them based on their preferences and strengths. Customized Employment

is a set of techniques that can be used as the situation warrants. An individual is then systematically trained for the different tasks to achieve a real job for real pay. This approach creates more success for people with disabilities.

If the individual is eligible for CLBC services, the first step to accessing Customized Employment is to speak with their CLBC facilitator. If the individual is not CLBC eligible, the process of Customized Employment services can be requested through Work BC.

The amount of support needed will depend on things such as:

- The individual's needs
- The job in question and the tasks involved in that job
- The amount of time the individual can spend at the job
- Other employees and their ability to help, and more

When visualizing future employment for an individual, the role of the family members and the network is to be creative and to always keep the individual's best interests at heart. It is equally important to manage an individual's expectations of their dream job with realistic opportunities. When dream jobs are unattainable, working within a similar theme can provide great satisfaction. For example, if a dream job is to be a Formula One race car driver, a service provider may look for employment

options within the theme of cars, such as working in a car dealership or auto mechanic shop. People take jobs for a variety of reasons: to get their foot in the door of a company they want to work for, to try something they are interested in, or because it was all that was available and offered to them. Rarely are first jobs the jobs that people keep for the rest of their lives. If a first attempt at employment does not end up being a good fit, an individual has the right to change their mind and look for something better suited to them.



Jonathan's Story

Jonathan is 32 years old and has been working at Waste Management for the past 8 years. Although Jonathan is happy to get out and help anyone he can, he does best in an environment where he does not have to deal too much with the public. The Cranbrook Society

for Community Living helped Jonathan get his job at Waste Management. His duties include sweeping the shop, picking up garbage and keeping the outside clear of snow during the winter. Jonathan benefited from the support of a job coach for the first two months of employment. After that he has been able to manage on his own. He loves that his job has well defined tasks and the staff appreciate that he can easily and happily take on more responsibilities when clearly defined.

c) Self-Employment

Self-employment refers to generating one's income directly from customers, clients, or other organizations as opposed to being an employee of a business (or person). Self-employment is becoming increasingly popular for people with disabilities and offers many advantages such as:

- Defining one's own job description
- Setting the working conditions
- Having flexibility in work hours
- Having control over growth and expansion
- Tax advantages

Using a customized approach, individuals can capitalize upon their interests, passions, and skills to create businesses that are tailored to them yet relevant in society. Self-employed individuals can also build a team around them to assist with components of the business where they require support.



Angela's Story

Thirty-two year-old Angela Lusignan is President and CEO of DisDaBomb Luxury Bath Experiences, a home-based bath bomb company based in Coquitlam, BC. The bombs (or should we say 'da bombs'?) are scented with natural ingredients that dissolve in the bath, leaving skin soft and fragrant.

Angela's dad Kevin comments proudly, "when Angela participated in her first trade show, we watched her demeanour shift: she changed from a person with a disability, to a business person." Dressed in a sharp business suit, armed with business cards, and with her iPad preloaded with verbal greetings and invitations to purchase her bath bombs, Angela boldly positioned herself in front of her display table, while many hid behind theirs, demonstrating confidence that many start-up business owners take years to cultivate. Angela generated \$600 in sales.

DisDaBomb began in 2010, when Angela was actively engaged in a brainstorming session with the people in her life. The core question was 'what does Angela like to do?' with the intention to explore the possibility of developing one of these concepts into a small business. The results: Angela loves to do beadwork, bake, and make bath bombs. The group supported Angela to create products in all three areas. Test marketing was not performed in theory, with a clipboard, approaching 'theoretical'

customers. Rather, Angela tested the three products 'live' at a school craft fair where her stepmother teaches. The bath bombs quickly sold out.

Looking back, Kevin comments that perhaps the products were priced too low, but the sales also demonstrated customer attraction to the bath bombs. From there, DisDaBomb was born.



