

100 Years...100 Stories

Throughout this month, we will be featuring Arkansas stories from yesterday and today to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month along with celebrating 100 years of Vocational Rehabilitation, 75 years of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Katie Johnson

Katie Johnson graduated from Bentonville High School in May of 2019. She received IEP services in high school due to multiple disabilities. While in high school, Katie participated Pre-ETS programs both during the summer and during the school year. During her senior year, she participated in the Mercy Jobpath Pathway to Employment program, a partnership between ARS, Mercy Hospital, Bentonville, and Roger's school districts. Mercy was so impressed with the abilities that Katie demonstrated during her program participation that they hired her after she graduated as a food tech in the food and nutrition department. Through her employment, she also has full benefits with paid leave and medical benefits and the opportunity for growth in her position.



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Harold Dahl

Harold Dahl became an Arkansas Rehabilitation Services client at the beginning of 2019 in the Conway Field Office. He has been a plumber for over 20 years and needed assistance with the purchase of hearing aids due to a recent decline in his hearing. Mr. Dahl discussed in lengths how his hearing loss was causing him difficulties performing many of his job duties, including being about to hear other workers on the job site, sounds of the equipment used and talking to potential clients on the phone. He spoke of the frequency of needing what people said to him to be repeated, making everything more challenging in his professional and personal life. By the middle of summer,



ARS was able to assist Mr. Dahl in purchasing his hearing aids from Infinity Hearing Center. Mr. Dahl's case was successfully closed at the end of 2019 after several follow-ups were completed confirming the hearing aids he received were working well for him. Mr. Dahl is very happy that he can maintain his long-standing employment as a plumber. We are glad that we could assist Mr. Dahl to continue his career for as long as he chooses.

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Kathy Walker

Kathy Walker enjoyed her job as a dedicated Lowes employee until spinal stenosis, arthritis, fibromyalgia, degenerative joint disease, and other disabling conditions affected her functional mobility and left her unable to continue working at Lowes. Kathy had her left and right hip replacements in

2014 and tried to return to working part-time at Lowes in May of 2015. Unfortunately, Kathy was physically unable to perform the work and returned to drawing disability benefits. In 2016, Kathy learned about Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and assistance available to individuals with disabling conditions who want to work. She began working with Paul

Shrum, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Fayetteville ARS office, to explore

vocational opportunities and establish goals for returning to work. Through her previous employment with Lowes, Kathy learned about a job opportunity with Joplin Door Company that involved scheduling contractors in installing doors and other household improvements. Kathy applied for a position where she could work on a computer from her home with a flexible schedule that allowed her to take breaks as necessary to support her physical condition.



ARS client Kathy Walker sits at her new ergonomic workstation that allows her to work from home with less discomfort.