Let's Work! California Networking Activity Guide



jvámonos a trabajar! 我们一起工作



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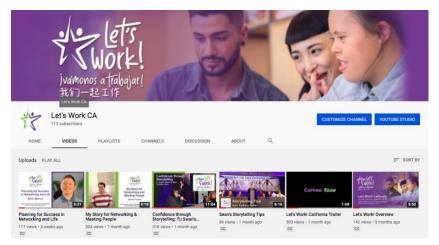






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Let's Work! CA YouTube Channel, available online at www.youtube.com/letsworkca

Designed to increase access to information for Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families and supporters to obtain competitive integrated employment (CIE), Let's Work! is a unique video-based initiative of the <u>California Transition Alliance</u>.

Funded by the <u>California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)</u> as part of Program Development Grant 42, the project is consistent with the SCDD mission to advocate, promote and implement policies and practices that achieve self-determination, independence, productivity and inclusion in all aspects of community life for Californians with IDDs and their families.

Let's Work! supports the <u>SCDD State Plan</u> goals for Employment and Self-Advocacy and supports the Individual and Family Advocacy performance objective of increasing awareness of how to make decisions to work for a minimum of 5,000 people. Importantly, this project is also enhancing four best practices as identified by the <u>National Technical Assistance Center</u> on <u>Transition</u> and the <u>Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center</u>.

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 2001CASCDD, from the U.S Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Service, Washington, D.C. 2020.



A Letter from the Authors

Thank you for reading the Let's Work! California Networking Activity Guide. Working together has been awesome. We hope you will like the ideas we share in this guide.

We all know there are different ways to meet people. For instance, we can go to conferences to meet people and talk about work. We meet people through school, clubs, sports and other groups. We can talk to these people about our work goals. These people are important and are part of something called our "network." These people will support us and help us find jobs and careers.



Derek Shields (left) and Sean Keilberg-Tucker (right) at Lights! Camera! Access!, Career Summit at the Computer History Museum in 2019.

We also know that we get nervous when talking to people about finding work. When Sean gets nervous, he takes a deep breath and reminds himself that he practiced and is prepared. When Derek gets nervous, he asks a friend to give him feedback and that helps him gain confidence.

For both of us, meeting people and networking actually led us to each other, and now we are working together! We want to share with you a way for you to meet people to help you find people who will help support you find the work, jobs and careers you want. Use this guide and the fun activities to learn how to:

- Prepare to meet people
- Build confidence in talking with people
- Talk to people about your search for work, and
- Stay in touch with the people you meet.

Networking – or using a "large net of people" to help you catch the work you want – is for all of us. We hope you will network with us, so all of us can work!

Sean Keilberg-Tucker

Derek S. Shields



About Let's Work!

Let's Work! is a project of the California Transition Alliance to create and share videos for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DDs) and your families. By creating the Let's Work! California YouTube channel, the California Transition Alliance is reaching youth, your families, your teachers and other resources working with you, businesses, and community partners to encourage self-advocacy, create personcentered plans and inform you on work options. In other words, YOUR network.

The project uses best practices, things we know that work well for people:

- Share employment and self-determination information
- Tell personal stories to help youth think about the possibility for work
- Build a network of adult allies through instructional videos and mentoring
- Provide work experience to more youth
- Help youth develop interviewing skills through informational interviews

This project will share stories and tools to encourage and support more Californians with I/DDs – you – to access work. One of the tools is this *Let's Work! California Networking Activity Guide*.

The purpose of this guide is to help you learn how to meet people that will help support you to help you find the work you want. The guide introduces what networking is, teaches a four-part model to meet people, and helps to create a plan to meet people to talk about work. Each section includes recommended activities that will help you gain confidence and find work!



Introduction to Networking Video



What is Networking?



The word "network" has two parts. **net · work**



First, let's think about the word "**Pet**." A net helps you catch something. Imagine using a **net** to catch a butterfly or a fish.

