

A Change in Mindset Changes Everything

Sometimes, all it takes to move forward is someone who believes in you. For Anna, it was the staff at Easterseals NH All Youth Count.

When Anna, 21, first connected with AYC, she had a low-paying job with unusual hours. But her aspirations were higher. She wanted to be a phlebotomist. AYC, a partnership with the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), service providers, and employers, supports youth who are in or have exited the foster care system. We turned to our network to see how we could help Anna become a phlebotomist.

To start, Anna needed training and certification. We found a phlebotomy training program in Manchester through an AYC council member who is also a director of the New Hampshire Jobs for America's Graduates (NH JAG). NH JAG partners with training providers, schools, employers, and communities to provide underserved students with training for post-secondary employment at no cost to the student.

We worked with JAG staff to inform Anna of the training opportunity, but she was hesitant to enroll. Anna lived in Laconia, an hour's drive from Manchester. She wondered how she

would work around class times plus afford the time and expense of traveling to the program. The logistics seemed overwhelming.

We knew Anna could make it all work. But she needed support to see it for herself.

Because Anna's existing job schedule conflicted with the phlebotomy training program's hours, she needed to ask her supervisor to accommodate a request for a schedule change. With our encouragement, Anna gained the confidence and language to advocate for herself. She asked her supervisor for a schedule change, and it was approved.

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—Anna

JAG staff helped us address the financial challenge of commuting from Laconia to Manchester by securing funds to reimburse for mileage. We reframed Anna's mindset about the two weeks of in-person training by breaking it down so that she could see that it was three days per week, not five, for a total of only six days.

With training and travel in place, one barrier remained for Anna: her fear of starting a new path, something unknown, at which she might fail, while giving up her familiar job and routine. We continually encouraged Anna and assured her that we would support her and help her advocate for any help she might need to succeed.

Anna began the training program and immediately found success. She contacted AYC staff after the first day, ecstatic. She enjoyed the training and excelled at the “hands-on” portion and, with support, the curriculum. Anna also made natural connections, attending a social party with several classmates. She began building a new network of friends and supports.

After six weeks, Anna earned her phlebotomist’s certification and quickly found a job at a nearby hospital. The new position came with a significant pay increase and benefits. It also offered the possibility of shifts as a Certified Lab Assistant, which paid even more, and overtime work, which Anna now frequently picks up.

“The most important support that All Youth Count has given me is the opportunity to express my challenges and figure out ways to overcome them,” Anna says. “All Youth Count has great staff, and I made genuine

connections with some that helped me become more independent on this journey to adulthood. Biweekly meetings were helpful in that aspect. My biggest takeaway from AYC is the willingness and hard work of the staff to always be on top of my case and motivate me so I can reach my goals.”

The results of Anna’s perseverance and confidence have continued to multiply. She has achieved her goals of a new apartment, a new job, and financial independence. Now, she’s begun setting new objectives, including progressing in her career, saving for a new vehicle, and building long-term professional and personal success.

“Starting her dream job has led to a big change in outlook for Anna,” says Thomas Ware, All Youth Count Program Coordinator. “Now she believes, as we do, that the sky is the limit for what she can achieve. We’re proud of all her hard work.”

All Youth Count

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