Moving beyond this test show, the company officially was debuted a few months later at a trade show featuring businesses owned by people with disabilities.

The bath bombs are produced in Angela's garage, and a support staff works for Angela in areas such as marketing, logistics, and new product development. Kevin observes that the staff team is there to support Angela in any case—whether for recreational activities, or to run a micro-enterprise. He felt that the highest and best use of staff time would be to experiment with business development. Even though production takes place in isolation, community integration benefits occur regularly by picking up supplies and interacting with customers.

The benefits of micro-enterprise for Angela include flexibility (when Angela doesn't feel like making bath bombs, she doesn't), inclusion opportunities, being able to do what she enjoys, accommodation of personal issues, and supporting a sense of purpose. Believing that goal setting is important, her team has set a stretch target of \$20,000 in sales.

d) Social Enterprise

Social Enterprises are non-profit or for-profit businesses that hold a specific mission at the core of their operations. As well as earning revenue, social enterprises fill a need in community by prioritizing their mission's values and by achieving

social, cultural, community economic, or environmental outcomes. An individual may choose to work within a social enterprise if employment options within it are a good match to the individual's interests and skills.

Here are a few examples of Social Enterprises:

Richmond Handy Crew Cooperative

The Richmond Handy Crew Cooperative was spearheaded by the Richmond Society for Community Living back in 2007. The co-op's 27 worker members enjoy an ownership and governance stake in the business, which provides services such as garden maintenance, minor repairs, painting, light carpentry, home maintenance, and moving services. The co-op is structured in such a way that new services can be added as worker interest and demand increases. www.handycrew.ca

Joe's Table Cafe

Joe's Table Cafe is a coffee shop and catering service that came to be because of a father's pursuit to create a business for his son with autism, Joe. In previous employment, Joe was always given jobs behind the scene yet Joe's true passions and gifts revolved around interacting with people. Joe's father decided to start a business that would best match his son's interests, skills, and qualities, so Joe's Table Cafe was born. Nestled within the same building that houses a couple of

college campuses, this coffee shop is a hub for students and teachers alike. Employing 5 people with disabilities, occupying a variety of roles, Joe's Table Cafe is a social enterprise that values community, diversity, and inclusion and has goals to expand to 10 locations in BC within the next 2 years. www.joestablecafe.com

COCO Cafe

With the intention of creating employment for their adult children with disabilities, a group of families in Nanaimo came together to create the Cedar Opportunities Cooperative (COCO). COCO's is a coffee shop and catering service that offers a vibrant menu and is a welcome addition to the community. This neighbourhood cafe prides itself as a community hot spot that offers jobs to people with developmental disabilities. www.cedaropportunities.coop

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE WORKPLACE

Regardless of which employment model is used, once working an individual can expect to enjoy the same rights and privileges as all other employees:

- Fair wages: the job seeker receives the same rate of pay and benefits as other employees did when they started doing the same job
- Inclusion: individuals have the right to be fully included in all aspects of the work community
- Respect as an equal

- Environment free of bullying
- An experience of belonging
- The opportunity to develop, pursue, and achieve personal career goals
- The right to a fair evaluation of job performance, feedback, and direction for improvement

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

There is a shift in culture and in thinking among employers, and as the capacities of communities grow, employers report positive benefits to hiring people with disabilities. Among these benefits are:

- Contribution to a better rate of attendance, punctuality, employee morale, teamwork, and safety in the workplace
- Reduction in staff turnover; people with disabilities have proven to be skilled and loyal employees

- Demonstration that the company values diversity and is a tangible example of good corporate citizenship
- Increase in the purchasing power for individuals with a disability and their families
- Reflection of the demographics of the community, and enhancement the community's understanding of people with disabilities
- Potential freeing up of resources to complete other tasks and increase productivity
- Allows the person with a disability to be a role model to the staff and community and others with a disability
- May include free corporate marketing when your new employee talks about where they work
- May require accommodations for your new employee, but the change



may make your company more robust, innovative, and adaptive

- Majority of consumers prefer to support businesses with diverse workforces

WHAT FAMILIES CAN DO

a) Starting Early

Successful employment involves matching an individual with a job that is well suited to their interests and skills. As a family member, it is important to take notice early on of the individual's specific passions, abilities, likes, and dislikes.

