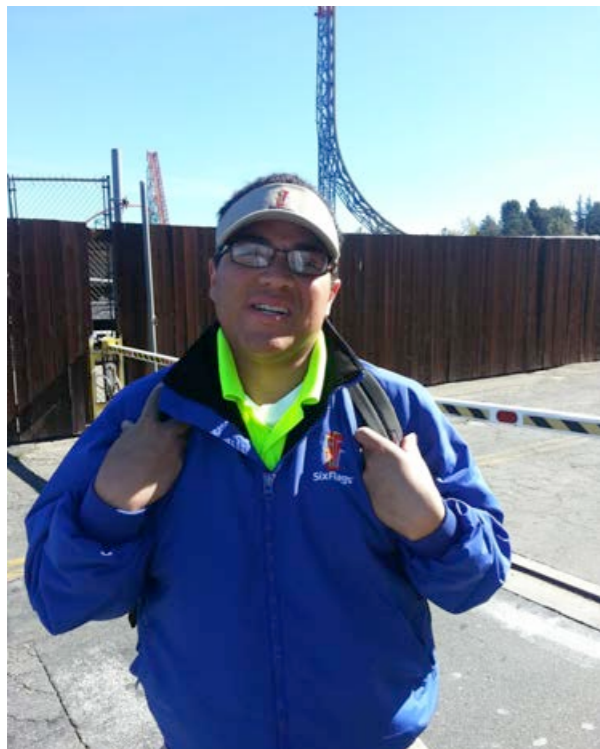


Competitive Integrated Employment *WORK is for Everyone!!!*



Heather Hardman, Tracy “Buddy”
Whitehorse & Scott Shepard

Competitive Integrated Employment numbers have flatlined and even decreased over the past 15 years, while 81% of people served in the U.S. remain stuck in day programs, work activity centers and sheltered workshops (Braddock, Hemp, Rizzolo, Tanis, Haffer & Wu, 2015). While some states have invested heavily into infrastructure, staff training, and a strong commitment to employment first policies (like Washington, serving 84% of adults with I/DD in integrated supported employment), most states contribute to the dismal 19.2% national numbers of people in CIE.



Despite the fact that research-based practices documenting the success of supported living and other person-centered services is increasing, there continues to be an urgent need for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to have access to quality, person centered (individualized) community supports and services that address their needs. Federal CMS Regs state that Home & Community Based Services must be integrated and support full access to the greater community. We need to work with the Gov and legislators to ensure we have the infrastructure to do this!



Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT)

-When professionals are knowledgeable about disability laws, job accommodations, methods for effective inclusion, employment possibilities, and state & federal benefits, people with I/DD are more likely to experience competitive employment outcomes (Francis, Turnbull 2013).

-Family Employment Awareness Training can assist to break down the barriers of low expectations and knowledge about competitive, integrated employment.

-The recent Federal CMS ruling on Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) has the goal to promote community integration by making sure that individuals with I/DD have the opportunity to work and spend time with other people in their community who do not have disabilities. Services CANNOT isolate individuals from the community. (HCBS Final Rule)

Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) conclusion

-High expectations for competitive employment and transition to employment knowledge among people with I/DD, their families, and the professionals who support them can help mitigate poor competitive employment outcomes.

(Francis, Turnbull, et al; Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 2013)

While **Individualized, Person-Centered services** make sense for everyone, they are especially appropriate for people with who communicate and learn differently and who are transitioning from institutional settings. We need States to commit to fund person-centered services, as outlined in the new HCBS regulations, and we the need help of Educators and Early Childhood supports to do the following:

- Educate Families about “Employment First” philosophy and high (typical) expectations for their sons & daughters from birth on!!!
- Help families to have high expectations for their children to have careers, healthy relationships, lifestyles and homes of their choosing.
- Encourage families to demand inclusive education options to promote communication and social development while avoiding baby-sitting in segregated settings shut away from gen ed peers.