Now, let's think about the word "WOrk." Work is doing a job for money.



Now, let's put the two words back together. **network**

Imagine creating a **net** with a lot of people you know to help find **work**.

Your network helps you find work.



People you know can help you build confidence and support you to find both jobs and careers.

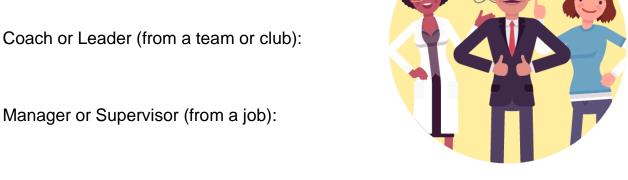
Let's find out how you can meet people, make new friends and create your own network! Let's help you start networking!



Recommended Activity: People You Know - Your First Network

Who do you know and which people helped you in the past? Write your response below.

- Teacher (past or current teacher):
- Coach or Leader (from a team or club):



- Three people you met at a job, club or another community organization:
 - 1. Insert Answer:
 - 2. Insert Answer:
 - 3. Insert Answer:
- Who do you wish you talked to in the past but never did?
 - 1. Insert Answer:
 - 2. Insert Answer:



Your Professional Networking Circles

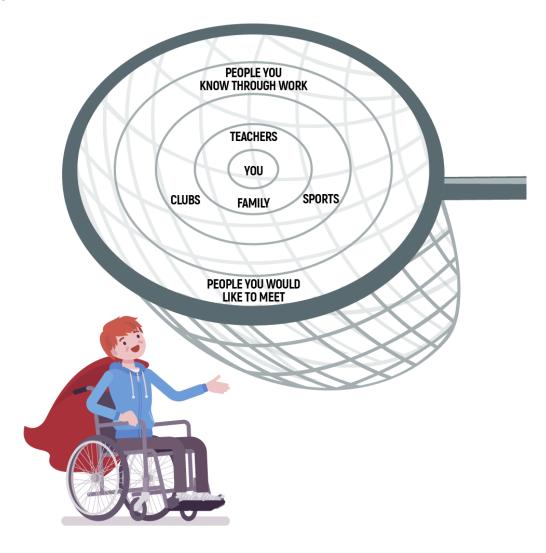
Consider your network to be a series of circles. Start in the middle with YOU. Next is your family and friends in the circle around you.



Planning for Success Video

Each circle is filled with ideas of who might be helpful to you during your job search. The people on the inside you know well, like your friends and family. The people on the outside circles are those you don't know very well or have not met yet.

All of the names are people you would like to meet to talk to about what you would like to do for work.







Preparing to Network



What can you do? What skills and services do you have? Think about what you have learned from your family, friends or in school, sports, clubs or previous jobs. All of this will be your "skills and services" list!

Preparing your resume. Your resume is type-written page that includes your education, work, skills, hobbies and social experiences. It is used by companies to hire people. Your resume should also include a statement about what work you want to do,



Preparing to Network Video

your work goal. Ask your family, teachers or friends to help you create or update your resume.



Knowing your story. Practice telling a short story about who you are and what you do well and how that might help others. This should be about one minute long. It might be good to work with a family member or teacher to write down a few notes and practice telling your story.

Confidence through Storytelling Video

Scheduling meetings. You now have your tools:

- Contacts list (from your circles)
- Resume
- Work goal, and
- Your story

Now it is time to schedule your first meetings to talk about yourself and your work goal! Who on your contacts list from your circles do you think you can talk to about your story and work goal? Do they





know anyone who can help you build your network or get the job you want?

Are you able to email or call them? Practice what you want to ask them, including how you will ask them to meet, talk about your work goal and career interests. Be ready to schedule a meeting to include the date and time of the meeting.

Expanding your network. If you have a short list of people on your contacts list, you can ask family, teachers or friends to help you reach out to find new people.

