

Real Work for Real People



Diversity Awareness in Full Bloom at Tomah Wal-Mart Garden Center

By Michael Molley, Riverfront office in Sparta

Amy Wotawa, store manager at the Tomah Wal-Mart, has been a long-time advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. A collaborative effort between Amy and Riverfront has led to many individuals finding rewarding positions. No one knows that better than Michelle Linenberg. Michelle is a homebody who loves watching TV, but when she was hired to work in the Wal-Mart Garden Center, she was happy to get out of the house and earn some money, because, even more than watching TV, Michelle loves to shop! Since starting her job in April, Michelle has made a few close friends and become a valuable asset to Wal-Mart working three eight-hour days per week. She is a hard worker and takes great pride in what she does, often taking it upon herself to do things without needing to be asked first. Amy commented that she loves walking around the garden center now that Michelle works so diligently to keep the area neat and clean. While Michelle came to Wal-Mart donning a quiet, shy, introverted personality, she has since established social connections at work, and a more independent, confident, outgoing Michelle is surfacing.



Michelle [right] poses with Tomah Wal-Mart store manager, Amy Wotawa.



Jim makes some final adjustments to a John Deere lawn mower engine.

Employee Starts His Engines at Horizon Equipment

By Cassandra Ray, Riverfront office in La Crosse

When Jim Kropelin wanted a job working in small engine repair, he turned to Riverfront. With Riverfront's support, he embarked upon a work experience with Horizon Equipment in March 2008. They initially gave him responsibility for maintaining the lot and unloading new lawn mowers. Later on, Jim was given an opportunity to work hands-on with small engines, just as he had aspired, and he began putting together new lawn mowers. The speed with which Jim assembled the mowers did not escape his supervisor, who praised him as a "lead installer." Productivity and efficiency distinguished Jim as a valuable member of the Horizon Equipment team, and in April 2008, they hired him full-time. Since that time, Jim has continued his exceptional job performance and, as a result, has been given additional responsibilities that take advantage of his mechanical aptitude. His supervisor is exceedingly pleased with his performance and is delighted to have him as an addition to Horizon Equipment. Jim's small engine skills promise to keep things running smoothly for a long time to come.

M & I Banks on Perfect Employee

By Debra Rimmel, Riverfront office in Janesville

Stacee Fisher had a challenge finding her first job. After two years of searching, Riverfront Job Developer Debra Rimmel began talking to M & I Bank. The bank identified several small but important jobs someone could complete in a couple hours per week, including photocopying and mail sorting and delivery. Stacee's abilities fit the bill, and she helped to increase the efficiency of the office. Now Stacee speeds around M & I Bank with a smile as she delivers mail. She appreciates casual Fridays and especially enjoys receiving a well-earned paycheck.



Stacee delivers mail at M & I Bank.

Serving Up Success at High Water Supper Club

By Kathy Leffingwell, Riverfront office in Black River Falls
While still in high school, Kyle Bolte transitioned from dreaming of his first job to becoming a valued employee. Riverfront arranged a work experience for Kyle, and after an initial interview, he began busing tables at High Water Supper Club in Ettrick. With the assistance of Riverfront staff, Kyle immersed himself in learning every aspect of the job, and in a short time, he was busing tables like a natural. As the end of the work experience drew near, the owner and other employees agreed that he was an invaluable asset and made him a permanent fixture. Kyle's success has helped him gain self esteem and confidence. Even at the supper club's busiest times, he always stays calm and cool. The owner states, "We all should take lessons from Kyle, including me." With his newfound confidence, Kyle is now planning to pursue his driver's license. His first job has opened up a whole new world of possibilities.



Kyle busily buses tables at High Water Supper Club.

Burger King Rewards Loyal Workers

By Shelly Cherry, Riverfront office in Mondovi

Loyalty was rewarded when two hardworking employees were faced with the unexpected loss of their jobs. Lee Moy and Tracy Loewenhagen were hired at Burger King in Mondovi in February 1995. They were highly valued workers who were always on time, had a good rapport with coworkers, and possessed a strong work ethic. However, the two workers faced hardship in December 2003 when Burger King closed the Mondovi location. Their Riverfront job coaches and coworkers responded, advocating to transfer them to the Eau Claire restaurant. Dedication paid off, and the pair was promptly moved to Eau Claire. Now they work five days a week and have quickly reestablished their friendships with their coworkers.



Lee and Tracy prepare for a full day's work at Burger King.



3000 South Ave.
La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone (608) 784-9450

110A S. Main St.
Alma, WI 54610
Phone (608) 685-3350

720 Red Iron Road
Black River Falls, WI 54615
Phone (715) 284-2546

1107 Barberry Drive
Janesville, WI 53545
Phone (608) 757-0909

132 S. Eau Claire St.
Mondovi, WI 54755
Phone (715) 926-3987

103 S. Water St. Ste. 8
Sparta, WI 54656
Phone (608) 269-8263

Website
www.riverfrontinc.org