- What environments or conditions does the individual thrive in?
- Does a quiet workplace best suit the individual's personality?
- Perhaps an environment with lots of people and action is a good fit?
- Does the individual prefer to be outdoors or indoors?
- Does the individual prefer working with people or with things?

Getting input from family members and the individual's network can also help expose options and opportunities that otherwise may not have been considered.

Many parents find transitioning from high school into adulthood a challenging time in their family's life. Putting together a transition team can be very helpful during this stage. Members of this team should consist of people the youth knows well. It can include the family, friends, foster caregivers, respite caregivers, school staff, social workers,

service providers, community members, cultural and religious affiliations, and other organization members along with the youth. A key item on the transition meeting agenda should focus on employment. Working closely with their school based team, parents should have employment goals included in Individualized Education Plans. Since research indicates that paid work in high school, not work experience, greatly improves the chances of work in adulthood, parents should also advocate to have vocational skill development and paid work occurring before graduation from school. The Transition Timeline found on findsupportbc.com is a step-by-step guide for families who are transitioning youth into adulthood. findsupportbc.com/timeline

Parents can help develop their child's employment-related skills by:

- Assigning responsibilities at home from an early age
- Offering paid chores at home, including everyday chores such as setting the table as well as larger responsibilities like washing the car
- Networking with co-workers, neighbors, and relatives about opportunities for volunteer and paid work
- Teaching money skills when banking and shopping
- Supporting independence by taking public transportation and planning trips on public transit
- Encouraging and nurturing hobbies and interests
- Researching and interacting with local community centres and libraries

- Determining times when leadership can be exercised and self-esteem can be built (for example: planning a family outing)

Some other ways to help prepare for the future in the workforce while still in school are:

- Taking courses that match work goals
- Learning valuable skills that will be used at a future job
- Enlisting the help of professionals to set a career path
- Looking for opportunities early and often to learn about different types of jobs

Some activities that develop work skills and offer opportunities to explore careers are:

- Workplace visits and tours
- Mock job interviews
- Afterschool and summer jobs
- Internships (paid or unpaid)
- Job placements
- Mentorships
- Job shadowing

Research tells us that the best places to get employment is through people you already know. Networking with family, friends, colleagues, people in the community, and service providers may take some practice but it is a skill well worth the effort in the end. These conversations are about building relationships with potential

future employers and facilitating an exchange of true worth for fair pay - where both parties enter a mutually beneficial partnership. Regardless of how unique a contribution may be, everyone has a contribution to make.

Other methods of finding work can include:

- Approaching employers that are of interest and inquiring about available jobs
- Asking these same employers if they know of any jobs
- Joining a job club
- Networking through social media

b) Families Working Together

When families join forces and work towards a common goal, the results are incredible. Below is the story of a group of families in Victoria who had a vision of employment for their children and who worked together to bring that vision to fruition.

Doing It Together: Families Working Collectively in Community Partnerships

By Catriona Johnson, with contributions from Arlene Zuckernick and Paula Shaw

According to Sowers and colleagues (2002), "There is a growing belief that to affect the persistently high unemployment rate of individuals with developmental disabilities, a paradigm shift from professional- to self-directed services must occur."



Individuals with disabilities and their families have the most invested in finding and maintaining employment, so why not capitalize on their dedication to create quality employment supports that make jobs a reality? In Victoria, 3 family-governed groups are doing just that, and with support from the Vancouver Foundation they will soon be sharing what they learn.

