



PRESS RELEASE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES / ONE MAN'S STORY

April 2007

In last month's issue, readers were introduced to Peak Community Services, an agency that provides support for persons with disabilities. One of the specific Peak Community Services offers is helping men and women with disabilities find and maintain employment. This month, we want to introduce you to Chris Brettin, a man who took full advantage of this opportunity.

With assistance from Peak Community Services, Chris took a job at Kauffmann Engineering (TM Morris) in August of 1997. This year he celebrates 10 years as an employee with this local manufacturing firm.

Chris works full time (40 hours a week) and receives full benefits, including vacation time and insurance. He no longer has to rely on government programs for sustenance.

When Chris initially took the job, he was terribly shy. His job coach from Peak Community Services' Supported Employment Program taught him the specifics of the job, but she also helped him with interpersonal skills. He learned how to talk appropriately with his co-workers, and now he has friends at work. He even attends company picnics and small gatherings. Ten years ago, he would not have voluntarily interacted with anyone outside of his family, but his new skills gave him the confidence he needed to move into a home of his own. He has a place in the community that he never before thought possible.

Peak Community Services provided support for Chris as he found this position and as he learned his new trade. However, most of his success was entirely up to him. Chris has a great work ethic. He shows up for work on time every day and does his job to the best of his ability until the shift is over. He doesn't call in sick, and he rarely uses his vacation time. He loves his job and he is committed to his employer.

Finding a job can be difficult. Learning a new job is a challenge. Becoming an asset to your employer is the key to success.

If you want to take advantage of this service, like Chris, Peak Community Services can help. But first, you must get the appropriate referral. Without repeating everything from last month's article, you need to do the following things.

- 1) Receive a medical diagnosis from a doctor that you have a disability (physical or developmental).
- 2) Call Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) at (574) 753-0102 and make an appointment. They will mail an



application packet to you.

3) Before your appointment, complete the packet to the best of your ability.

This service is provided by a state program that receives federal money, so even if you know you want a particular service provider to work with you, you must still go through all of these steps first. During your initial visit with Vocational Rehabilitation, you will be given the option of choosing Peak Community Services as your Supported Employment provider from a list of local providers.