



EmploymentFirst Ambassadors

Circles of Life Conference- May 6, 2021

Presenters

Megan Rindal
Transition Coordinator, School District of Elmbrook

Kathryn Burish, via video,
EmploymentFirst Ambassador

Grayson Dugall, via video,
EmploymentFirst Ambassador



Overview

- ❖ **What is EmploymentFirst**
 - ❖ **Goals of EmploymentFirst Ambassadors**
 - ❖ **WIN- Workforce Initiative Network- history with EmploymentFirst**
 - ❖ **Kathryn- EmploymentFirst Ambassador story**
 - ❖ **Grayson- EmploymentFirst Ambassador story**
 - ❖ **Discuss agencies/collaborations of EmploymentFirst Ambassadors**
 - ❖ **Questions**
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EmploymentFirst- WI

Employment First is designed to improve our state and improve the working lives of people with disabilities. Our goals are:

- Improve our state economy by helping businesses find talent and meet their needs by hiring people with disabilities.
- Create policies and practices that increase the number of people with disabilities being employed in the community.
- Support employment services to help working-age citizens with disabilities get jobs in the community that pay minimum wage or higher.

Source: <https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/employment-first/>



Why EmploymentFirst initiatives are important

- ❖ The US Dept of Labor tells us that people with disabilities are employed about 1/3 that people without disabilities.
- ❖ Over 13 million adults of working age in the US are receiving disability benefits from Social Security.
- ❖ Working age adults with disabilities are living below the poverty line at twice the rate of the general population.
- ❖ 65% of the individuals in poverty long-term are people with disabilities (Mathematica Policy Research)
- ❖ With assistance, accommodations, and encouragement, many more individuals with disabilities can work.

Source:

<https://www.apse.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/Employment%20First%20-%20Legislator%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

EmploymentFirst- WI

Major groups supporting EmploymentFirst in Wisconsin:

[Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities](#)

[Wisconsin Association for People Supporting EmploymentFirst \(APSE\)](#)



Policies in WI

In 2017 two important pieces of legislation passed in WI that relate to this national movement.

1. The Employment First law (AB 625) prioritizes community employment for people with disabilities and aims to increase the number of people in community integrated jobs who are paid wages comparable to people without disabilities.
2. The Partners with Business Bill (AB819) provides a small amount of funding for mini-grants to employment service providers, school districts, and funders to implement the support model. This innovative approach helps businesses learn how to hire and support employees with disabilities using co-worker support.

Source: [Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities- WI Legislation](#)



Workforce Initiative Network (WIN)

Started at Waukesha Independence Network- focus on increasing employment options for individuals in the community with disabilities. Grant funded through the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD).

- **Student workshops- Job Wanted!**
 - a. Mock job interviewing
 - b. Resume building
 - c. Social Media & Employment
 - d. Employer panel
- **Employer workshops/breakfast**
 - a. Sharing stories of success
 - b. How to make your workplace more sensory friendly- for everyone
- **Community Conversations**
- **Job Shadows- during virtual**
- **EmploymentFirst Ambassadors**



EmploymentFirst Ambassadors

EF Ambassadors support the principles of Employment First and believe that:

- Everyone can work and there is a job for everyone
- Schools, families, and businesses must raise their expectations about work
- Employment is not a social service
- People are healthier, safer, and happier when they work

Source: <http://www.wiemploymentfirst.com/wi-employment-first-ambassador/>



How to become an EmploymentFirst Ambassador

[How to become an EmploymentFirst Ambassador-](#)

[Toolkit for Preparing EmploymentFirst Ambassadors](#)

Source: <https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/employment-first/>



Kathryn Burish

[Audio](#)



Kathryn F Burish

EmploymentFirst story



High School Jobs

- **I had 12 different job experiences:**
 - Joe to Go, YMCA, laundry; Kidney Foundation, office work; CareAge, office and dining room.....
- **I got my first community integrated paid job!**
 - Noodles and Company, 4 years
 - Above minimum wage!
 - I waited on and bussed tables, cleaned, filled orders, delivered food...

