



Justin's Success Story

I had the pleasure of meeting a young man by the name of Justin Hodge. Justin is very independent and has a lot of exciting goals. This inspired me to write a success story about him.

Justin was born in New London, Connecticut, in 1986. My first question for Justin was can you share a personal goal that you are proud of. He shared “to eat well and stay fit”. Justin works hard at being healthy. He also expressed that he likes to stay active. Justin plays basketball, soccer, softball and enjoys going to the gym. Justin also likes to hang out with his friends and his family in his free time. He is extremely kind and generous. Justin’s drive, independence, and commitment to healthy living is inspiring.

My next question focused on what Justin aspires to do as a career. Justin expressed that he wanted to be a chef. His first job experience was at McDonald’s, he worked there for one year. His next position was at Mohegan Sun. Justin started working there in 2022 and is presently in this position. Justin’s role is doing food prep, when I asked Justin how he feels about his role, he said “I like my job”. He was able to get the position by following the suggestions and guidance of his case manager. I then asked him what the best thing is about working, and he replied, “going to work is fun”! Justin shared, when he was young, his uncle cooked a lot and Justin enjoyed watching and learning from him. His uncle was a big inspiration to him. He takes pride in his work; Justin now strives to become a chef! He continues to be successful, and we are excited to see his accomplishments.

At 39 years old, Justin’s journey is amazing! He is driven to have a happy and fulfilling life. His accomplishments have taken him far and following his life goals have been instrumental to him living an independent life. Paying for his own rent, food and activities keeps Justin proud and will assure him to maintain a shining independent life.

When asked, what advice you would give someone with a disability that has dreams of working independently. He said, “to keep trying, have hope, perseverance and take ownership of your life”.

Written by:

Shannon Flannery South Region Self – Advocate Coordinator Wallingford office