
CENTER FOR DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Possibilities in Education and Training

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From "Zero" to Hero...

By SueAnn Morrow, Money Follows the Person Employment Services Specialist

From "Zero" to Hero. That is how Devin Lile and his mother, Karen, laughingly explain his life. Born in 1996, Devin was adopted by the Liles when he was three. As parents, they had high expectations for not only Devin, but for all three of their children. They pushed them to try their best and have high expectations for themselves.

When Devin was 14, things were not going so well and he was placed in an Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/ID). He lived there for approximately four years. As he approached his 18th birthday, the ICF/ID staff told the family about the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. The Liles were connected to Jo Schumacher, a Transition Specialist with MFP. They credit Jo with helping them open doors and learning about services in the community.

MFP is a Medicaid program that helps individuals wanting to move to the community from an ICF/ID. Currently, MFP serves persons who are on the Waiver for Individuals with Intellectual disabilities (ID Waiver) and those who are served by the Waiver for Individuals with Brain Injuries (BI Waiver). To be eligible for MFP, the person wanting to move has to have lived in an ICF/ID or nursing home for 90 days.

MFP Transition Specialists help plan the move and confirm that the necessary supports and services are in place to ensure a successful transition. Once the person moves to the community, the Transition Specialist follows them for 365 days. During those 365 days, MFP can provide intensive services and supports to/for the person based on their needs as determined by their team. Once the MFP year is over, it is expected that the person will be successful using the services and supports offered through the traditional waivers.



After three months of planning, Devin moved to a duplex in November 2013. He lived with two other individuals. Things went well for a while, but he and

his family made the decision that he needed different residential supports. So, while the year of MFP was coming to a close, Devin moved into a townhouse with two other young men. Interestingly, this move was on the one-year anniversary of his earlier move and the last day of MFP.

To ensure that this move went as smoothly as possible and increase the chance for success, not only did Devin “interview” the other two roommates, they also “interviewed” him. They wanted to make sure all were compatible. Additionally, the parents met over dinner to discuss their children, their expectations, dreams, and goals. It was agreed that this new arrangement would be beneficial for all involved.

Devin feels that he has more freedom living in the community. He has fewer roommates and more privacy. Both Devin and his Mother agreed that one of the best things that has changed since the move is that there are fewer phone calls from staff. In the past, more phone calls meant more problems, so all are grateful for fewer calls.

Neither move was stress free. Former roommates and friends were left behind, furniture and home furnishings had to be purchased, new staff had to be met, and sometimes just moving can be stressful. The Liles are grateful for MFP and Jo’s help with the transitions. According to Karen, “Jo did an amazing job.”

Devin graduated from High School in June of 2014. While in school he participated in Experience Based Career Education Work Experience (EBCE) that included work experiences at multiple places. The ones he remembers most were a Concrete statuary business and a grocery store. The summer after graduation, Devin found his first paying job—a position with the Parks and Recreation Department of West Des Moines. The summer job was perfect as Devin was to begin Project SEARCH operated by Candeo at Unity Point—Methodist Hospital in Des Moines in the fall.

Devin applied to Project SEARCH at the end of his senior year. This fit well with his career goal of helping people and he knew he wanted to work in the medical field. He was the first applicant to use a video to show why he was interested in Project SEARCH and how he would be a good fit for the program.

In addition to being a participatory class member, Devin completed three internships: Grounds, Pathology Laboratory, and Radiology. He completed Project SEARCH in June of 2015 and in July was hired to work in the Pathology Laboratory. He works 8:00-4:30 Monday—Friday, has benefits and currently earns \$11.85 an hour.

One of his duties at the “Path Lab” includes batching specimens, which involves scanning the bar codes on the tubes and placing them in the right container to make sure they get to the right place. He also fills orders for supplies to be delivered to other hospitals and clinics. This involves gathering the needed items, labeling the bag and placing it on the correct shelving unit so the delivery personnel can quickly retrieve it. Devin also works on the computer where he enters patient information when Doctors order tests. Indexing, as this is called, allows Doctors to double check what tests they have asked to be run.

Devin enjoys his job. He likes the hours and the pay! He believes he would not have this job if it had not been for Project SEARCH. When asked what he would say to others thinking about

applying to Project SEARCH, he said he would encourage them to do so. He would urge them to select internships in which they are interested and possess some of the skills needed. At the same time, however, he would tell them “Don't be afraid to try something different”.

