



### ***Jackson - Fast Learner, Great Employee***

Jackson is like any other young man in Medina County. He's trying to figure out how to balance work and find free time for his hobbies. In fact, according to Samantha Grzybowski, Jackson's job coach from the Medina County Board of DD, he is really looking forward to working and earning vacation days in 2023 so he is able to take time off for his favorite hobby - trains.

"He's had major, major employment slam dunks this year," Ms. Grzybowski says proudly. "Jackson is enthusiastic, he's a quick study, and he really wants to do his best. He cares about his performance. He's ready to take the next big steps into his own independent life."

Jackson works for Advanced Auto Parts in the returns department. His favorite part of his behind the scenes job, he says, is not having to talk to customers. Jackson says employment makes him very happy. He likes that his days are busy and he has something to do. It makes him feel fulfilled.

Jackson has a good relationship with Ken, his boss, who is understanding of Jackson's needs, especially during a long shift. Ken is adaptable and will gladly give Jackson alternate tasks if he's getting burnt out or losing focus. The one thing Jackson appreciates most about his boss is that he is direct. Jackson needs direct instruction and picks things up fast. In fact, by the end of his first week of work, he was at the same training level as a coworker who had been there for two years. "Once he's told what to do, he's got it," says his job coach.

Jackson is eager to talk about employment and what steps he took in deciding where he wanted to submit job applications. "Well to be honest it was between two places, and this interview went really well. The other place --", he pauses, maybe debating on how much he wants to share, "They didn't even get back to me about an interview!"

Jackson is eager to talk about his experiences working and employment in general (and of course his love of trains). Like many of his counterparts, Jackson has experienced his fair share of frustration with finding a spot in the job market. Getting employers to consider hiring a person with a developmental disability just adds to that frustration. One thing is clear, he has become a pro at interviews. But there is one question which makes him think. What would you like the community and companies to know about hiring individuals with disabilities? "Hmm," he says thoughtfully. "I would say because it's just worth it to hire them. It's good for the companies, and it also helps me. Having a job makes me happy."

Jackson's biggest aspiration is to work for a railroad. His dream job is to become a conductor; he wants to see the country by train. He knows that to reach that dreams, he needed to get some job experience. "It's just what I needed to do," Jackson explains. He knows employment is the first step to opening doors to future success.

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*October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Congress first enacted NDEAM in 1945 as a way to pay tribute to the accomplishments of individuals with disabilities. The theme for 2022's NDEAM celebration is "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation", meant to recognize everything people with disabilities have done to build a diverse and inclusive workforce. Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities will be celebrating with, among other items, spotlights on Medina County individuals with disabilities. Stay tuned in to our social media pages to see more and join in the #NDEAM2022 celebrations.*