

PEOPLE WITH IDD JUST WANT TO WORK BY SCOTT MASSON

The state legislators on the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) Caucus recently learned how many young adults with a disability are looking for job opportunities. Connecticut companies or agencies like Favarrh are stepping forward to help those with disabilities get employment opportunities.

Lauren Traceski, a friend of mine and a Favarrh self-advocate who works with me at Michaels Arts & Crafts, told the legislators during a public hearing that everyone has a disability of some kind. They aren't any different than any other person in the world; we all have different abilities that make us special and learn differently. Each one of us with a disability wants to be treated the same as anybody else.

Favarrh Executive Director Steve Morris, meanwhile, told the legislators about Project SEARCH, a program Favarrh started several years ago. It involves interns with IDD working at UConn Health, preparing for careers, not just jobs. The internships last from mid-August to early June and have resulted in 100 percent of them obtaining employment.

Mark Boxer, executive vice president at Cigna, told the legislators how his company supports people with disabilities. "It's about paychecks, not pity," he said.

Lauren told the legislators that more young adults with IDD are seeking jobs and asked them to persuade businesses to hire us. Businesses need to understand that young adults such as me and my friends are very productive with our work and can do the job. We all have dreams to make a difference out in the world and with the right help we can do it.

Favarrh features many employment opportunities at companies such as: Michael's Arts and Crafts, MicroCare, Davidson Specialty Foods, Legrand Wiremold, and Winslow Automatics, just to name a few. Each client at Favarrh tries to make a difference and an impact in the community. With the help from legislators more adults with disabilities can make an impact and each day and the world can be a happier place.

The local news stations can also help by letting businesses know that we aren't any different even if we have a disability. Just like me and my friend Lauren, we are following our dreams. We would like to see more young adults with IDD FOLLOW THEIR DREAMS.