

Linking Learning to Careers Success Stories

The staff of Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) are happy to present Success Stories reflecting some of the great work that has been done with participating youth and the results that they are demonstrating related to their preparedness for careers, college and life. The stories have been generated by the Career Consultants and other youth staff working closely with these youth. The purpose for sharing these stories is to acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments of these young people and to share with VocRehab and VABIR staff, as well as state and national LLC partners. These stories are not intended for use in publications without expressed consent from the individuals profiled (and their parents/guardians if under 18).

Middlebury

Libby's Story

As I write this, I sit on my couch of my own apartment which I afford with the money that I am supplied with at my dream job where I am currently employed! I had spent years wishing to be in the position I am, and it has been a journey to get here. But as I comfortably sit and reflect on my day, I reflect on the years that Vocational Rehab helped me get through high school, but I also reflect on the days that Vocational Rehab currently helps and encourages me as I go through online college and work full time.

It started when I was only in 10th grade, and I was wheelchair bound due to a month long stay in the hospital. Although long hospital stays were not uncommon, it started to impact my education in a negative way, and my family and I did not know if I was going to even graduate! My family, friends, and the school system knew how important my education was to me, so they were able to reach out to Vocational Rehab (VR), who primarily was going to be in my life to help navigate the ways of getting credit, to ensure that I was to graduate. Although VR/Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) was aware of my medical needs and difficulties, no one was prepared for how my medical situation would continuously worsen, affecting my education and daily life.

Through my experience with VR/LLC, I was understood and each person that I worked with went above their role to educate themselves on each of my disorders, and how they could help! I was introduced to the basics of VR/LLC first, in order to get the credits needed for graduation. We went straight to business, they believed in me, knew I could do it, so they were able to set me up with a secondary schooling (Vermont Adult Learning) to which I worked weekly with someone in the comfort of my home, and got the credits needed!

But, as my health decreased, VR/LLC set me up with someone who specialized in Assistive Technology. I was newly diagnosed with a brain processing disorder, which meant I couldn't process information properly nor did I have the same vision that I did months before! Personally, AT was the best thing that I was introduced to. My specific LLC AT counselor familiarized herself with each of my disorders and researched the tools that would help me. She knew that I wasn't within the "normal" standards of schooling, but she never made me feel separate. Each decision she made, I was a part of

and each tool she thought would help, I had a demo of! Then, and now, finances were not something my family and I had/has to worry about, which took so much stress off of our shoulders, because we were able to focus on the tools that would help, and not how they would affect us financially. Throughout the last couple years in high school, she introduced me to tools that helped me graduate! I have nothing but amazing things to say about AT. I was even able to attend a conference with my counselor and speak to others about my personal experience and bring my own tools to show and explain!

Once I graduated high school, I seemed a little lost on how to balance online college and to get a job. I had so many accommodations needed, I thought it was hopeless to even try – until I was introduced to an LLC employment specialist who helped me – a disabled teenager, to find an appropriate job, that allows the accommodations needed! The employment specialist worked with me closely and asked for my opinion in each decision she made. It gave me the opportunity to become knowledgeable about my own abilities and my body but also helped me become knowledgeable about how to find a job, and what to look for, so I could look for my own job! She heard about my future plans and we made a 5-year plan together. She made sure to include me in all of her research for jobs around us, and through her research, she made sure that the qualifying choices were able to make the appropriate accommodations. She was able to find the perfect job for me at the time that included the customer service I wanted, had the flexible schedule that allowed me to better my education, and also had the right accommodations! Although I left that job and went to my current job with Easter Seals, the employment specialist was able to help me ensure to continue having the accommodations and continues to check in and be sure that I am happy!

My job at Easter Seals is going very well. I am working as a "family engagement specialist" where I work with families to assess their needs and direct them to programming. Easter Seals will pay for my bachelor's degree through Springfield College after I meet the pre-requisites that include 9 credits at CCV. I have taken 3 credits and am enrolling in the Summer 2021 semester at CCV to take the last 2 classes (6 credits) I need as prerequisites. I will use LLC vouchers for those classes.

Overall, I never thought Vocational Rehab would be as important in my life as it is now. Thanks to VR/LLC, I have successfully completed high school, found my dream job, and am able to succeed in college with the tools and financial assistance I have received from them. I would thank them a hundred times, if able, and could not recommend them enough for those who, like me, struggled with normalcy and needed the extra help that I never was thought possible.