We can't emphasize enough how important it is to have integrated work-based experiences during High School

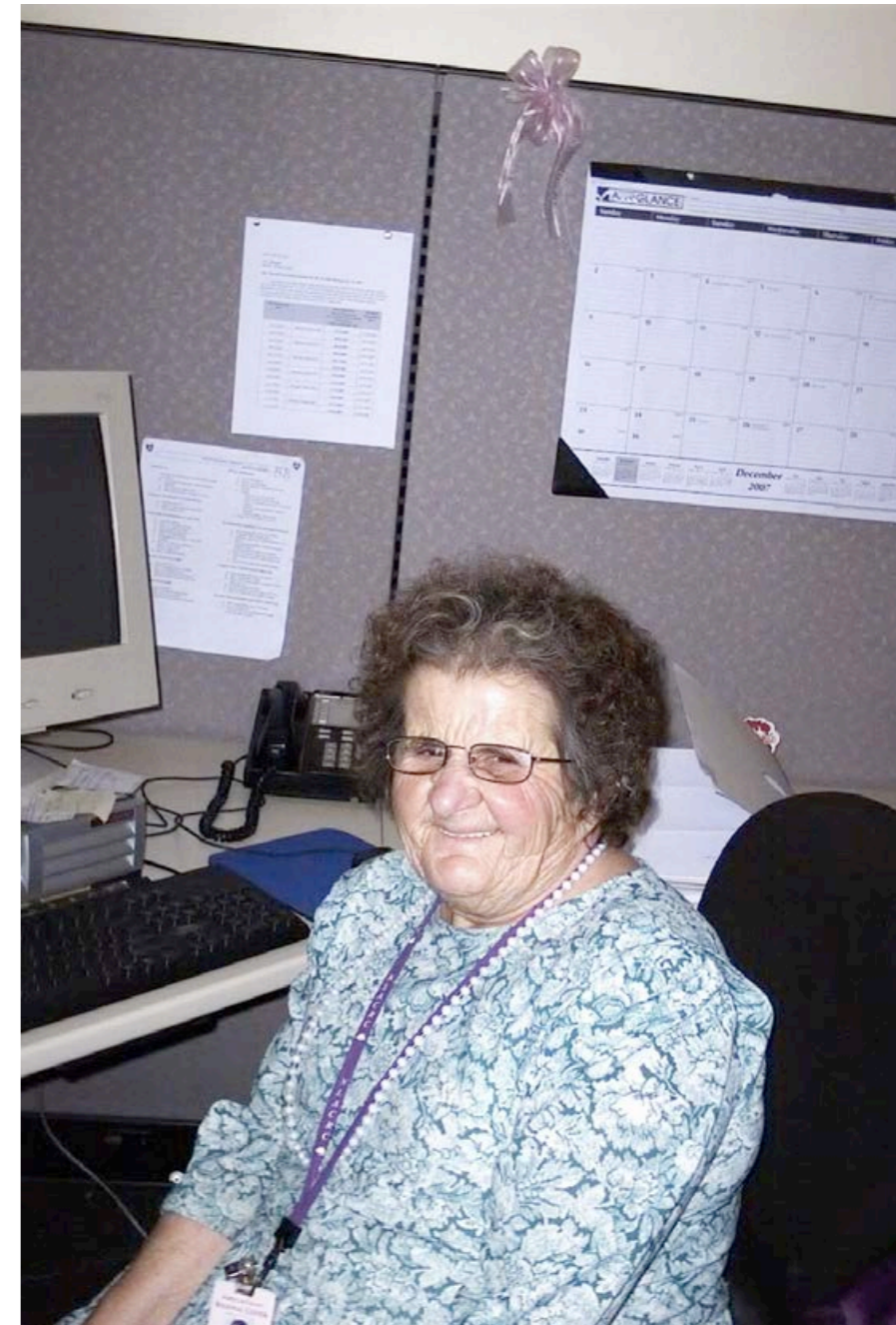
Developing a resumé of experience will help lead to employment. People with disabilities who are unemployed generally live in poverty



