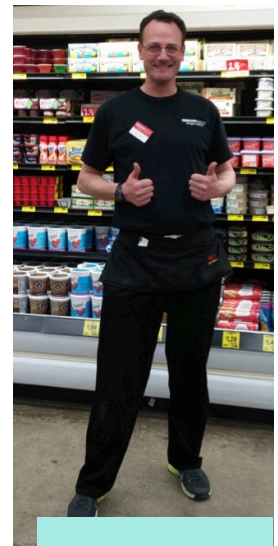


Supported Employment Success Story

Weeden Cole



Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Weeden Cole, I live in Milwaukie, OR, and I work at Grocery Outlet. In high school, I did track and really enjoyed distance running. Nowadays, I love cinema and movies. My favorite films are ones that have messages about life – not just surface level topics. I have a teenage son, and we go see a movie at the theater every Sunday.

Share your experience with the Supported Employment Program.

I was referred to the program by the team at Alder Creek because I had expressed my interest in looking for employment. I officially joined the program back in April of 2016. At the time, Eden Hale was my Supported Employment Specialist that helped get me started. I had many great interviews, but I never was offered a job because my background check never passed. I

spent a solid 3 months working with Eden (before she moved to another position) and then began working with Nina Askew for the rest of the time.

“Weeden was very organized and motivated in his job search. Although he experienced some rejection from employers, he didn't let that stop him from pursuing his goals. He has succeeded in this position because he has true passion for his work. Anyone would love to have an employee like Weeden!”

**– Nina Askew,
Supported Employment
Specialist**

As I started to lose hope that an employer would never accept me because of my background, Grocery Outlet decided to give me a chance and offered me a job. I started out as a checker/cashier and then was recently promoted as manager of the dairy department. I am very proud of the work that I have done so far and what I will accomplish in the future.

Now that you are successfully employed, what is your current involvement in the SE Program?

Nina and I meet about every 3 weeks to check in and see how I'm doing. She has been amazing to work with and is willing to help me in any way possible. It is all the little things she has done for me along the way. She just is a really cool person. I would encourage anyone to get involved with the Supported Employment Program. It has been a great experience.

“You will only get as much out of something as you are willing to put into it.”

– Weeden Cole

Final thoughts?

My way is my way. If you stay true to yourself with the program's process, you will find the right job to fit your needs. Everything happens for a reason, and I am glad that in the beginning I was rejected because I ended up getting the best job for me. I love what I'm doing, I get to work with a great group of people, and there is nothing else I could picture myself doing.

Congratulations

to Weeden for recently being selected as the Employee of the Month at Grocery Outlet!

For more information about the Supported Employment Program, please contact Madonna Werthman at mwerthman@columbiacare.org.