

DDS Employment Happens Initiative
Case Study: King Philip High School and Lifeworks Employment Services
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Jacob was a 21-year old student in a transition program at a high school within the DDS Newton South Norfolk Area at the time the project began. While in high school, Jacob participated in a number of onsite and community-based work experiences and had developed positive work skills, demonstrated a strong desire to work, and **is highly** social. Throughout his internship and volunteer opportunities, Jacob was able to state his preferences and interests. Over time, Jacob clearly and consistently stated that he was interested in janitorial work. He remained on a janitorial crew throughout the remainder of his high school experience.

Prior to the start of the project, Lifeworks and the school district had been involved in a long-term formal collaboration. The school district contracts with Lifeworks for staffing a Community Coach position on a half-time basis. This coach provides job and independent living skills coaching in school and community settings. This provides the district the opportunity to provide the supports needed in a more flexible manner. For example, transition services may require tasks performed outside the purview of a typical Teaching Assistant's responsibility. This collaboration provides Lifeworks the opportunity to establish a relationship with students and parents, and to provide a smoother transition process for students. It also presents as a marketing opportunity and new funding source.

With support from school, Jacob developed a picture employment portfolio and resume. The Transition Coordinator presented it to their school committee for support with networking to find a job. By this time, Jacob had been participating in interview skills and employment training and volunteer opportunities through his school district in his stated areas of interest (e.g. janitorial work, grounds keeping and landscaping) in school and community sites. The project team, consisting of the school district, Lifeworks and a parent representative met to establish goals and objectives, the identification of students for the project, and discussed how to present the project to Jacob and his family to determine if they were interested in participating. Jacob's family identified employment issues/concerns including Jacob's lack of transportation and the potential need to work near home, as well as his potential vulnerability in the community. In response, the transition program provided travel training on how to use the local bus route and taught community safety awareness curriculum.

Shortly thereafter, Jacob met with the Lifeworks' job developer in January 2014 as a preliminary meeting to discuss interests, skills and preferences toward job development. Because Jacob had a network of friends who had recently transitioned to Lifeworks, he was clear that this was his provider of choice. Therefore, he soon participated in a tour of Lifeworks. Lifeworks' job development efforts began immediately in Jacob's local community. Numerous opportunities were explored with careful consideration to pedestrian safety, sidewalk availability and Jacob's commute to work. Within a couple of weeks, Jacob had participated in several job interviews. At one point, Jacob had a job interview scheduled during a school vacation.

After one interview was scheduled, it was learned that Jacob's parent had planned to be away during the school break and Jacob was therefore staying at another family member's home in the city. Both Lifeworks and DDS collaborated to provide transportation resources to get Jacob to and from the city for that interview. As a result, Jacob was offered 2 positions at one time - Lowe's and the local Y. In considering scheduling needs, the team worked together to determine if Jacob could remain at home safely and independently following his shift. This would preclude the need to return to school for a short time, while being more efficient and reflective of life after high school. Jacob accepted the custodial position at his local Y and began his first paid position in early March. Initially, Jacob was hired to work

at the main branch of the Y, to which travel training was provided along the bus route. Shortly thereafter he was transferred to a different site, less conducive to public transportation. The Dial-A-Ride door-to-door transportation resource was explored, but the service does not cross those specific town lines. Jacob's transition program provided the initial transportation and job coaching, yet worked collaboratively with Lifeworks to brainstorm challenges, such as school vacation. Lifeworks stepped in to provide transportation and job coaching during the school break.

Concurrent with acquiring the job at the Y, Jacob participated in Lifeworks' 2-week evaluation, which is a standard step in their referral and acceptance process for the individuals they serve. While Lifeworks provides daily transportation to accepted individuals, families are responsible for providing transportation to and from the program throughout the evaluation process. Because this parent has a rigorous work schedule, the parent inquired about the transition program providing transportation for that 2-week period, which they did. For the remainder of Jacob's transition period, which extends beyond school exit, collaboration continued to address challenges that arose on the job.

Upon turning age 22 at the end of May, Jacob began participation in the Lifeworks program. During this time, Lifeworks noted some challenges that Jacob was facing on the job. For example, during a check-in by Lifeworks, Jacob's supervisor reported that Jacob had initiated interactions with a female staff member that were not acceptable in the workplace. This also distracted him from focusing on his work tasks. Lifeworks contacted the school system to inquire about any history with this behavior and to brainstorm strategies to support him in maintaining focus on his job. Jacob then participated in group discussions, education and training on acceptable workplace behaviors. Jacob was very motivated to keep his job and modify behaviors accordingly. Periodic check-ins with Jacob and his supervisor allow Jacob to maintain his independence and success on the job. Through this team effort and using these support strategies, Jacob remains actively and productively employed.