Factors that Promote Successful Student Outcomes

Paid work experiences during
High School
Parent Involvement
A network of family & friends
Community-based instruction
A good job match

Rusch & Chadsey, 1998



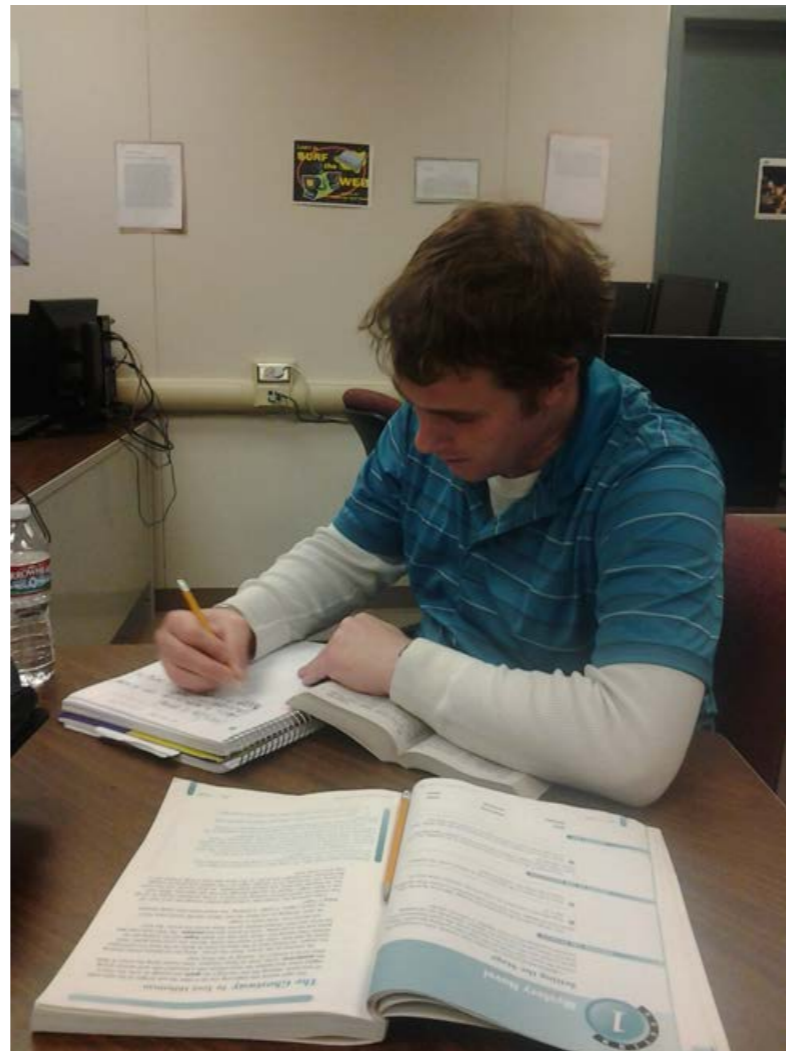
What type of transition services should you ask for in your ITP/IEP?



Paid and volunteer work experiences



Enroll in classes at college or adult school. At home, enroll in recreational or hobby classes through local Parks & Rec., YMCA, a gym





Heather

**Why work is
important to me**

Brief History:

Heather attended a school for kids with autism in Connecticut before moving to California with her family in 1986. Her “behavior plan” from Connecticut suggested that her chairs always be bolted into the floor to avoid being thrown. She attended the “Calypso” Behavior Management Day program and the Saturday Community Recreation Program once she moved.



Heather's History (continued)



It took a while to notice that Heather enjoyed spending time in the community as opposed to a classroom or program setting where she gets trapped in some compulsive routines. Heather had a blast at Saturday Program in the community, but had challenges at the segregated Day Program.

