

Breaking Through



Justin Winings

"I've wanted a job since I was sixteen years old," explains Justin.

"To get some money, and to take care of my family, my foster dad and mom."

The first time Justin Winings met with his Goodwill GoodGuides youth mentor, it didn't take long for him to get to the point.

"I asked him what he wanted to accomplish with the program," explains Justin's mentor, Goodwill Vice President of Finance John Doramus. "The first words out of his mouth were, 'Get a job.' That was it. There wasn't anything else on his plate."

"I've wanted a job since I was sixteen years old," explains Justin. "To get some money, and to take care of my family, my foster dad and mom."



The Goodwill GoodGuides program places at-risk youth with adult mentors, who provide guidance, advice, and career exploration activities for their young partners. Children's Medical Services referred Justin to the GoodGuides program because of his physical challenges.

Justin has scoliosis and neurofibromatosis, along with cognitive limitations and vision loss due to optic atrophy— all of which can make day-to-day tasks daunting. However, Justin takes his disabilities in stride.

"Justin is an extremely positive individual," says John. "When you take a look at everyone's issues, they're small compared to Justin's. But he faces those issues in a positive manner. There's nothing he won't try to do, nothing he won't try to accomplish."

Justin, now eighteen, achieved his goal of employment when he started working at Goodwill's Chiquita Retail & Donation Center in June 2011. His enthusiasm made an immediate impression on his co-workers, including store manager Kathy Mullin.

"He's always smiling, and I know that's not always easy for him," says Kathy. "He works really hard and does the best he can. He's an awesome young man."

As a customer service staffer at the store, Justin straightens shelves and helps to stock merchandise. He enjoys joking around with customers and his co-workers.

"They're very nice people," he says, smiling as he talks about his Goodwill colleagues. "They love me, and they're very good to me."

Ask anyone who knows Justin, from his teachers, to his caregivers, to his mentors and supervisors, and they'll tell you that he has blossomed since starting his job.

"It gives him self-worth," explains John, his mentor. "It's the highlight of his week."

"Justin wants to achieve," continues former GoodGuides Program Manager Laura Allard. "He has exceeded every challenge in his pathway. And even though we're there to assist Justin, he's taught us more about appreciating life."