High School Life

When I was In High School:

- I was a Varsity Cheerleader for 4 years
- I was in 2 of my high school musicals
- I want to become an Actor



High School Classes

When I was In High School I took many classes, including:

- History
- Marine Biology
- Lifetime Activities I & II,
- Outdoor Pursuits
- Stagecraft (English credit)



Project STRIVE

Started at age 19. STRIVE is a community-based program in an apartment. I participated in for the my last two years of my education. At STRIVE, I learned Independent skills such as:

- Budgeting money
- Doing laundry, taking out garbage
- Planning fun outings
- Making my own and group meals
- Employment skills; worked at Noodles and Co.



After High School Life

- **Attended Project SEARCH, Milwaukee County Zoo**
- **Maintained my job at Noodles & Co**
- **Currently working at Aurora Health Care**

Project Search - Milwaukee County Zoo

Nine month Job Training Program - 3 job rotations

- **Zoological Society** - office work, answering phones, mailings. This was my favorite rotation that showed me what I wanted to do long-term! I loved working with people.
- **Gift Shop** - Stocking, cleaning, customer service. Kind of slow because it was winter.
- **Education Department** - prepare class materials, assisted in classrooms. Fun rotation, where I worked with amazing people!

Kathryn Burish: Employee of Aurora!!

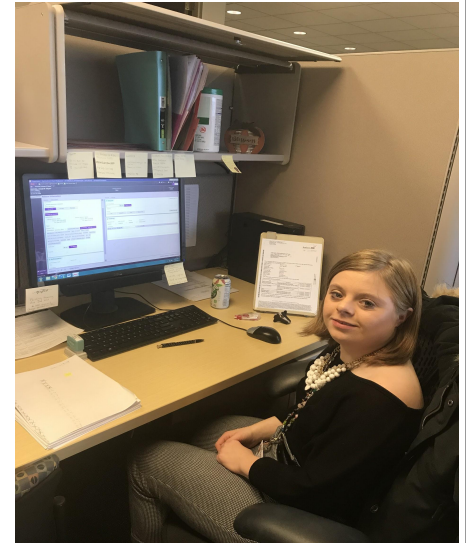


My Job at AURORA

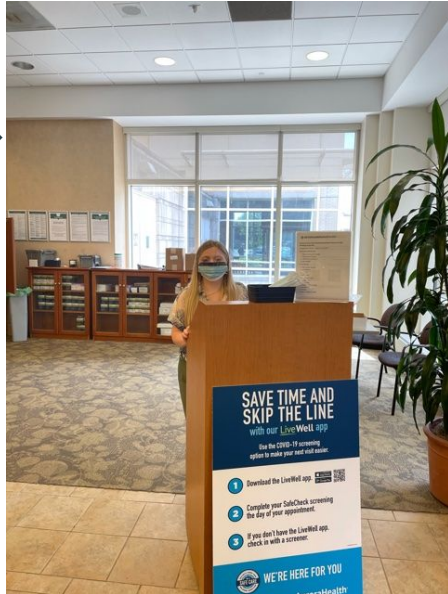
My Job Title: Health Information Clerk

What I did at my job:

- **I entered paper Medical Records in the computer.**
- **I also requested additional information and mail out records.**

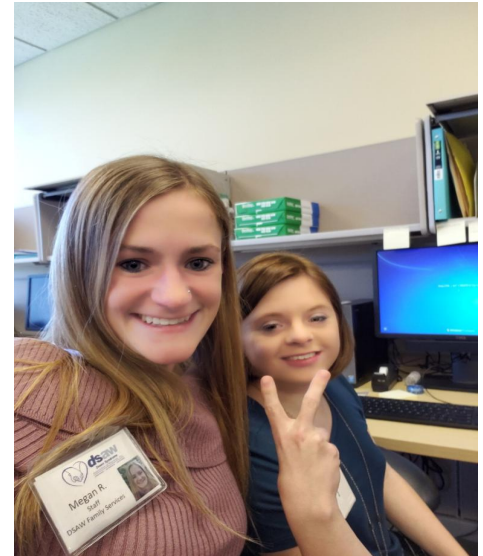


Current job: West Allis Women's pavilion



The Fave part of working at AURORA

I loved all the great people that I worked with and I especially LOVED being a part of the team!



