

Dave's Restaurant partners with IVRS to help employee reach his potential

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) first began working with Antawn Hill when he was a high school student. Communication was difficult for Antawn because of severe stuttering. This caused him to have a lack of confidence and he would not try to speak to others or even smile.

After graduating from high school, Antawn went to work for Dave's Restaurant in Charles City. He started as a dishwasher but ultimately wanted to become a cook. However, Antawn's difficulty communicating with servers and kitchen staff created a barrier to his success. Restaurant owner, Dave, contacted IVRS to see if there was something to help Antawn manage his condition.

IVRS Counselor Mary Ott arranged for Antawn to have a speech pathology assessment, and a device that resembles a hearing aid (the Speech Easy) was recommended. Once IVRS purchased the device, the restaurant owner, Dave, drove Antawn to Cedar Rapids to have the device fitted because Antawn didn't have transportation.

As soon as the device was placed, Antawn showed improvement in his speech. He practiced until he was able to take his mother out to lunch and order for both of them.

At the restaurant, Dave promoted Antawn to a full-time cook and both are happy with his success on the job.

Antawn now smiles frequently and his mother calls the transformation in his attitude miraculous.

Antawn is pursuing the career he wanted and he loves his job as a cook. Not only did his employer, Dave, provide the training for Antawn to achieve his goals, he did whatever was necessary - with the help of IVRS counselor Mary Ott - to make sure Antawn succeeded.



Antawn (left) and Dave (right) cook up a specialty for the menu at Dave's Restaurant in Charles City.

Employer: Dave's Restaurant

Area Office: Mason City

Counselor: Mary Ott

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For TTY, call Iowa Relay at 711 or 1-800-735-2942, and ask for the phone number you wish to contact.