



Media Contact:

Marisa Markowski

(262) 658-9557

mmarkowski@thekac.com

PRESS RELEASE

June 30, 2021

Kenosha Achievement Center Seeks Partnerships for Community Employment and Exploration Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

June 30, 2021 (Kenosha, WI.) – Kenosha Achievement Center (KAC), empowering individuals of all abilities, is seeking business partnerships to help provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities. KAC's community employment services provide individualized support to help job seekers. At the same time, the team works with employers to fill job vacancies with highly qualified candidates.

Last year, KAC's community employment team served roughly 125 people. Of those, 32 people found work while practicing COVID-19 safety measures. Two thirds of the individuals placed have already reached success in their positions, which is defined as 90 days on the job.

One community employment success story involves Katherine Rizzo, who currently works at Festival Foods.

Rizzo first came to KAC as a child when her mother enrolled in KAC's Birth to Three program, which helps children and their families prepare for kindergarten. Then, during high school, Rizzo was re-referred to KAC through a standing partnership with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). She participated in KAC's Summer Employment Exploration program, where participants have the opportunity to try out a variety of work experiences and get the help needed to create an employment plan. As Rizzo continued working with KAC and DVR and participated in several internships and employment Experiences, it was learned that her greatest strength is her ability to work with people.

Now, as a young adult, she continuously receives on-site job training and support while on the job at Festival Foods. The KAC team provides Rizzo with the support she needs to complete weekly online trainings as well as learn any new job tasks or procedures. Rizzo experienced a brief absence of work at the onset of COVID-19 but is now back on the job where she wears a mask and helps customers from a safe distance.

"We take a systematic approach to helping individuals get their dream job and keep it," says Michelle George, community employment specialist at KAC. "This is equally as important to the employer so that they get a great employee, like Katherine, and know they will be supported when needed. Turnover is costly to individuals and employers."

It is equally important for both the employee and the employer to be happy a job placement. That's why George describes her role as an, "employer match-maker," because she helps individuals fulfill their dreams while also helping employers fill open positions.



Katherine Rizzo bags groceries while working at Festival Foods.

(Continued on next page.)



Empowering people **OF ALL ABILITIES**

1218 79th Street • Kenosha, WI 53143-6199 • 262.658.9500 • www.theKAC.com

Additionally, KAC also offers a Summer Employment Exploration program sponsored by DVR. This eight-week internship program provides students the opportunity to try out different jobs and learn new skills. Summer Employment Exploration includes hands-on activities and soft-skill training to help individuals prepare for joining the workforce after graduation. Students enrolled in the program began their first placement Monday, June 28.

Business owners or managers can work directly with KAC to discuss how to best come together to support KAC's community employment and/or summer employment exploration programs. Community partnerships greatly help KAC provide these much needed resources to the individuals who need it most.

For more information or to get connected with KAC's community employment services, contact Gary Eckstein at (262) 658-9568.

About KAC:

Since 1964, [Kenosha Achievement Center](#) has worked to create opportunities for the personal growth and success of persons with special needs. KAC does this by removing barriers, changing perceptions and building confidence. Annually, KAC serves roughly 3,000 individuals in the Kenosha community and the surrounding area. These vital children, adult and transportation services provide individuals with special needs and their families with the resources and support needed to thrive throughout their entire lives.