My Hours

I work:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 to 2:00 = 20 hours/wk
- I make a very good competitive wage!!!!
- I have health and dental benefits; and a retirement plan

My Apartment

I got an apartment about four years ago. I am one apartment in a four-unit building. I decorated it the way I want.

Since the pandemic, I have moved back in with my parents, except for one night a week, but am hoping to be back in my apartment full-time by summer.



Community Involvement

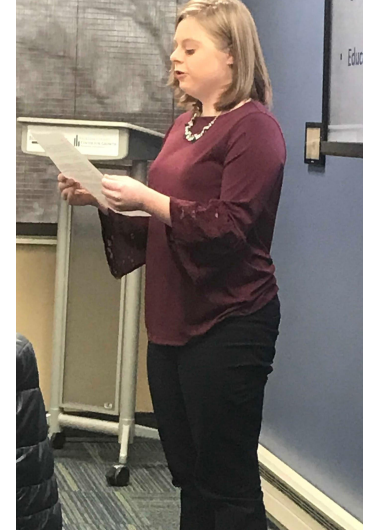
Board member, Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin (DSAW), Milwaukee Chapter

-Attend meetings to discuss and plan events like dances, the DSAW Walk at the Zoo and the golf outing/fundraiser.



Taking a Young Leaders course at DSAW where I learn:

- Skills to maintain a job
- How to interact with people
- Giving good presentations



Community Involvement

WI Employment First Ambassador

-Present about my Employment journey and how I got to my current job

-Presented at Carroll University and the WI Employment First Conference in 2019

-Hope to inspire others to work in the community!



Grayson Dugall

[Audio](#)



Grayson Dugall

EmploymentFirst Ambassador Story

Work experiences started in high school

Care-Age Nursing and Rehabilitation

- Activities with Residents

Penzeys Spices

- Packaging and Assembly



Work Experiences started in High School

Elmbrook Central Administrative Office

- Assembled Foss Science Kits
- Clerical Work

Korkos Investments

- Assist with Cleaning of Common Areas



Support through DVR

Veloce Indoor Speedway

- Help charge go-karts
- General cleaning and maintenance



Project SEARCH

9-Month Program for People with Disabilities

Three meaningful rotations:

- ❖ Volunteer Services
- ❖ Housekeeping
- ❖ Distribution

Goal of Employment in the Community!



Current Job

**Housekeeper at ProHealth Waukesha
Memorial Hospital**

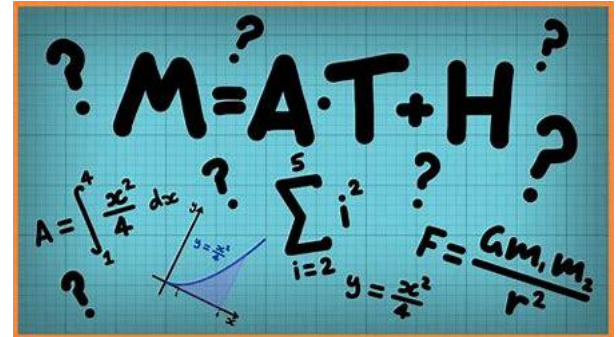
Impressed Environmental Services
staff during Project SEARCH

Hired after Successful Interview



Life outside of work

- Waukesha County Technical College- Took a Math class last winter, may take more in the future
- I live on my own, in an apartment in Waukesha. I have lived there since Oct 2016.
- Love attending local sporting events, Especially the Bucks and Brewers




Importance of Hiring People with Disabilities

- Different Perspectives
- Different Skills and Abilities



Collaboration

→ Kathryn and Grayson

- Families
 - School District of Elmbrook
 - Businesses, including Aurora, Milwaukee County Zoo, Waukesha Memorial Hospital
 - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - DVR-funded vendors:
 - a. Goodwill (Project SEARCH)
 - b. Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin
 - c. Easterseals of SEWI
 - IRIS (long-term care funding)
 - Community Care (long-term care funding)
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Thank you!

**Questions, or those interested in having Kathryn
or Grayson speak at an event, contact**

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