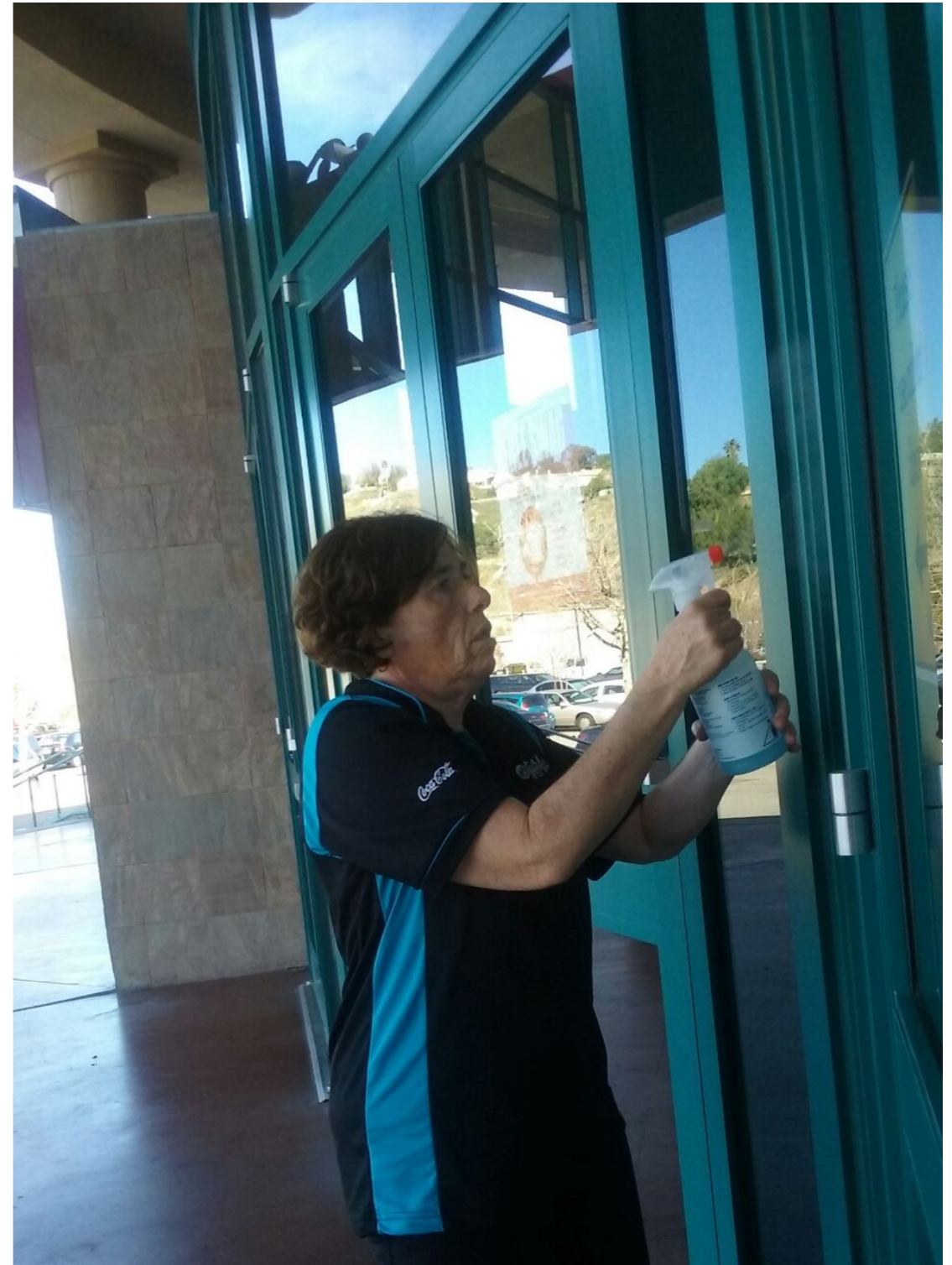
So....Heather began to work!



