

***Easterseals has provided Workforce development services since 1974. We offer a variety of services that help individuals achieve meaningful career outcomes while meeting the needs of the business community. These services include Youth Transitional Services, Pre-Employment Transition Services, ApprenticeshipNH, Independence Cleaning, and Apparel Impact Partnership.***



## **This is Janine and Hank's Story . . .**

Although Christopher is known for his big personality and kind heart, he still had trouble regulating his emotions and behavior. His parents, Janine and Hank, realized that Christopher would need additional support once he finished high school and were referred to Easterseals Youth Transitional Services in 2015. They were looking for a smooth transition from school based services to adult life.

"When we realized that we would have to go through this transition, we began researching and visiting local programs," Janine and Hank said. "We looked at other programs, but we decided on Easterseals because their program was lightyears ahead of the others."

The primary goal for Christopher and his family was to get him more involved vocationally and in his local community. He needed to gain important life skills, such as money management, emotional regulation, and the ability to be independent. As a family they met with the program coordinators and established a plan to suit Christopher's individual needs, achieve his goals, and aid in the transition to adult life.

To gain vocational skills, Christopher volunteered for Gather Food Pantry and SPCA. He also participated in cooking and art classes with his Easterseals peers, and stayed active with trips to the YMCA and Planet Fitness with his Youth Support Specialist. As time went on, Christopher gained paid employment in addition to his volunteer roles.

Throughout his Easterseals journey, Christopher became more fulfilled, independent, and willing to try new things.

"He has improved so much since 2015, when we began this program," said Janine. "He does very well controlling his emotions and is ninety percent independent. Before he would have a difficult time adjusting to new situations. Now he is much more flexible."

Christopher keeps a busy schedule, which is evident through his multiple part-time jobs. Recently, he started a culinary education program. In this program, he is learning valuable skills, such as baking and preparing food. When completed, Christopher will have three different certifications to work in various culinary settings.

Now that Christopher is transitioning between youth and adult services at Easterseals, he is spending more time at home. During the weekend, he and his parents bake cakes, prepare dinner, and take lots of fun trips together, such as parasailing and zip-lining. However, their family's favorite thing to do is joke around, smile, and laugh.

"As a family we are still improving. We are very proud of Christopher and his progress," Janine said. "I have validation that I am doing enough for my son. We are very lucky!"