



Tanner: A WDI Success Story



Tanner came to Workforce Development, Inc. (WDI) in April 2014 after hearing about the Youth Program through his Children’s Mental Health Case Manager, Missy. Tanner was in tenth grade and finding that it was difficult to secure employment on his own with his social phobia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Asperger’s Syndrome. Tanner was also struggling in school and was at risk of not graduating on time. His WDI Career Planner felt that Tanner would benefit from the Disability Employment Initiative Grant (DEI) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program in work readiness skills, learning self-advocacy, and exploring a work experience. His Career Planner was able to provide him with an iPad through the Assistive Technology DEI Grant. The iPad became a valuable and treasured

item for Tanner, taking it everywhere with him; using it to take notes in class and complete homework. Due to his hard work, Tanner was able to take additional classes; classes that he originally thought he wouldn’t be able to.

Throughout his tenth grade year, Tanner worked with his WDI Career Planner to complete the Blueprint for Success: Work Readiness curriculum, create a resume, and explore his interests. In June of 2015, Tanner started a work experience through the Mantorville Theatre Company, where he has been able to use his talent in art to design and paint sets for their theatre productions. With his work experience, Tanner has also been an instrumental part in restoring a turn of the century carriage house that was originally used as a “model” when first built. “We have appreciated his help, and we have achieved a lot more on our projects because he has been a part of our team,” stated Karl Huppler – Mantorville Theatre Company and Work Experience Supervisor. Tanner has learned how to use power tools, various hand tools, and work as a team; as well as, to work independently on different projects. He had been very flexible with schedules and even worked weekends helping put sets together and maintaining the opera house.

Tanner started actively searching for employment upon completion of his work experience and obtained his first position, on his own, in the Winter of 2016. In the spring of 2017, Tanner decided it would be a better fit for him to attend a charter school to complete his education. He obtained his driver’s permit and made the goal to save money to purchase a car.

Today, Tanner is working two jobs, which he secured on his own, and has maintained long-term employment with both. Recently, Tanner completed his high school experience and obtained his diploma. He continues to study for his driver’s exam in order to obtain his license, in hope of picking out his first car soon.