

## Success Stories: Vocational Rehabilitation



# Karen Nelson



OCCUPATION:  
Grocery Bagger/Customer Service

#### VR PROVIDED ASSISTANCE:

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Individualized Plan for Employment
- Job Development and Placement
- Supported Employment Job Coaching
- Utah Work Incentive Planning Services (UWIPS)

In March 2016, Karen Nelson was found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services by her counselor Lora Flanigan. Karen had been involved in the RITES, Inc. Day Program for several years and had developed pre-employment skills as a volunteer that could now be utilized in competitive employment.

Through a coordinated effort between Karen, her VR counselor, and an employment specialist from RITES, Inc. Karen was able to secure an interview with the Harmon's grocery store in Roy, Utah. Once hired, it didn't take her long to become a favorite of management, co-workers, and customers with her friendly personality.

The employment specialist noticed that Karen would need her height accommodated to perform the job functions of a bagger. Karen was unable to reach the conveyor belt, see into, and/or place the grocery bags into a shopping cart. Working with the district manager at Harmon's a platform was constructed to give Karen more height near the register.

A platform used to display products was equipped with grip tape on the top of the platform and holes drilled into the platform sides to place handlebars. The platform was now the size of the checkout stand and allowed Karen the ability to place grocery bags into the shopping carts. In addition, Karen can move the platform from one checkout stand to another, giving her the ability to go where she is needed.

Karen has been successfully employed with Harmon's for one year and loves her job. She uses her earnings to buy herself what she wants and gifts for her nieces and nephews—which gives Karen the motivation to continue to work.