

Deborah's Success Story

It was Deborah Gaither-Phillip's grandmother who insisted that she learn how to navigate the city and live on her own. Deborah resided at Forest Haven, the District's former institution for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities until she was 17 years old. But after just one year of living with her grandmother, she emerged as a strong advocate for herself and an expert at maneuvering the streets of D.C. with relative ease.

The native Washingtonian has held a variety of jobs, from cook to housekeeper, to construction demolition assistant. At the urging of her daughter, Deborah came to DDS in 2014 for support and a fresh start in pursuing a self-directed life. Her two primary wishes at that time were to get a new place to live and a new job. Within the year, she began an internship with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), working with the operations unit. Her duties included filing and assisting with preparations for the agency to relocate to the southwest area of the District. Based on her performance as an intern and the Agency's commitment to model the employment practices it works to cultivate with local business, in March 2016, Deborah became a full-time employee with DDS/RSA.

As a clerical assistant, Deborah answers the phone, gathers and distributes mail throughout her unit, assists with meeting room setup, processes orders for office supplies, and handles other duties as assigned. "I have come a long way," she acknowledges with a humble smile. "I have my own money and I am learning a lot of stuff." That "stuff" includes improving her computer skills. Supported by RCM of Washington, she has a job coach who works with her two days a week to make sure she understands the basics of email usage, Microsoft Office products, and internet usage and file navigation. Job Coach Danielle Deshields commented that Deborah is "very determined to learn and to do a good job." Because of her perceptive reasoning and observation skills, Deborah was recommended and accepted the role of trainer assistant with People Planning Together, a person-centered training module that teaches people with disabilities how to effectively advocate for the supports they need to lead self-directed lives. Eventually, Deborah hopes to join the ranks of trainer to ensure that people with disabilities are confident and effective in communicating about things that matter most to them.

Excited about her first government job, Deborah has one message for people with disabilities: "You have to want to do better for yourself. Be willing to do what is asked of you. Work with your counselors and supervisors so you can get a better life."



Deborah's One Page Profile

Created with support in a
People Planning Together
Workshop

Important to me:

- To work hard to accomplish my SMART Goals.
- To keep improving myself and learning new things. *Reading, computers, spreadsheets and literacy.*
- Helping people w/ things I'm good at:
 - Filing
 - Checking mail
 - Ordering supplies

What people like and admire about me!

"I like how outgoing you are! You say Good morning every day."

"Her eagerness to work and get things done in a timely manner. You are very persistent, which is a good thing."

"When learning new task, you ask many questions until you are to understand."

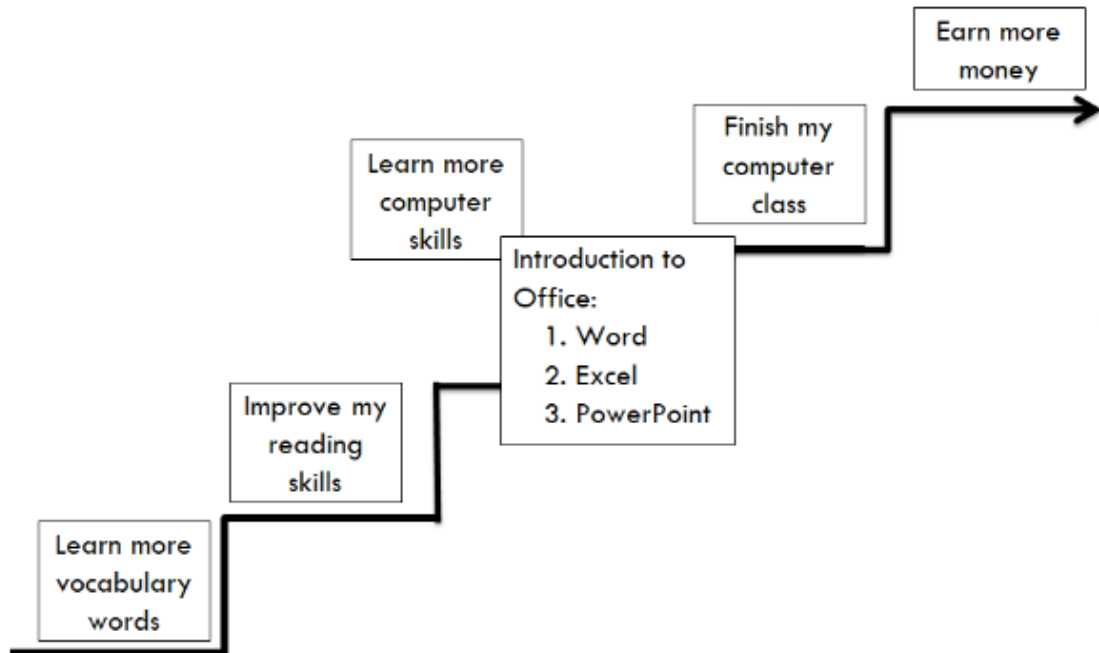


What Others Need To Know Or Do To Best Support Me:

- Get the training I need- Outlook and other computer products.
- To have Dragon and JAWS on my computer
- To have a Job Coach helping me learn the things I need to work in an office.
- Show me how to do what I need to do first and then I can practice it.

DEBORAH LIFE TRAJECTORY: PLANNING EMPLOYMENT

STEPS I need to take to help me move closer to my JOB/CAREER goal:



THINGS THAT MIGHT MAKE IT HARD TO GET THE JOB/CAREER I WANT:

MY VISION

WHAT I WANT FOR MY JOB/CAREER

- To become a program support assistant
- Feel confident in my job
- Be happy and comfortable in my job
- Receive support from my coworkers when needed
- Feel respected
- Know how to do my job well

WHO CAN HELP?

- Coach counselor
- Co-workers
- Service Coordinator
- Supervisor
- Daughter
- Fiancée

DISLIKES

WHAT I DON'T WANT FOR MY JOB/CAREER

- Negativity from people
- For people to rush me
- Frustration with myself when I don't understand
- To stay in one position and not grow