Heather has had jobs at Foster's Freeze and Carl's Jr., and has attended C.O.C. when time permits, taking courses in swimming, aerobics & dance.

She now works at Edwards (Regal) twice a week

Heather has been on the job at Edwards (now Regal) since 1998.



Washing mirrors at Regal Theater



Heather's 2nd job at Marshalls (20 years)



She works one to two days a week
at Marshalls hanging Lingerie





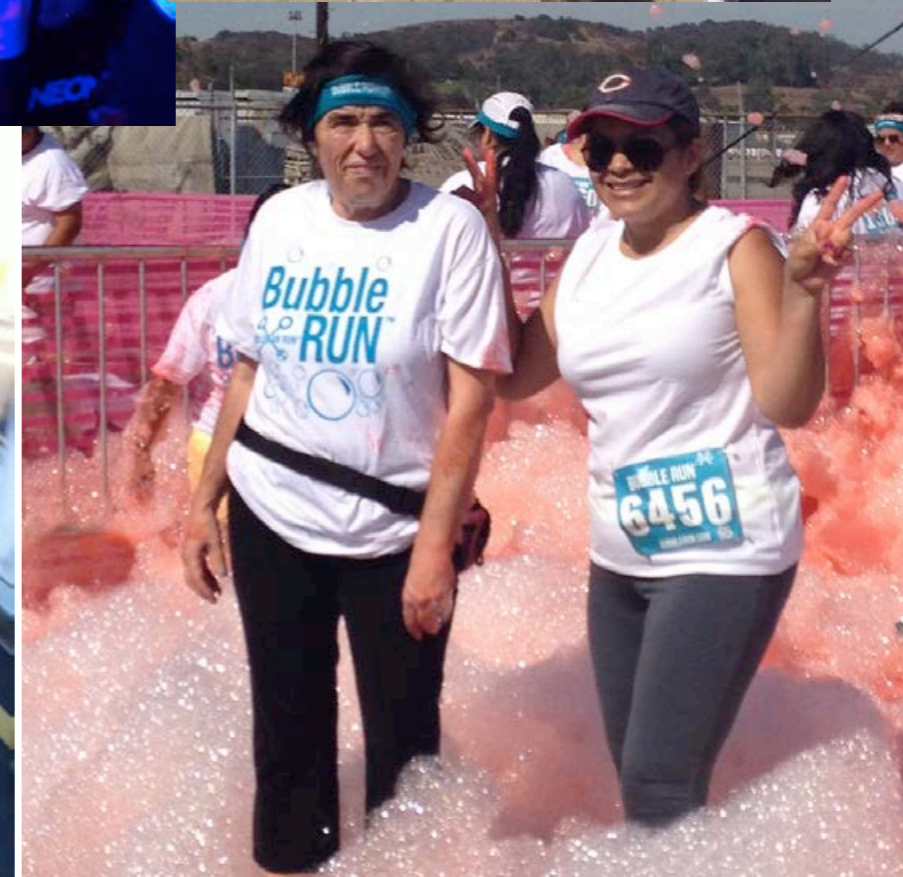
I have the support of a job coach from Avenues

“Dependable & hard working”

Heather is a classic example of a person whose skills were underestimated in a SDC setting and other segregated environments. If she was still there, they still might not think she was “ready” to work.



