

WVS

Washington Vocational Services Where Visions Succeed

WVS is a non-profit agency providing valuable work force services in the state of Washington since 1976. Our vision, "All people will be recognized for their abilities and contributions in the workplace and community" has not waived since our humble beginnings. Today, we serve over 850 customers, in 8 different counties, and our menu of services are as diverse as our incredible team.

32-year-old Aaron Marshall, was born with left side hemiplegia, a condition that impacted the right side of his body, resulting in his need to learn to perform his daily functions with one hand. Aaron experienced some issues with his eyes upon birth as well, which resulted in eye surgery at the tender age of 5 months. This surgery left him legally blind. From an early age, Aaron refused to let his disability define him. He taught himself how to play piano one handed and without the benefit of sheet music. Over the years, he has composed over 300 pieces of original music for the right-hand only.

Although Aaron built an extensive skill inventory resume, possessed strong motivation, and held high expectations for himself, he still faced numerous obstacles in achieving his goals. In a recent speaking engagement, Aaron reflected on the past several years of his job search efforts. He stated that he had participated in countless interviews, "many times I felt I was getting the job and then the second I brought up special vision software or other accommodations, they would freeze and show hesitation". Even though many employers stated they were an Equal Opportunity Employer, it was clear that hiring Aaron brought a degree of fear or hesitancy. The consistent message of rejection was deflating. "When you spend so much time being unemployed, and you don't have anything on your calendar, it can be hard to find a reason to get out of bed in



the morning." That all changed when Aaron began partnering with Washington Vocational Services. With the support of his WVS Employment Consultant, Aaron was supported

in obtaining a dream job at Cascade Public Media. In fact, on November 20th, he celebrated his one-year anniversary in his job, an opportunity that has changed his life in major ways. "WVS helped me make sure the employers were focused on my abilities and not my disabilities. I'm really blessed to know them." To show his appreciation he recently agreed to provide the entertainment for the agency's Toast to Abilities gala, this past October. He publicly thanked WVS for helping him secure a job that has given his life purpose. "I hear about all these people who win the lottery and then they quit their job and I just think, why? Why would you do that? Even if you had all the money in the world, I can't understand why you'd give up your purpose. This is where I'm meant to be, and I thank WVS for the role they played in my journey."



By investing in WVS, you are helping ensure that individuals such as Aaron are fulfilling their purpose in life. Please consider a donation to our agency during this holiday season.

Don't define yourself by disability, define yourself by ability.