In 2010, a small group of parents in Victoria, BC came together to consider how to support their teenage children with developmental disabilities who were about to leave the education system as ‘transitioning youth.’ For most in the group, their children had been included fully or partially

in regular education classrooms in their neighborhood schools from elementary school onward, and yet the options they were being presented at transition did not reflect this. Instead, the service system presented them almost exclusively with globally-funded day programs – segregated, congregate, and serving people across the adult age span from youth to the elderly. The political and economic circumstances of that particular year meant there were few of these day program slots available in Victoria even for those transitioning youth and their family members who wanted them. It was in this context that two mothers had brought the group together – seven

initial families who determined that no matter the service funding provided by government, they would collaborate to try to create an alternative to the available day programs being offered. InclusionWorks!, an agency-hosted model of collective family governance, was thus developed by families determined to pool their financial resources, along with their knowledge, ideas, skills, and networks, to create inclusive and meaningful services for their participating young adults. Using Individualized Funding from CLBC, their own personal funds, and the goodwill and resources of partners, including its Host Agency – Community Living Victoria, the group began in September of that year.

Two years later, following the lead of that original InclusionWorks! group, another group was formed. The initial group had by then become InclusionWorks! Victoria, InclusionWorks! Saanich formed in 2012, and a new group, InclusionWorks! South Island, formed in 2014, all based in Southern Vancouver Island. These 3 family-governed groups now support 26 young adults ages 18-25 with various labels of developmental disability providing supports and services for up to 35 hours per week focused on employment, independent living, health and well-being, and creating friendships.

Unlike traditional day programs - which are almost universally facility-based - activities take place in community spaces, at the local university and distributed learning

school, in recreation and community centres, on the jobsite, outdoors, and in coffee shops. The three InclusionWorks! groups have each chosen to provide programming and support to their participating youth for a 5 to 6 year period following the typical trajectories of young adulthood through activities such as college, apprenticeships, and first jobs, after which participating individuals will begin the next stages of their lives as yet unknown. Programming itself is predominantly provided in small groups of 2-4 participants and individually (e.g. volunteering, employment, recreational activities), though there is some whole group programming on specific topics (e.g. self-advocacy, sexuality) or in order to fit with some partners' service delivery arrangements (e.g. group outdoor recreation). Each InclusionWorks! group contracts with four support workers as well as a number of casual workers.

Despite the first InclusionWorks! group's primary goal of finding and supporting employment for all of its participants, as it approached its third year few participating youth had paid work. A partnership with a large service agency to deliver employment services had been a failure. That agency's approach to employment services did not fit well with a family governance model in which individuals, parents, and support workers formed a collective decision-making team and desired to

work on employment more intensely than a couple of hours per week. InclusionWorks! Victoria also had very limited resources at the time, making individualization more challenging. After all, it really does take 1:1 support to conduct a Discovery process and provide initial job coaching. Finally, the group didn't have a job developer, and support workers were not trained in the Discovery process or job coaching. InclusionWorks! Victoria, and InclusionWorks! Saanich which was in its formative stages, were looking for some creative options.

Luckily, several opportunities arose to change this unproductive situation. In 2012 InclusionWorks! received a grant from The Community Living Innovation Venture Fund, followed by winning funding from the Ministry of Social Development, CLBC, and others through the BC Ideas contest. Directed in part towards the goal of employment, some of these funds were used to hire a consultant to answer the question: How does InclusionWorks! get its participating youth employed? They consulted with Annette Borrows, a national expert in customized employment, who assessed the existing groups' needs and surveyed the options and opportunities available in Victoria. In the final analysis, she recommended a partnership with the new Work BC program through its local employment services provider, GT Hiring Solutions.

But, the resource issues continued. How could a couple of family-

governed groups make such a partnership work? With the help of Annette and Community Living Victoria, the support of various partners, and encouragement from the Family Support Institute, InclusionWorks! wrote and received a 3-year grant from The Vancouver Foundation to pilot a partnership between InclusionWorks! and the Work BC program. By the end of the grant project, the goal is that all participating youth will be employed and that a guidebook will be created to assist other family-governed groups throughout BC in partnering with the Work BC program and providing employment services.