Heather loves to walk 5K's

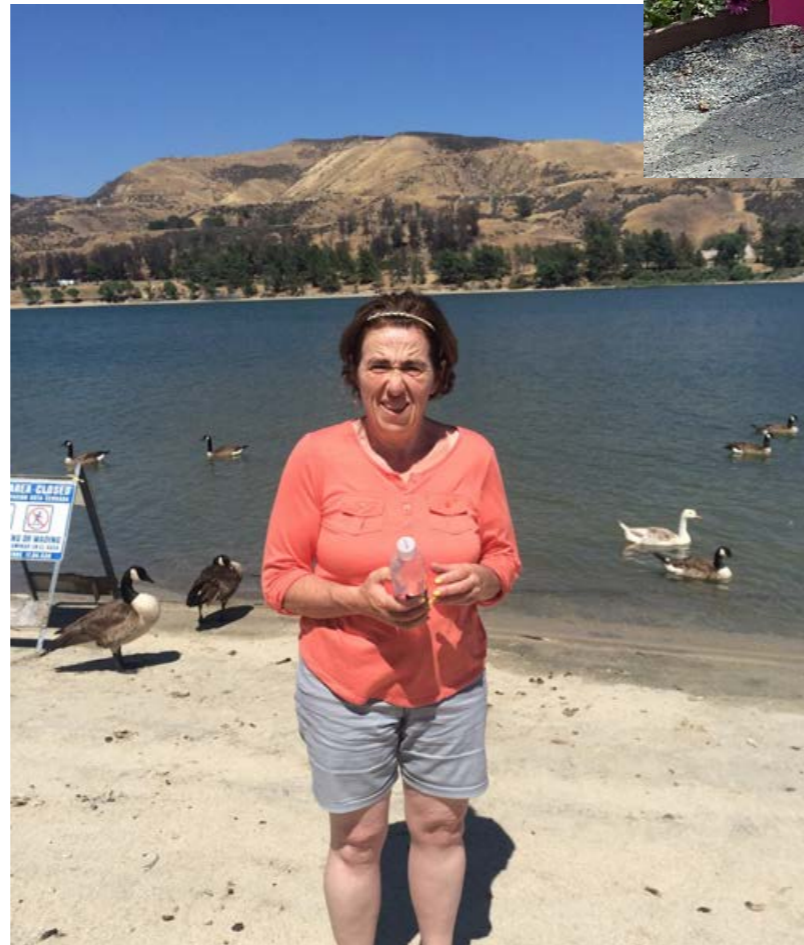


And, loves to get her nails done!



I live in my house in Saugus with my roommate Gloria. We split the rent & utilities.

I spend my work earnings on vacations to Santa Barbara, Aspendell, San Diego, Ventura and other places.



I share my story with Legislators like Assemblyman Lackey and LA County Supervisor Barger



Buddy Whitehorse



I live in my own apartment by myself. I am lucky to have gotten a Section 8 Housing Voucher over 25 years ago. I pay my own bills and shop for myself



Since the pandemic, I also spend time in Castaic and may move there in a few years to be closer to my jobs

I graduated from Reseda High School in 1984 and have always worked since then. I worked on a gardening crew, maintenance at an apartment complex, and landscaping at Kenyon Landscaping.



I did janitorial work for BriteWorks for over 5 years. They gave me an award for the quality of my work.



I worked at the Japanese Gardens,
but they closed during the pandemic.



Now I have three jobs:
Landscaping, working as an IHSS
provider, and at the Avenues office



What Works for Me:

Show me what to do (don't talk too much because it confuses me)

Notice when I do a good job

Write things down so that I understand better

Give me time to process

It bothers me when people say my name too much

Avenues helped me to switch eye doctors. Dr. Rauchman performed 2 laser surgeries on each of my eyes. Now my eye pressure and glaucoma is controlled by my eye drops. I do have some problems reading my newspapers and small print. Reading glasses help but I don't want to wear them.



I enjoy making presentations at conferences and at visits with State Legislators.



I also love the outdoors



Concluding Thoughts...

Students who do not work will live in poverty and have less control over their lives (relying only on SSI and govt. resources)

*People with I/DD will **ALWAYS** be better off financially when they work! Even when their SSI benefits are adjusted down due to work income, people will always earn MORE when they work, than on SSI or SSDI alone.*

Utilize families, friends, and colleagues to develop employment connections!

Ensure that motivations to work are in place! How will having a job make a significant difference in the persons quality of life?

For more info:

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AVENUES SLS