



Sept 27 & 28 OKDHS Volunteerism Conference is for YOU!

Conference registration is sure to fill up fast, so talk to your supervisor and [sign up TODAY!](#)

After registering on the LMS, you can view information about the conference [here](#).

Questions? Contact Heidi Port, hport@metrolibrary.org or Stacy Schrank, sschrank@metrolibrary.org

A Volunteer Success Story

by Lindsay Egle

About two years ago I had a young man start volunteering at Del City. He was 18, had severe Aspergers Syndrome and had been homeschooled his whole life. His mom spoke to me at length about her hopes for him and his future. She desperately wanted him to become more comfortable (or comfortable at all) socializing and working alongside other people. **1** I had worked closely with kids with autism at a previous job and had no qualms about taking him on as a volunteer. **2**

To say that he was quiet would be an understatement. He probably spoke about three words to me for the first 3-4 months, but we had our routine down pat. **3** He would come in the front entrance and stand by the door until I noticed him, I would sign him in and hand him his badge, and he would go to work straightening the shelves or dusting. Those were his specialties at first. He was the best volunteer I have EVER had! Always on time and very meticulous. **4** I would get updates from his mom every week and she ensured me that in his own way he was letting her know that he really loved his volunteer work here. **5** As time went on he started talking more and more. I found out that his favorite thing in the world was the band "Celtic Woman" and that his parents had taken him to see them 4 times.

Eventually, Josh felt comfortable enough to sign himself in, grab his badge out of my desk drawer, and start working alongside the other pages - helping to unload delivery, box up donations, even shelve. He would immerse himself in his work even when the chatter and traffic in the work room made it seem like chaos - something that Josh would have avoided like the plague when he first started. Everyone loved it when Josh came in twice a week to volunteer. About a year after he had been volunteering steadily his mom and I looked into a program with the Office of Disability Services that would allow him to be paid by them for volunteering at our library. It was a great program and I could see his confidence soar. **6** Last December I got a heartfelt thank you card from his mom saying that he had decided to enroll in classes at Rose State and was interested in getting a degree in computer programming. She had never in her wildest dreams imagined that he would go to college. She said she owed it all to his volunteerism at Del City. On his last day to volunteer we gave him a CD of Celtic folk music (he said he already owned all of Celtic Woman's albums) that several of us had pitched in to order. **7** When his mom came to pick him up he stuck out his hand to shake and I saw his mom's jaw drop. One of the very first things she warned me about when he started was that "He does NOT touch people." **8** :)

Secrets Behind Lindsay's Success:

1. Work with people as people - be patient with where they are and work to relate to them.
2. Use all your skills and knowledge - including those from previous experience.
3. Do what works for the volunteer when possible.
4. Give praise whenever you can - notice and reward the good.
5. Keep open communication.
6. Be open to growth and look for opportunities to increase responsibility for the volunteer when appropriate.
7. Show meaningful and personal appreciation.
8. Stay involved in the process.

Have a volunteer story you'd like to share? I'd love to hear it - call Heidi at 405-606-3762 or e-

mail hport@metrolibrary.org !

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For more information you can always view the [Volunteer Supers Website](#).

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