- It is also okay to ask people questions to learn about them, like:
- How did you get started in your job?
- What was your first job and who helped you get the job?
- What advice do you have for someone who is just starting to work?
- What do you know now, that you wished you knew when you first started?

Do your research! Before you meet with someone, research information about the person and their organization. Find out what they are doing in their current job and come up with some questions you can ask them about their interests, focus, and organization. This can be done with an "internet search" or by talking to someone you know who already knows the person you are meeting.

Arrive early. Plan to arrive 15 minutes before your meeting time. This should be done for in-person and online meetings. This will help you be less nervous and you will be recognized as someone who is on time and prepared. If you arrive early and the person isn't ready to meet, take the time and read your notes and practice telling your story.



Part 1 Recommended Activity: Create Your Networking Plan

What do you do well? What do you like to do? Make a list below.

What are your three best skills?





Skills

/skils/

the ability to do something well

Your skills are important to help you tell *your story*. List things you are good at or bring to a team or employer, like "communication skills," "positive attitude," "customer service," or "computer skills." Or, you might list something you have done at a job, before like "stocking shelves," "answering phones," or "organizing." Skills can also be

found in favorite hobbies like solving problems (puzzles), following directions (cooking or baking), teamwork (joining clubs or playing sports), learning new skills (favorite subjects in school, reading, playing a musical instrument) and leadership (teaching younger family or friends new skills, team activities).



Networking Video with Skills in the Story

What do you do well and are proud of? List those three items below.

Insert Answer:
Insert Answer:
Insert Answer:

What job or work do you want to do? This is your work goal.

Create or update your resume. This will include your education, work, volunteer experiences and hobbies. Share the resume with three people in your network and ask for their review and help to make it better.



Create and practice your story. Remember, this needs to have the following parts:

- 1. Your name
- 2. List top 3 skills (from above)
- 3. Your education
- 4. Your work experience
- 5. Your volunteer experience or hobbies
- 6. Your goal(s) for getting the work you want
- 7. Ask for help in finding work

Who do you know who you can talk to about work?

Who can you ask for help to meet new people to build your network?

Create a calendar of when you will talk with these people.



TIP

Use your phone, planner, or desk calendar to help!

When you meet these people, consider doing the following:

- Learn about their work and how they found their job
- Tell your story and share your work goal
- Give them your resume and ask if they have any suggestions for finding work
- Ask for the person's business card or contact information and follow up with a thank you note
- Ask to be introduced to new people, and then, make a new calendar

Keep track of what is helping you build confidence or find work and what is not helping.





Building Confidence



Before you start networking, let's make sure you feel good about yourself and most importantly, believe in yourself! Sometimes meeting new people and asking for help and support can make you nervous. So, we want you to use the *Four Tools of the Creative Hero*ⁱ to help build your confidence while you practice networking! Let's review the tools now.

Four Tools of the Creative Hero

- **1 | Have faith in yourself and your voice**. You are awesome and the world needs you and wants you to work.
- 2 | Be positive and focus on what you CAN do! It is what you CAN do that matters. Don't allow people to limit you or put you down. Self-determination allows you to make choices and decisions to direct your own life. Self-determination is your path forward to work and to the life you want.



- **3 | Listen, watch and learn.** After you believe in yourself, and you are staying positive, then it is important to *listen, watch, and learn* all you can to understand what people are talking about and need.
- **4 | Ask questions.** After learning from people about their needs, experiences and challenges, ask questions to find if there are ways you can help them.





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TIP

"Learning to use the Four Tools of the Creative Hero takes time and practice. So be patient with yourself. But it works. And it will help you build confidence as you start to network!" – Sean Spence



Building Confidence Video



Part 2 Recommended Activity: Build Your Confidence

Do you know how to "brag" about yourself? We are usually taught not to brag, but this is a different kind of bragging because it shows you are proud of yourself and what you can do. An important part of building your confidence is being proud of who you are. What are you good at doing? What are you proud that you are able to do? These are good things and should be shared with other people so they can get to know you!



