

# Community Based Employment Works!

Christina was referred to IVRS by her team because she had many skills to become employed in the community. Christina had been attending a segregated work setting for many years and local staff believed she had many great qualities an employer would want. Christina also felt she could do more than she was currently doing and wanted to try. Christina worked with IVRS and her team to develop a plan of Supported Employment. She has been working through the years to put money into a PASS Plan to save up and buy a car. The PASS Grant Cadre has worked with her to extend her plan each year the goal wasn't met. There were many barriers to this journey but Christina is proud of what she has achieved.

Christina initially struggled with her confidence in community settings. This was definitely a change from what she was used to — meeting new people, following new expectations, learning new roles, and making conversation with co-workers. These are all things anyone would feel when starting something new, but she used her humor to begin to start making new acquaintances.

Christina is a great example of an individual who did not give up on her dreams and found the right supports to assist her. IVRS connected her with a community provider who came out and met with the team to explore what Christina wanted to do for a career. We agreed to start with a few community assessments, that were able to occur through the work of the community provider. Christina had a couple of positive experiences and really started to gain confidence with her job coach providing necessary supports. It was in the last community assessment, where she expressed interest in applying for a job. She worked with her provider to complete the application. She was offered the job and has been successfully employed in the dietary department at Good Samaritan Nursing Home. Christina's supervisor said, "I offered Christina the job because I felt she would be a good fit to my team. She is doing a wonderful job and she helps to fill in when others need a shift off." IVRS helped her purchase some new scrubs and shoes for her job and connected her to the benefits planner. She has continued to pick up the job coaching for long-term support for her success and the waiver is assisting with funding.

Over the years of working to meet her goals Christina has hit many roadblocks. Christina wanted to get a driver's license but needed to have experience driving. In order to drive, she needed insurance but nobody would insure her. IVRS consulted with the VR Assistive Technology Specialist to see if there were any contacts across the state for her to be able to complete driving training. She was too old to complete Driver's Education locally. IVRS was able to locate a driving instructor locally, her community provider found an insurance company who



Christina next to the car she purchased with her PASS Plan.

would support her plan and provide insurance, and now she has purchased a car she has saved for years to buy.

This was not an overnight success, but Christina's willingness to keep going and the collaboration between many partners has made this dream a reality for her. Christina specifically expressed appreciation to her community providers for the supports and work efforts and for her VR Counselor who never gave up on her and pushed her to pursue her work interests and provided essential counseling and financial supports to provide a foundation to build upon. The collaborative efforts of Goodwill Industries, Ida Services Inc., IVRS and her case management staff working together with a common employment goal and the determination of Christina paid off. The community supports are valuable as they re-enforce her achievements and goals!

Christina has the possibility of earning more per hour when she is called to cover someone else's shift. She is working hard on her on-line courses because these allow her to earn raises along with consistent job performance. On average she works four to five days per week. She has been a great team player and will trade people days or just work for them if they need a day off for special occasions.

Christina is now working in a competitive, integrated community setting and has increased her independence. She is working 20 hours per week, earning \$9.25 an hour and is living independently in the community with supports.