

# Caleb's Success Story



**Meet Caleb.** He has fought hard to overcome many obstacles in his young life, but he has developed into a compassionate and caring young man who always has a smile on his face. Diagnosed with autism at a young age, Caleb has worked through many challenges and leads an active life playing Special Olympics basketball, loves listening to rock and roll music, and enjoys being outdoors.

During the summers of 2021 and 2022, Caleb participated in the Hope Garden Project Older Youth Farm job program. Offered to high school students, it teaches a structured approach to horticulture, interpersonal and self-reflection skills, and practical cooking methods.

In his last year of high school transition, Caleb participated in the School to Work program. His supported employment provider worked with him to identify his abilities, interests, skills, and long-term and short-term employment goals. His provider also assisted him in developing a résumé and taught him interview skills through mock interviews.

All of the hard work paid off! In October 2022 Caleb got a job at the YMCA in Shelton. He works at the front desk checking customers in, takes new customers on tours, cleans equipment, and answers the phone. Caleb loves going to work and helping people.

Caleb's mom is proud of his accomplishments and expressed, "Caleb's job opportunity at the YMCA has given him confidence and hope in who he is and who he can become. Caleb comes home with a smile on his face because he is learning so much, gets to work with people, and truly feels valued as an employee. I know it means a lot to Caleb to be able to work with people and provide service with kindness. I am so thankful Caleb was provided this job opportunity and I am so excited to watch Caleb grow and work towards his future and goals."

When asked what Caleb likes most about his job, he expressed, "I like to work at the front desk, because I like to work around people, and I can greet them and help check them in so they can enjoy the time at the YMCA. I like to learn new things in my job."