Brag

/brag/

say something about yourself or that you can do that you really like; say it with lots of pride

In networking, when meeting people to talk about work, you need a list of things you are good at doing. The below questionsⁱⁱ will help you when it's time to talk to someone or when someone asks you "What do you do?" or "What are you good at?" or "What skills do you have?"



What is something you are proud you have done?

1.	Insert Answer:	
٠	INSUIT ANSWELL	
2.	Insert Answer:	
3	Insert Answer:	
Examples : "I finished my school project." "I got my first job!" "I learned how to welcome customers to the store." "I learned how to stock shelves." "I created my first YouTube video."		
What a skills?	re your best skills, and what are you working on that show off t	hose
1	Insert Answer:	
2.	Insert Answer:	
3	Insert Answer:	
Examples : "I am always on time for school and work and I show this every day." "I am excellent using the computer and I am doing research now."		
What h	ave you learned in the last year, what new skill(s) do you have?	
1.	Insert Answer:	
2	Insert Answer:	

Examples: "I learned how to use Zoom for meetings on the computer." "I can do Internet searches." "I learned how to fill out a time card for work."



What was a problem you had and what did you learn from it?

Insert Answer:
Insert Answer:

Example: "I used to interrupt people on the phone and now I learned to wait my turn. I had to be patient and say "excuse me" to then take my turn when they are finished talking."

How do you make things better for people? How do you make people feel better?

- 1. Insert Answer:
- 2. Insert Answer:
- 3. Insert Answer:

Examples: "I help people do things." I make people smile when I help carry bags for them."



Tips for Sharing Your Story with Confidence



Networking and Meeting People

Let's revisit the definition of networking. Remember the two parts of the word?

net - work

And remember creating your own net with people you know to help support you and find work; to find a job. Your **network** can help you find work!



Now that you are PREPARED to network and have CONFIDENCE to network, where will you actually meet people you want to talk with about your work goals?

Meetings. If you want to learn about how to do a job, start by asking someone who does the job to meet and talk to them about the job.

Get experience! Join clubs and ask to help out with something that needs to be done. This helps build your leadership skills. Apply for part-time job or join a group that needs help with different activities. It is important to get experience and meet new people.

Join a program. A great way to network is to find organizations that involve businesses and promote



Networking & Meeting People Video

employment of people with disabilities. Examples would be Centers for Independent Living and other disability service providers that are organizations connected to local businesses or schools. This connects you with business professionals interested in hiring people with disabilities.



Listen for challenges. When you are talking to someone listen for what they need done. And then offer to help them!

Have prepared questions. Have a few questions ready before meeting someone. You can use the questions listed above or ask family and friends to help you. Then, practice asking these questions with family or friends or in front of a mirror before the meeting so you are less nervous, more prepared and more confident.

- What do you do for your job?
- What is the hardest part of your job?
- What is your favorite part of the job?
- What is it like to work here?
- What was your first job like and how did you find it?
- What did you need to learn before you started the job?
- What is something you suggest to people who want to do the job?
- What do you suggest I do to get this kind of job?
- What is something you wished you knew when you did your first job that might be helpful for me with my first job?



Resume. Share your resume with the person you are meeting with so they have a list of your work goal, skills, education, work, hobbies and volunteer experiences, and how to contact you in the future.





Part 3 Recommended Activity: Schedule a Networking Meeting

Now that are prepared and you have your tools to build your confidence in talking with people, it is time to start meeting people and networking! Here are some good questions to help you find people to meet

- 1. What do you want to learn?
- 2. Why do you want to learn it?
- 3. Who do you know that might be able to help? Create a list of people from the Professional Networking Circles activity.
- 4. How will you contact this person or people?
- 5. Pick the person you want to meet and Write an email to introduce yourself and ask for a meeting.
- 6. Have a friend review the email before you send it.
- 7. Schedule the meeting and then get prepared!

Prepare your questions. Here are some examples to get you started!



