

### Aspire of WNY's Mission:

*Our mission is to support children and adults with developmental and similar disabilities, helping them to live their lives to the fullest by providing individualized assistance based on personal choices.*

## What's Inside This Edition of Transition Times

1. JOURNEY TO PAID EMPLOYMENT
2. HAYLEY'S JOURNEY OF SELF POTENTIAL WITH SVLE
3. OPWDD STUDENT TO ADULT SERVICES TRANSITION – KEY CONTACTS

## Acronym Corner

SVLE - Supported Volunteering & Lifestyle Enrichment

DMS - Data Management Specialist

CBPV - Community-Based Prevocational Services

CILS - Community & Independent Living Supports (Aspire of WNY)

OPWDD - Office for People with Developmental Disabilities

CCO - Care Coordination Organization

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## JOURNEY TO PAID EMPLOYMENT

Since 2019 Danny has been a part of Aspire of WNY's Community-Based Pre-Vocational Services Program within our Community and Independent Living Supports (CILS) division. In August of 2023 Danny ended his 10-week internship at Ecklof Bakery and received rave reviews from his manager Chad.

While at Ecklof Bakery, Danny continued to work hard on the skills needed to be successful in paid employment. Danny focused on perfecting his self-advocacy, problem-solving skills, and productivity with his Employment Specialists.

When the internship ended Danny was asked what he thought of his internship, he told us that he really enjoyed his time in the bakery, and, at the end of the internship, he was

blown away to find that Chad had made him a special cake to celebrate his success and offered him a position at the company!



Danny accepted the position with a huge smile and stated that "I am so very proud of myself, and all the years of hard work has paid off, I am employed!" Congratulations Danny!



# TRANSITION TIMES

## Aspire of WNY's Success Through Transition

### Hayley Realizes Her Own Potential with SVLE Support

Meet Hayley, a bright, amazing, 23-year-old young lady! From her first step into Aspire of WNY's Supported Volunteering & Lifestyle Enrichment (SVLE) program, Hayley has grown from the girl who puts a smile on everyone's face to a young woman with an incredible story of growth and self-discipline.

Three years before she began her journey with SVLE, Hayley's mother Lisa spent a great deal of time at provider fairs and researching Hayley's options before she even graduated from high school. Through careful consideration, Lisa determined early on that SVLE was where Hayley needed to be. Hayley officially started SVLE during the fall of 2021.

Like with most kids just graduating from high school, nerves were high for Hayley and her family concerning her transition into the adult world. During the initial meeting for SVLE, Lisa was (and continues to be) a great advocate for Hayley and mentioned that she did some data entry work in high school. SVLE made a place for Hayley in the office two days per week to provide an opportunity for Hayley to enhance this skill. For almost two years now, she has worked very closely with the program's Data Management Specialist, Hannah, to learn how to record billing and attendance for the program.

At first, Hayley had a hard time concentrating. After a year of working in the office, she started to get the hang of things. She learned to focus on her tasks after taking a "How Do I Learn" assessment with Hannah and discovered that if she read the lines of data aloud to herself, she could focus much better. This was a turning point for Hayley and her billing accuracy went from 40% to 100%. Hayley has also cultivated her social skills by delivering Meals on Wheels for Feedmore WNY. When she was uncomfortable conversing with customers, Hayley and her mom created question cards that helped spark conversations. She's become quite popular among the residents!

With improved confidence, Hayley joined the Self-Advocacy group where she was elected as one of two Vice Presidents! She is well on her way to being able to speak up for the things she wants. As one of the guys that receives her help on her Meals on Wheels route says: Hayley is "having a good life." Keep up the awesome work Hayley!



### SCHOOL TO ADULT SERVICES TRANSITION: KEY CONTACTS

Every young person who is transitioning out of high school in WNY and is seeking adult services with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), regardless of whether they already receive services with OPWDD, will be required to go through the "Front Door." Your Care Coordinator will assist with this process. Here are some key contacts and resources to help you during this transition process:

- OPWDD Front Door (Western Region only), call 1.800.487.6310 or visit <https://opwdd.ny.gov/getstarted/front-door>
- Care Coordination: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/find-care-manager>
  - Person Centered Services: 1.855.208.3533 <https://personcenteredservices.com/>
  - Prime Care Coordination: 1.844.347.3168 <https://primecareny.org/>

**Have questions? Need help navigating the system?** Please reach out to us at Aspire of WNY. Aspire of WNY's Central Intake Department is here to help! We can be reached at 716.838.0047 Option 1 or by email at [intake@aspirewny.org](mailto:intake@aspirewny.org).

### Comments, Suggestions, or Ideas?

If you have any comments, suggestions or a subject you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter, please contact Paula Kerber at 716-505-5262, or email [paula.kerber@aspirewny.org](mailto:paula.kerber@aspirewny.org).

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