



United Cerebral Palsy: Stories of Living Life Without Limits

Ayden

“Just 10,000 steps a day could change someone’s life forever,” said Ayden, who was born three months premature and diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy.

After receiving a college scholarship through United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Indiana, Ayden said, “This helped me in chasing my dreams in college, and I have wanted to give back ever since.”

Despite the challenges with cerebral palsy, Ayden served as team manager for the Indiana State University track and field and cross country teams for four years, helping the teams win 11 conference championships. He graduated with a Political Science degree in 2015 and dreams of becoming a politician on the local level.

A two-time U.S. Paralympic National Track and Field Member, Ayden was inspired after watching a video of an athlete with cerebral palsy. He is preparing for the U.S. Paralympics Trials in North Carolina to compete for a spot in the Rio games. We have confidence many of his 10,000 steps will be left in Rio.

Jesse

Oakleaf, A Center of Excellence for Adults at UCP of Greater Cleveland, offers programs that operate with a presumption of employability for people with disabilities: meaningful work is available for every individual who wants to work at a level that meets their needs. Program staff work with each individual to identify their interests and employment goals, as well as developing their workplace skills, to encourage them to continue their growth and become more independent. One client, Jesse, is a great example how the tiered approach of our employment programs helps people to obtain a job with the least restrictions.



Jesse began his journey with Oakleaf Transition Services as part of the 2012 and 2013 Summer Youth Work Experience. This program allows high school students with disabilities the opportunity to explore different careers to find what they're interested in and to build job-related skills to help them on whatever path they choose. After Jesse graduated from high school in 2014, he began in the OakLeaf Job Training Services program where he worked on packaging, sorting, shredding documents and even tried some janitorial work.

In June 2015, Jesse felt he was ready to try working in the community and attended the Cuyahoga County Board of Development Disabilities' Cleveland Crops farming program. Although Jesse was certainly able to perform the work, it was discovered that he works best in a work group with a supervisor to help him remain on task. Jesse briefly returned to UCP's Job Training Services until October when an opportunity became available for an assessment at OakLeaf Partner's Reese Pharmaceutical Supported Employment Site. Jesse flourished under the supervision of an OakLeaf Site Supervisor. However, a permanent position at Reese was not available at that time. In January of 2016, Jesse moved on to another assessment at the Supported Employment Site at Oatey SCS where he wowed them with his excellent work skills and can-do attitude.

OakLeaf Partner's is pleased to announce that, as of April 2016, Jesse has been hired in the Supported Employment group at Oatey Manufacturing. He has continued to increase his skill set and has begun building relationships with his co-workers as well as many Oatey staff and management. Jesse has expressed his satisfaction with his job and looks forward to going every day. Jesse's supervisor at Oatey states, "He gets along very well with co-workers and is a big asset to the Oatey team. He has a willingness to learn new tasks and does so quickly. Jess is always smiling and happy when he comes to work."