During my interview with Devin, Karen, and Project SEARCH staff, all agreed that Devin is the reason for his success. He worked hard, did his best, learned from the internships as well as the classroom portion of the program. He listened to others, keeping an open mind about the best way to do things. He gained confidence, was willing to try new and different things, and recognized when he needed to ask for assistance. His hard work paid off. He has a great job that he likes, he is in the medical field and he has money to spend on things he enjoys.

Devin may have started out as a “Zero,” but it is clear to see he is a Hero now!

Self-help Devices for People with Disabilities: What's New in the Hardware/Software Lending Library?

Echo Smartpen 3: Pro Edition, by Livescribe, Inc.

Smartpens are ink pens with a difference: their embedded computer captures everything that you write and hear on special pixelated notebook paper. Write as much or as little as you need in the notebook to remember key points: a concept, a diagram, or an equation. Tap the pen anywhere on your script to play back an entire lecture or just one passage. The pen records only what you choose to isolate from a lecture or a discussion with an on/off record feature. Later download the notes and audio to your Mac or Windows PC to organize and share the results.

Tecla Shield DOS, by Komodo OpenLab.

The Tecla Shield is a hardware interface device that allows people who have limited upper body mobility to wirelessly control screen devices – iOS, Android, or a computer -- using an accessibility switch. With the Tecla engaged, even power wheelchair controls can serve as a switch. Examples of conditions for which the shield might be suitable include: spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, ALS, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brain injury, stroke, or arthritis.

SmartEdPad, by Samsung Electronics America and SmartEdTech.

Children who have difficulty learning at the rate of their peers may benefit from this collection of activities on a tablet computer for kids according to their developmental age and skill. Designed for special educators and therapists to track and share student progress, the SmartEd apps will be helpful in the home environment as well. The usual distractions of screen technology – Web entertainment and social communication sites – are unavailable on this device.

WilliamsSound PocketTalker Ultra Personal Amplifier, by Williams Sound, LLC.

This small amplification system with a choice of a single mini earphone or headphones is perfect for improved hearing in close quarters, be it one-on-one conversation, small groups, or watching television. External tone control is available. The PocketTalker is not a substitute for hearing devices that are necessary for functional, regular hearing.

Compact+ HD Video Magnifier, by Optelec U.S.

This powerful optical magnifier – designed to glide across a page – is equipped with a full color snapshot function that will capture up to four images at a time for enhancement and clarification on the widescreen display. The Compact+ provides 3X to 10X continuous magnification with LED lighting and illumination. Four viewing options are available in high contrast colors.

Beamz-Lekotek Family Play Bundle, by Beamz Interactive Inc.

Beamz is a musical device that at rest resembles three girders of a tabletop suspension bridge. It comes to life when two sets of laser beams are switched on between the core and the outer girders. Each of the resulting four laser beams are set up to be a different instrument or sound effect. When bisected by a hand, foot, nose, head pointer, or eye-enabled switch, the laser beams will respond with harmonious sounds. Beamz is a popular resource for inclusive music in the schools; this Lekotek branded set is developed specifically for family-centered play activities and includes a songbook. Computer setup is required; connect your iOS device to the system via an included Bluetooth adapter to record the sessions.

All of the equipment listed here is available for checkout from the Disability Resource Library at the Center for Disabilities and Development in Iowa City. Please call us at 1-800-272-7713 for full details.



Want to go from this?

<http://www.uihealthcare.org/UCEDD/Family-Support/>

To this?

<http://goo.gl/aejl5c>

Use **Google URL Shortener** at <https://goo.gl/>.

According to the University of Wisconsin *Internet Scout*, “the Google URL Shortener is as intuitive as it is powerful. Users may paste any web address into the appropriate text box, select Shorten URL, and a shorter, more manageable URL will appear. For instance, “<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/home>,” which is 49 characters long, becomes “goo.gl/8rrlvp,” which is just 11 characters long. Though most users will most likely shorten URLs for Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms, these concise versions can also be helpful for business cards and presentations, among other possibilities.”

Although we have many differences, there is one quality we all share, one thing all of us have in common: human spirit.

-David Cameron, British Prime Minister

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