

Success Stories: Vocational Rehabilitation



Malia Dickinson



OCCUPATION:
Lobby Attendant at Costa Vida

VR COUNSELOR NAME:
Vicky Peterson, Central Utah District



VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- VR counseling and guidance
- Individualized plan for employment
- Disability medical treatment assistance
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Job development and coaching
- Clothes for employment
- Long-term employment coordination

Malia Dickinson came to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) when she was a senior in high school. Malia and her grandmother/guardian wanted to understand options for employment, schooling and obtain resources that would help Malia be as independent as possible.

Malia attended Bridges Transition Center and participated in Pre-Employment Transition Services. The teachers and students at Bridges helped Malia feel included and helped her understand how to talk appropriately to others in a social setting. Malia completed several Work-Based Learning Experiences and gained the work skills for her current position as a lobby attendant. Malia found that she liked talking to others, cleaning, and feeling needed. Her teachers at Bridges and the high school all praised Malia for being a friendly, fun person to be around, and having a great imagination.

Through VR counseling and guidance with her counselor, Malia's strengths, abilities and career interests were identified. Malia completed a summer internship at a daycare. She then completed a Temporary-Work Experience at Payson High School assisting with the school's play. Malia worked with the

students, assisting with set design. Malia completed several work experiences as a teacher's aide, custodian, paper shredder, and clothes sorter. Through these experiences she obtained both hard and soft skills necessary for employment.

Malia was awarded Social Security benefits while working with VR. In order for her and her guardian to understand her Social Security benefits and how work affects benefits, Malia met with Margot Dana at Utah Work Incentives Planning Services (UWIPS). Through Margot's assistance, Malia and her guardian determined the amount Malia can make each month and how to report her earnings.

VR provided funding for Malia to obtain job placement and coaching services through Allies Supported Employment. Allies supplied Malia with the tools and confidence to do her job tasks with minimum support from her coworkers and supervisors at Costa Vida. Malia says of her experience with VR: "I enjoy being around people and talking to them. I really like my managers and coworkers as they help me do the things I cannot do; they invite me to activities, and they are my friends."