



Success Story: Kyle Gonzalez

By Self-Advocate Coordinator: Kevin Arce

Kyle Gonzalez has quite a successful life. He not only has a great paying job, but also has a great social and personal life to boot. He has his own place that he shares with a roommate, who he gets along with very well. He works at Avon Prime Meats, where one can buy all sorts of meats, like beef, turkey, chicken, steak, and pork, just to name a few. I had the pleasure of interviewing Kyle about his life, the process he went through to get his job, as well as the help he received along the way.

When I asked him how he felt when he applied for this job, he responded that he felt excited. He felt confident that it was a good fit, especially since that position was recommended to him by his team at his IP meeting. During the process of getting the job, he shared that he was nervous, especially during the interview. He said that he was given a hands-on interview, where he was observed while completing tasks around the store, to see how capable he was to get them done. When he finally got the job, he was very excited stating, “It’s not easy finding a job.”

He also mentioned that he graduated from Project SEARCH, which is a program that helps people with intellectual disabilities prepare to find jobs, interview for the job and support at the job. He also learned independence, a good work ethic and how to be dependable. He had practice interviews, learned how to make formal emails, and even interned at different jobs to get a feel of how the workplace was and further develop the appropriate skills.



Kyle now enjoys having his own place to live with a roommate that he gets along well with. He said that he feels freedom in making his own choices and being so independent. He said, "It's great to live on your own, though it can be nerve-wracking. But you get used to it." Kyle was kind enough to share with us his thoughts about what were the best and most challenging parts about living on his own. His best part of being independent was spending time with his friends. It didn't matter if they were playing basketball, cooking, watching movies at home or in the movie theater, he enjoyed being social. The most challenging part was when there's a disagreement with his friends on how to spend the day, but he always does his best to try to work it out and reach a compromise. Kyle's mother and father are great supports for him, as well as his friends and therapist. His hobbies include basketball, watching movies, and taking part in the Special Olympics. When asked what advice he would give to those who also want to succeed, he had this to say: "Don't sell yourself short. If you put your mind to it, anything can happen!"