I wanted to meet today because I wanted to learn ______(Fill in the blank with what you want to learn).





What do you do for work?



What do you like about that work?



I want to _____ (fill in the blank with your job/career goal). Do you have any recommendations of how I can get experience or a job in that field?



Ask the person for feedback on your resume (provide them a copy of your resume in advance of your meeting). This can be sent before you meet and bring it with you so they can provide feedback in person.



Share how you feel and be sure to thank the person. Think of saying something like:

"This meeting was very helpful. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I learned a lot."

And make sure you ask them to introduce you to someone else, like:

"Is there anyone you can introduce me to who works in the same field I want to be in and would be willing to talk with me?"

Before leaving, make sure you ask your questions and listen to the replies





What does this person do for work and what projects are they working on next?



Is there anything you might be able to do together? Write a blog post? Take a picture and share on social media?



Be sure to offer your resume (if you haven't yet) to the person and ask for their business card or contact information.



Thank the person for their time.



TIP

Remember to write some notes down after your meeting so you remember what you learned and anything you agreed to do as a follow-up to the meeting.







After you network with people you have started your relationship. This is the connection between two people that may continue to grow. Now it's time to follow-up and continue the relationship. Here are some ideas to help you.

Say thank you. After meeting someone, be sure to send a thank you note by email or U.S. Postal Service. Do this in a **unique** way, something that will set you apart from others and will be tied to your personal "What I CAN Do List."



u-nique

/yoo'nēk/

one of a kind, remarkable, special or unusual

In your thank you note, include:

- A review of the meeting, retelling what you and the person talked about
- List anything you and the person agreed to do, either together or separately
- Ask for introductions to other people that you can talk to about work
- Ask if you can do something new together, something that matters to you



Check out the example letter on the next page to help you make yours!



To: Ms. Jones

Subject: Thank you!

Dear Ms. Jones,

Thank you very much for meeting with me to talk about your work. I was excited to learn how you and the people you work with do their jobs. I especially liked the tour of the back office and seeing how the packages arrived and were unpacked. Please tell Ms. Rogers that I liked how she took the items from the package and moved them to the store, or what she called inventory management. This was new to me.

Everyone was so nice; it's good to see people enjoy working together and what they are doing.

Please know I am looking for work. If you know of any jobs that are a good fit with my skills, please keep me in mind. If you know other people I could meet for an information interview and to network with, please do introduce us!

Thanks again for brightening up my day by having me visit your work.

I hope you have a great day!

Sincerely,

Wendy Smith

wendysmith@email.com



Stay in touch. It can take a long time from a first meeting to building your network to getting a job, so it's important to stay in touch with people, share with them news on your activities and offer how you might be able to assist individuals. If you want to make a difference, include ideas of how you will make a difference.



Staying in Touch with Your Network Video

Social media. How do you use social media for connecting with people about work? With approval and safety in mind, you can connect with people on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.



TIP

With permission from the people you meet with, you should also consider sharing your stories about meeting people and talking about work on your social media accounts. Who did you meet? What did you learn? How is this helping you find work?

Join a group to discover, learn and connect. You can join clubs or other community groups, either online, in-person or both. This will help you practice telling your story, become more comfortable and confident, and help you meet more people with shared interests to add to your network.

Follow-up, follow-up! People are busy and you may need to follow-up a second or third time to get their attention. You can follow-up by sending a letter, email or by calling on the telephone. Be polite and patient because people are busy.

Ask for what you want. When you find someone who you want to learn from it is important to ask for support or help from that person. Be sure to ask for a short meeting, about 30 minutes works well. You can even provide your questions before the meeting to help them prepare.



