Sharing the Youth Transitional Services Story

**Samuel embraces his community**

Sam entered Youth Transitional Services (YTS) in 2015 because he was having difficulty accessing his school’s in-house transition program due to his unpredictable behaviors in the community. Sam had been removed from volunteer sites during his school program due to his inability to regulate his emotions. As he neared his 18th birthday, the time had come for him to gain experience outside of the school building.

When Sam started with YTS, he benefitted immediately from the one-on-one dynamic with his Youth Support Specialist (YSS). Sam began by participating in various volunteer opportunities, and learned to utilize different strategies to handle the changes that inevitably occur outside of the school walls. Sam’s YSS was able to spot antecedents to emotional escalation, and support Sam to regulate his emotions. Sam’s confidence grew as he successfully participated at multiple volunteer and work-based learning host sites. After six months with the YTS program, Sam was offered a paid position at one of his work-based learning sites. Sam now works 5-10 hours a week and continues to give back by volunteering. In YTS, Sam has built a life for himself outside of high school and has become an active member of his local community.

**Sarah moves towards independence**

Sarah began YTS programming with the goal of exploring career options, and post-secondary education options. Working with her YSS, Sarah researched, scheduled, and participated in more than five informational interviews and job shadows in just one month. Sarah worked with her YSS and Program Coordinator to improve her resume, develop a cover letter, and schedule a mock interview with an Easterseals Human Resources staff, who provided Sarah with valuable feedback. Sarah continued her career exploration by establishing a work-based learning experience at a for-profit IT company. With the support of her YSS, Sarah learned about online job search resources, and submitted several applications for employment.

With work experience, a resume, and confidence in her interview skills, Sarah was able to secure a job working with technology at Staples. Sarah shifted her focus to the future and utilized her YTS program time to research, and visit colleges, as well as to prepare for her driving exam. Through collaborating with her IEP team and Easterseals Youth Transitional Services, Sarah was able to play a key role in creating an individualized, community based program that prepared her for the future.

**Andrew gains employment**

Andrew began working with YTS in September 2015. He was residing at a residential facility, had completed his high school credits, but needed exposure to the community where he could gain the skills necessary for adult life. Initially Andrew’s residential support team stated he displayed challenging behaviors, and they were worried about him participating in a community based program. Andrew benefited from a change in environment, one-on-one support, and an individualized program. His negative behaviors diminished, and he began making strides toward greater independence.

As a component of his YTS program, Andrew enrolled in, and completed the Recipe for Success Program (a culinary program through the New Hampshire Food Bank). He participated in work-based learning experiences at for-profit employers, and volunteer experiences at non-profit organizations. These experiences helped Andrew develop hard and soft employment skills. Having succeeded in unpaid opportunities, Andrew was ready for a paid position. Andrew worked with his YSS to obtain paid employment at Walmart where he was hired for a position providing customer service, operating a point of sale terminal, and stocking merchandise.

**John finds new confidence**

When John was referred to YTS he was struggling with severe anxiety, social isolation, and a lack of exposure to the community he would soon transition into. John was often visibly uncomfortable in public situations, especially when surrounded by strangers or large groups. YTS helped expose John to new and different social experiences, and assisted him in learning to manage his anxiety.

When John began working with YTS, he was highly resistant to trying new things such as accessing public transportation. With encouragement and support, John was able to learn the local bus routes. He even demonstrated social awareness and began to initiate polite conversations with others.

John’s YTS program also allowed him to obtain vocational experience in a variety of settings, including a local grocery store, a retirement home, an automotive repair shop, a book store, and a non-profit humane society. YTS connected John with the state office of Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure he continued to receive employment supports. Throughout his program, John benefitted from one-on-one support, which allowed him to learn at his own pace, and experience success.