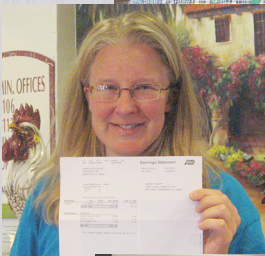




“Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.”

– Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe



persistence pays off!

You may recall an article about Brad Lewis a few years ago, which highlighted his successful brain surgery and the resultant lack of seizures. Since then his life has radically changed. He no longer has seizures and has energy and the ability to do many things he was never able to before! One of Brad's goals was to get a paying job, which is often easier said than done for many adults with disabilities. Brad began with a volunteer job and for the first time in his life was working five days a week. From there he was promoted to a job that offered pay for part of the day and now he got a regular paycheck. Casa de Amma's vocational coordinator, Gina Hughes, helped Brad find employment at Marshals for a seasonal position, and for the first-time Brad was hired independently and was treated the same as any employee! Unfortunately, the position wasn't able to continue past the holidays even though Brad proved to the management - and himself, he was more than capable of fulfilling the job duties.



Disappointed but never willing to give up, Brad went back to the five-day a week combination of volunteer/some paid hours and social activities in the community work program. Meanwhile, Gina was working behind the scenes to find Brad the job she knew he deserved and had set up an interview at local store, Marbella Market. The interview went well but the manger explained he didn't have a position at the time but asked that Brad check in weekly. Brad's determination and hard work showed, as every week he dressed up to walk the half mile to the market and respectfully check in to see if there was a position. Brad continued this routine faithfully for months until he recently got the good news — he was hired! The manager shared with us how impressed he was with Brad's commitment and desire to be part of the work force. Brad's story is a great example of someone who has worked for his opportunities and who is thankful for every chance afforded to him. Brad's resolve demonstrates that his disability will not be an excuse to keep him from using his God-given abilities. Congratulations to Brad and Gina and our thanks to Marbella Market for teaming together to show others the contribution people like Brad can make in our community!

inspired by Brad's story?

The unfortunate truth is no matter how hard our residents and staff work to secure employment, we still rely on people in the community to hire adults with special needs. Do you own a small business or have the ability to hire people at your place of work? If so we would love to talk to you about some of our qualified residents who are looking for a job. When businesses are approached to hire a person with disabilities they often have questions and some understandable apprehension. If you are interested in Casa's Vocational program, here are answers to some of the questions you may have.

IS THE PERSON CAPABLE OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE BUSINESS?

Yes! Not all adults with disabilities have the same skills, and we wouldn't place a person in a situation that isn't a good fit for the business and the individual. We only place our residents in positions where they can make a significant contribution.

WILL THEY HAVE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

Our residents have worked very hard to learn appropriate social and professional skills. Any resident referred to your business would have the skills they need, and any concerns would be discussed in detail with our Vocational Manager. Part of our program is ongoing training and support with social skills and community interactions.

WILL IT BE EXTRA WORK FOR ME AND MY EMPLOYEES?

No more than with any other employee. With a clear list and explanation of tasks, the individual should be capable of doing his/her tasks. When extra attention is needed, we provide job coaches that work to ensure tasks are learned and carried out properly. The job coaches demonstrate professionalism and a positive work ethic to ensure the individual has mastered their skills and is meeting the company's expectations.

Adults with disabilities benefit their workplace in many ways. They are loyal and dependable and willing to perform tasks that others may not wish to do such as routine and repetitious tasks. Our experience has shown that oftentimes people with disabilities have equal or higher performance ratings, better retention rates, and less absenteeism. Hiring adults with disabilities helps improve diversity in the workplace and certain tax credits may be available for qualified applicants. Please contact Aaron Vorell at avorell@casadeamma.org for more information.

please help us keep the wheels turning!

Casa de Amma's 3rd annual Triathlon is coming up on Saturday, June 24th. Unfortunately as our residents begin to train, we have run into a shortage of bikes because someone broke into our service bay and stole some. We were able to add extra security to prevent this in the future, but because of the theft and our residents' increased interest in fitness, **we are in desperate need of more bikes!** We are looking at purchasing at least 4-6 bikes to keep the wheels of fitness rolling — both hybrid bikes and 3-wheelers for those with mobility difficulties. If you would like to give a tax-deductible donation in any amount to this cause, please visit our website or send a check to us with the memo "bikes" on it. We appreciate your willingness to support our healthy Lifestyle programs!



www.casadeamma.org