



DRC Spotlight Series



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A little bit about me...

When I was little I wanted to be a Kindergarten teacher, which I did for 13 years!

My favorite hobby is camping and being outdoors with my family.

My favorite toy as a kid was my Mrs. Beasley Doll. You would pull the string and she would talk.

The song I would most likely sing at Karaoke night would be Delta Dawn and I sing it every time I get a chance!

My favorite food is Roast Beef, Potatoes, Brown Gravy, Carrots and Rolls.

My favorite book/movie is On Golden Pond.

What this work means to me...

The best thing about being a DRC is that I am able to assist Tribal Citizens become self-sufficient. It has been very rewarding to see customers follow their plan through a career pathway of training and work experience and end up far better off than when they started the program. It is rewarding to be able to write success stories at the end of their program. This makes all of the hard work worthwhile.

The greatest barrier I face as a DRC is working with business and getting employers to understand that individuals with disabilities make some of the greatest workers. We provide businesses with a packet explaining tax incentives, accessibility information, and what is required for work experience.

I value my work because I have learned so much from my customers. This work has pushed me to take on new and challenging opportunities. My customers make me feel respected and valued. They are so appreciative of the services and assistance that we can provide for them.

My frequent go-to resource to support my work as a DRC is our partnership with OK Department of Rehabilitation Services. We are able to refer customers for testing, get disability-related support and participate in learning opportunities. We are very thankful to have them as a valuable resource.

Making an Impact / Systems Change

My proudest moment as part of the DEI for Cherokee Nation happened when we successfully got Leona (name modified), a Tribal citizen, a single mom with six kids, and a Traumatic Brain Injury survivor on a successful career path. Leona had not worked in over six years in part because of cognitive challenges and a felony conviction. While Leona was receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), she wanted a better life for her family. The DEI team developed a plan to help achieve her goals by starting with a one-week life skills class, which taught her how she could put her best foot forward, including resume writing and interviewing skills. The DEI team also worked with the local tribal hospital to develop a sixteen-week paid work experience in the housekeeping department. Leona had a rocky start in the beginning and the hospital wasn't sure she was a good fit. One of the leading barriers was Leona's short-term memory that resulted in mistakes which led the DEI team to successfully follow up with the hospital to develop detailed checklists to accommodate Leona complete future work assignments. At the end of the work experience, she was offered a full-time position. Leona has been with Cherokee Health Services for almost a year and was recently offered a promotion at their newly opened Tribal Health Center. She has also been able to transition off of SSI benefits. It was amazing to witness a major improvement in her self-esteem as she now can provide for her family allowing them to live a much healthier lifestyle.