

JUSTIN SMOCK
Nominated by: Mid 5 Employment & Training, Inc.
Case Manager: Rita Steele
(SYEP)

First, we would like to say hats off to the State of Illinois for their work placement program! We feel this program is an excellent source of training for the young people getting ready to enter the working world. It teaches them all the aspects of job placement, responsibility, skills, respect for themselves and others and professionalism. It prepares them to go out in the public workforce with the confidence and professionalism to tackle anything put before them at work and everyday situations. We don't have a lot of help for our young adults to prepare them for life after school, but this program definitely does that.



We were given Justin Smock. He is a seventeen year old junior at Harrisburg High School. His interests are art and band. He had never had a job other than cleaning his church. One of this friends' grandmothers told him about the program so he applied. A flower shop was not on his want list, but we are glad his first choice (the Health Department) would take to long for background checks and a drug screening.

Justin was setup with an interview at which he arrived on time, polite, professionally dressed and very grateful for the opportunity to fill a gap in our work schedule. He started the next day. He had no experience in the floral business, but was eager to learn. We started with bow making and he turned into a bow making machine! He was taught to answer the phone, take orders, help customers and deliver flowers. He said it was very gratifying to see the smiles and tears when he delivered the flowers. It took him no time before he was making vases, mixed baskets, cemetery vases and saddle arrangements. He learned all the aspects of the cooler and care of the flowers. In a very short time Justin could do it all! We turned the shop over to him to run without any hesitation a couple hours a day and Saturday mornings. He is very trustworthy and professional.

Needless to say, we are grateful Justin accepted our shop as a job experience. He has a long list of things he has learned from us, but we don't hesitate to let him know that he has also taught us many things. We learn from each other. We can't speak for other participants, but we feel we got one of the best. Justin has a permanent job at our business for as long as he wishes. We are very proud of him. When he changes the tassel on his graduation cap, he will be ready and will be an asset to the workforce.

When we asked Justin about his experience through Mid 5 his response was they are very kind and hospitable. He feels blessed he had the opportunity to participate in the program. We also asked him if he would recommend the program and for what reason. He response was yes because it lets you get hands on in the workforce and a feel for the real outside work experience.

Cottage Flower Shop
Eldorado, IL