

Josh's Story: Thriving in the
Hospitality Industry

This series of stories aims to shed light on the transformative power of higher education credentials for students with intellectual disability. Through real-life examples, we explore how earning credentials in various fields has not only equipped these individuals with essential skills but has also paved the way for meaningful employment opportunities.

4-year university

Hospitality

Alabama

Josh attended the EAGLES Program at Auburn University ready to learn! At the EAGLES Program, Josh quickly identified his interest in hospitality and was able to incorporate earning micro-credentials into his college experience.

The EAGLES Program is a certificate program that provides the opportunity for students to engage in a 2 or 4-year campus residential experience. The goal of the EAGLES Program is to prepare students with intellectual disability to achieve and maximize their potential as they transition to adulthood and the world of work. The curriculum focuses on academic enrichment, personal and social skills, independence, employment, and health and wellness.

Josh discovered the power of micro-credentials when obtaining full-time employment in the hospitality industry. By enrolling in a series of short, focused courses on hospitality, safety skills, and food safety, he quickly built a robust skill set that set him apart from other applicants. The EAGLES Program provided Josh with support in earning his micro-credentials by offering structured guidance and resources tailored to his career goals. EAGLES also offered mentorship opportunities, connecting Josh with industry professionals who provided insights and practical advice. Workshops and networking events allowed Josh to build connections within the hospitality community at his then-current part-time job, which increased his confidence and knowledge.

The EAGLES Program partnered with Southeastern Onsite Safety to provide comprehensive OSHA training as part of their micro-credential offerings. This collaboration aimed to equip participants with essential workplace safety skills, which are crucial in the restaurant industry. Southeastern Onsite Safety brought their expertise in safety standards and regulations, delivering hands-on training sessions that covered topics like hazard recognition, proper handling of equipment, and emergency preparedness. By integrating this training into the EAGLES Program, participants like Josh not only gained valuable certifications but also enhanced their employability.

Each micro-credential Josh earned not only boosted his confidence but made him more aware of his surroundings in the workplace. Josh now thrives in a fast-paced environment and continues to learn and grow every day. Josh said, "OSHA training helped me to be aware of spills or if someone falls or gets hurt. ServSafe helped me be aware of food hazards and safety to protect my job!"



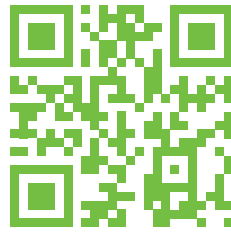
**Josh earned OSHA
micro-credentials through a
partnership between the EAGLES
Program and Southeastern
Onsite Safety.**

Why are postsecondary education credentials important?

Earning a postsecondary education credential creates a better starting point for students with intellectual disability entering the job market and adult life. Those who access higher education are more likely to be employed, earn higher wages, and have stronger social and professional networks. There are more than 350 colleges and universities in the US with various credential options providing college students with intellectual disability opportunities for better employment outcomes and more successful adult lives.



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pathway stories



Learn more about inclusive
postsecondary education



See the data on employment
outcomes of students with
intellectual disability



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The Inclusive Higher Education Network is a national technical assistance and dissemination center, funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. The Network is tasked with increasing regional and state capacity, building awareness, creating strategic partnerships, and supporting expansion and improvement of higher education for students with intellectual disability through resource and training development.

Learn more about TCN at thinkcollege.net/projects/tcn

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