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Patrick Lavery | Published: October 18, 2021

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WOODBRIIDGE – When you hop off the New Jersey Turnpike and stop in at the Grover Cleveland Service Area, you may encounter a friendly, enthusiastic worker named Kimberly Imhoff, who said she loves interacting with customers and bringing a positive attitude to her job.

She is just one Garden State resident with a disability who has been helped in the navigation of the job market by Easterseals New Jersey, a connection made through the state's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

"I stock all the beverages, candy, and snacks, to make sure customers find what they need, and I also fold T-shirts and sweaters very nicely," Imhoff said.

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An Easterseals job coach assisted Imhoff with resume prep, the job search itself, and then the interview process, but community employment services and vocational training director Daniela Rivera said even with all that knowledge, it's still a stigma-filled world for people with disabilities.

The fact that the Americans with Disabilities Act has been in place for more than 30 years hasn't exactly solved accessibility or hiring issues, according to Rivera.

"Many of the opportunities that are available to people with disabilities, they're entry-level positions with little opportunity for advancement," she said.

Imhoff wants hiring managers to know that people with disabilities can do whatever they put their minds to, and would like more people like her to be given the chance to be in a work environment, to prove what they can achieve.

Their success will only lead to more job openings, plus better accessibility in the hiring process itself, Rivera said, especially for candidates with vision problems or hearing loss.

"As more businesses realize the benefits and importance of hiring people with disabilities, then more and better job opportunities would be emerging in the future," Rivera said.

The advice that Imhoff wants to give to other New Jersey job seekers with disabilities is to be confident in themselves, and never give up.

"You can always do anything. Keep moving forward and you will definitely find the right job," she said.

*Patrick Lavery is New Jersey 101.5's afternoon news anchor. Follow him **on Twitter @plavery1015** or email **patrick.lavery@townsquaremedia.com**.*
