



Community Based Training Work Site: *Web Creations and Graphics*

One of the first businesses to sign on as a Community Based Training work site, Web Creations and Graphics in Beckley, is owned by Danny Cole.

Danny has been blind from birth and is considered to be legally blind. Danny attended public school, which was, as Danny tells us, a very good experience for him socially but with many challenges around actual education. Most public schools today are still dealing with the challenge of providing the supports that a child with a disability needs in order to do well in school.

After Danny graduated from high school he bounced around for a while trying to find work that he both could do and wanted to do. He eventually became a client of the WV Rehabilitation Center Blind Adjustment Unit for six months. During his time in the program, he was able to identify a career path and afterward completing the program he started college. Upon receiving his Bachelors of Social Work, his first job was with WV Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS) in Beckley. He worked as a counselor at WVDRS for 12 years before leaving to start his own business.

During his time at WVDRS, Danny found that many people had an idea of what type of work they wanted to do but did not have a realistic understanding of what the job entailed. For some people it was committing to school for the required training and education; others did not have realistic expectations of the responsibilities of having a job, pay scales and other real world issues. Add to the mix having a disability and the odds for failure increase.

When Danny heard about the Employment Services Division at Mountain State Centers for Independent Living, he immediately signed on to be a Community Based Training work site. For Danny it is going back to his roots and sharing the personal experiences of being a person with a disability in order to help others have some of the opportunities he did not. He also sees it as a way for businesses to open doors for people with disabilities - businesses that may have never considered hiring a person with a disability.

Danny can offer people with disabilities an opportunity to look at a working environment, see how he uses adaptive equipment to do his work, help identify skills and help define what a person wants to do, as well as what they can't do, and identify solutions – think outside the box. It is also a chance to fail without failing; to try a job and find that it is not right without the need to fail at a permanent job.

Web Creations and Graphics employs three full-time and one part-time employee. As there are limited opportunities for employment in his business, Danny is pleased to be able to participate as a Community Based Training work site in order to offer something many people with disabilities don't have – a chance for a reference. By providing internships, Danny sees this as his opportunity to reach back and give a leg up to someone as so many people did for him when he started out.

Web Creations and Graphics is located in Beckley, WV and provides Web site design, hosting, off site data backup and more. You can visit their Web site at wcn.net to learn more about them.

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living
Foundation for Independent Living

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