

Breaking Through



Matt Davis

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When Matt Davis moved from North Carolina to Southwest Florida, he didn't expect to have difficulty finding a job. But after being unemployed for more than a year and a half, he was starting to lose hope.

"When you don't have a job, you're not making money, everybody's supporting you," says Matt. "I'm a very independent person so I don't like having to ask people to do things for me. I ended up sleeping every day. I was sleeping my life away."

Matt has Asperger Syndrome, a mild autism spectrum disorder that affects an individual's social skills. He was referred to Goodwill Employment Consultant Enas Bendeck by the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

"He had filled out more than 50 applications," explains Enas. "He was actively looking, but I don't think he was applying to the right places. With Asperger Syndrome, environment is the number one factor to their success."

After meeting with the Ritz-Carlton Human Resources staff, Enas became convinced that the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort would provide the right environment.

"They weren't concerned about his disability; instead they were concerned about what accommodations they could make for Matt to be successful on the job," says Enas. "They set the expectations from the beginning. It's hard work, but they would give him the nurturing that he needed."

Matt began work as a Steward in April 2011 washing dishes and cookware at the golf resort.

"It was hard at first, after going almost two years without a job," explains Matt. "But everyone's very helpful. When I started out here, I didn't know front from back, left from right, or where anything was. Everybody offered to give me help. When I started I was actually taken aback because everyone's so kind."

Having a job allows Matt to live on his own and maintain his independence. Matt's mother tells Enas that he's now more social and talkative around family members.

"He's feeling good about himself, feeling confident," says Enas. "That's what we want. We want to make a change in the whole cycle of his life, not just work and home."

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"This is a job I look forward to getting up every day and going to."