Now over a year and a half into the project, much progress towards these goals has been made. In September 2013, Paula Shaw was contracted as the InclusionWorks! Employment Facilitator and, working with the staff from GT Hiring Solutions, she has spearheaded work on the grant project. Support workers from all 3 InclusionWorks! groups have now all been trained in Customized Employment, and all 3 groups are working collaboratively with the Work BC program to deliver employment services. Participants from InclusionWorks! South Island are currently going through the intake process and InclusionWorks! Victoria and InclusionWorks! Saanich are both delivering employment services to their participants, all governed by the families themselves.

For the young adults, there have been successes and challenges finding and maintaining employment, but mostly successes. A shift in thinking about work took place as participants began getting jobs. Those young adults who had not previously expressed interest in employment, became interested. Family members who questioned whether employment was really possible for their sons and daughters, saw that indeed their children could work. Weekly programming has become more employment-focused as participants go through the Discovery process to identify their interests, skills, and support needs; job sample; receive training; and go to their places of employment. Their independence is increasing and they are all contributing to their community .

A few of our participant's stories are below:

Meliah has always loved sports and physical activity. She has volunteered with the University of Victoria Vikes, and loves the outdoor adventures of Power To Be. She also loves to connect with people and have conversations. An initial job cleaning tables didn't work for Meliah because it didn't speak to her passions. Those passions have been the perfect fit at CBI Health Langford, working with physiotherapists and other health professionals. CBI Health was so impressed with her work, they put out the word to other CBI Health clinics on Vancouver Island and another

participant, Jocelyn, got a position with the CBI Health Saanich office.





Jocelyn has been volunteering at the Jubilee Hospital for the past 2 years, where she enjoys greeting patients, family members, and friends, and helps by directing them to the right ward in the hospital. Jocelyn loves swimming, dancing, walking the dogs, and most of all loves her new job at CBI Health where she gets to meet people on every shift.

Jay LOVES washing dishes and is employed by Mystic Market at the University of Victoria where he works 4 mornings a week during the school term and has become a valued employee. The position takes a hiatus during the summer when the university's student population is low, but Jay just got a new dish-washing job at White Spot!



Sarah began working at Thrifty Foods last year and has just been given a second shift. She is especially proud to work at Thrifty Foods given her father also works for the company. She joined Hannah who has been working at another Thrifty Foods store since high school, a job she got through CanAssist's TeenWorks program and where she is now supported by InclusionWorks!

