



DRC Spotlight Series



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A little bit about me...

My role models in life are the individuals with disabilities I get to connect with in the work I do. They are a reminder to me that despite barriers, we all still get up every day and keep going.

The three words to best describe me are Trustworthy, Resilient, Free-spirited.

People would be surprised that I'm in my second career. I was a cosmetologist for 25 years and at 38 began a post-secondary journey leading me to this AMAZING profession.

If I could visit anywhere in the world tomorrow, I would visit Bora Bora in Tahiti. I need to be in one of those huts over the water.

What this work means to me...

The best thing about being a DRC is that I get to impart the concept of "you can" and I can help. I encourage individuals with and without disabilities to go for their dreams, while working with them to understand I will help whenever possible. The lessons individuals learn from creating their own employment journey is as important as any other life skill.

I enjoy supporting the mission of the DEI because it encourages people who have been told "you can't" to "you can". There is nothing better than being connected to someone that was feeling beat down and watch them spread their wings and soar.

The greatest barrier I face as a DRC is getting agencies to come together as an Integrated Resource Team especially since WIOA fosters this concept.

Being a workforce Employment Network to support the Ticket to Work program has allowed my American Job Center to actively speak to customers about work incentives and the possibility of economic self-sufficiency. It's not uncommon for AJCs to send referrals. Even though Ticket to Work is still relatively new to the local EN staff, they've come to recognize its immense value.

I value my work because I get to help others realize they are important; that their skills, abilities, and knowledge matter in the world.

Making an Impact / Systems Change

I will never forget in 2016 when our former DEI project manager requested that I take a part time position as the Idaho DOL Statewide Ticket Coordinator to administer our new Ticket to Work Program. This Social Security program's focus was new to me and I was excited to take on the challenge. Three years later, our statewide workforce employment network (EN) has grown in both service delivery and is actively working to make it a sustainable funding stream. For me, the Ticket program is much more than work incentives - it is a life-line for Idahoans who had thought economic self-sufficiency was beyond their reach due to their disability. Idaho's Workforce EN is an invaluable resource to beneficiaries because it provides them a safety net to return to work while having access to resources and connections needed to enter the labor force. During the past year, 12 ticketholders were gainfully employed and found success in high demand industries such as IT and healthcare. Another vital component of our success has been collaborating with Idaho VR under WIOA to make referrals or provide continued support to individuals with successful VR closures. Overall, with continued persistence and patience, Idaho has joined a growing number of states with successful Workforce ENs. I believe that if a rural state like Idaho can do it, any state workforce system can do it and make a difference.