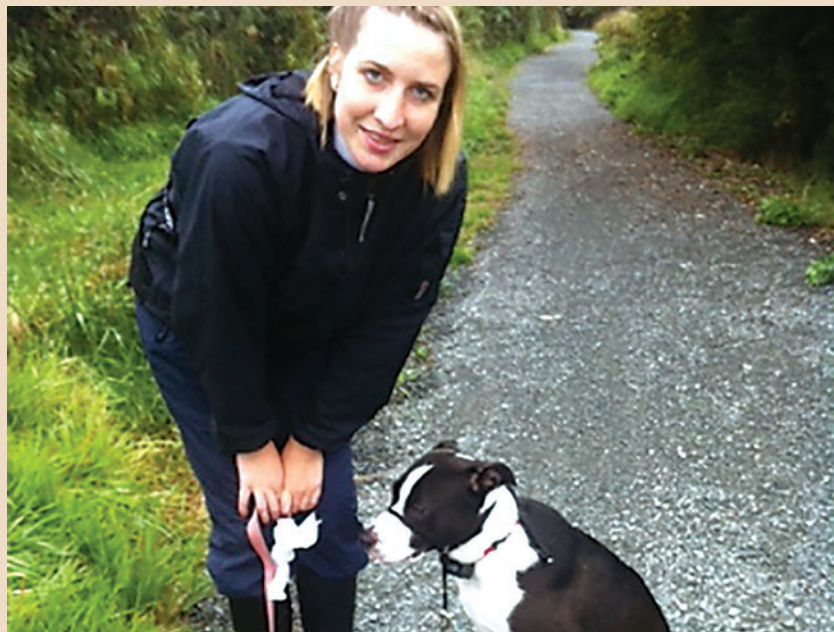


Asher has just started up his own business, Asher's Amazing Popcorn, and has begun the process of promoting his product. Last year he completed his Food Safe training, and this year he finished a business development course with EntreActive which helped him develop a business plan. He is looking forward to selling fresh and flavored popcorn at markets and events.



Stephanie has always loved animals and she loves caring for them. When she began thinking about owning her own business it was clear that working with animals was a good fit. Her business, Stephanie's Pet Care, was started in 2015 after she too completed a business development course with EntreActive.

Hannah has worked at Thrifty Foods since she was a teenager.



Stephanie handing out surveys and business cards at her church



Rachel has always been crafty – she draws, paints, does ceramics, and bakes – and she has taught other InclusionWorks! participants how to bring out their artistic selves. When considering her career of choice Rachel turned to what she loved, and she has now started her own business, Marsco Canine Crunchies, that sells biscuits for our four-footed friends!

For more information about *InclusionWorks!* see www.inclusionworks.ca
A guidebook on forming employment-focused family-governed groups will be available from *InclusionWorks!* in Summer 2016.

Source: Sowers, J., McLean, D. & Owens, C. (2002). Self-Directed Employment for People with Developmental Disabilities: Issues, Characteristics, and Illustrations. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies* (13)2, from *Self-Directed Employment: Story Book of Oregonians with Developmental Disabilities* (pp. 4-11), by J. Sowers, D. Mclean, J. Stevely, C. Owens, G. Avery-Grubbs, and K. Schumaker, 2001, Portland: Oregon Health & Science University.



CONCLUSION

Beginning the journey to employment is an exciting and fulfilling time. In the process, important discoveries about the individual are made as they take steps that bring them closer to their personal independence and improved quality of life.

A positive attitude and unwavering belief that employment is possible will go a long way towards making employment dreams become employment realities. Employment for all people - disabled or not - is appropriate and expected because everyone has a contribution to make and can be a part of community in a meaningful way.

RESOURCES

Directed by families, the [Family Support Institute](#) provides information, training, and province-wide networking to assist families and their communities to build upon and share their strengths.

www.familysupportbc.com

[CLBC](#) (Community Living BC) is a provincial agency that offers employment supports and services to adults with developmental disabilities.

www.communitylivingbc.ca

The [familyWORKs](#) website consists of tools, strategies and success stories related to employment in British Columbia, including familyWORKs meetings driven by families that look at the possibilities employment can bring to the lives of those we love.

www.familyworksbc.com

[Inclusion BC](#) is a provincial non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the participation of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life.

www.inclusionbc.org

[WorkBC](#) is the provincial government's agency whose objective is to help British Columbians successfully navigate B.C.'s labour market.

www.workbc.ca

[Employment For All](#) is a website that offers information for job seekers, families, employers and support workers for the best practices in supported employment in BC.

www.employmentforall.ca

[CASE](#) (Canadian Association for Supported Employment) works to increase the employment inclusion of Canadians with disabilities through the provision of leadership, resources and ongoing opportunities for dialogue and engagement.

www.supportedemployment.ca

[Find Support BC](#) a comprehensive and searchable online disability resource database that houses more than 1000 governmental and non-governmental resources in almost every region of British Columbia.

www.findsupportbc.com

[Geolive](#) is an online mapping tool that allows self advocates to share and learn about their positive employment experiences in BC.

www.emap.geolive.ca



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