Follow-Up Video





Part 4 Recommended Activity: Follow-Up Actions

After reviewing the model and practicing, you should now consider how to make networking part of your daily routine. Try the following:

Join a community to discover, learn and connect. A community is not just where you live. A community can also be a group, club, church, mosque or temple. List three groups you would like to join to meet new contacts (such as a school club or a professional network):

1.	Insert Answer:
2.	Insert Answer:
3.	Insert Answer:

Share your stories on networking and mentoring. With permission of the person you met with, write a social media post about your networking and mentoring experiences. Submit an article to a journal, newsletter or your local newspaper. Share the impact that experiences or mentoring had on you and the people you met.

Say thank you. Find someone that made a difference in your life through sharing and caring. Tell them how they made you feel and show your appreciation. By doing this, you are practicing an important skill and it will help you to say thank you after a networking meeting.





Access More Videos

If you want to get more ideas on talking with people about your goals and finding work, we have other videos on the Let's Work! CA YouTube channel made for you!



Self-Advocacy Video



You and Your IEP



Disability Disclosure



Peer Mentors Video

And we have stories about young adults who have transitioned to work, like Caley pictured below! Be sure to check out this video about them called a documentary!



Young Adult Documentaries





About the Authors and Contributors





Derrek Freitas

Derrek graduated from the Life Skills Program at Yucaipa High School in 2019 in California. Through a teacher, he was able to meet many people, learn new skills and get work experience. Derrek was also a proud associate of the Best Buddies Club.

Skills Derrek learned include how to be friendly, have a positive attitude, and be ready to work. He worked at Fitness 19, Payless Shoes, Walgreens, Jake's Bistro and Brew, American Road Trip, Tuscano's Pizza, and Woody's Classic Grill. Derrek was hired after high school as a bus boy at Woody's and liked his awesome co-workers.

In the Summer of 2020, Derrek joined the Let's Work! California team to support the creation of this Let's Work! Networking Activity Guide and share his story on YouTube.

Derrek has a goal to find work that uses his talents and skills and is a place that the coworkers understand his Autism.



Sean Keilberg-Tucker

Sean is a Project Assistant on the Let's Work! Initiative for ForwardWorks Consulting, a partner of the California Transition Alliance.

Sean is a graduate of Fairfield High School (California) and a recipient of the Solano County Office of Education Adult Transition Program Certificate of Completion. In November 2018, he was a featured speaker at the *Bridge to the Future Institute*, a



conference of 2,000 attendees organized by the California Transition Alliance. He also joined actor RJ Mitte and Derek Shields of the National Disability Mentoring Coalition to deliver a workshop for youth with disabilities on networking skills as part of a self-determination youth strand. From that experience and using the self-determination skills he learned, he returned home and conducted a self-determination workshop to help "pass the baton" of self-advocacy as it was passed to him at the *Bridge to the Future Institute* by two of his mentors.

Sean is currently attending Solano Community College and learning about horticulture. He also works at Digital Stichz and enjoys cosplay, video games, and playing basketball.



Derek Shields

Derek is a certified Project Management Professional with twenty-five years of experience in disability inclusion, accessibility and employment policy and programming.

Since 2014, Derek has served as the Director of the National Disability Mentoring Coalition, a national organization committed to increasing the awareness, quality and impact of mentoring for youth and adults with disabilities. He is also a mentor and enjoys helping young people network from job search to job satisfaction. In this regard, Derek spends endless hours on the front lines of disability mentoring to help move this disability inclusion model forward.

In 2016, he helped launch ForwardWorks Consulting, focusing on both private and government disability inclusion policies and programs. He serves as a project consultant for the California Transition Alliance on the Let's Work! California initiative.





Kayla Smit

Kayla Smit joined the Let's Work! Networking Team during the Summer of 2020. Graduating from Tokay High School with high honors, Kayla was in National Honor Society and received the Principal's Award and Scholarship for her academic achievements. .

Kayla is currently a participant in the Future Explorers Program learning about the film industry. Kayla's other areas of interest are surfing, history, reading, drawing and music. She gained work experience at farmer's markets, a family business, including product staging, sampling and is currently learning point of sale services. Kayla was a 4-year member of her high school's Japanese Club and helped coordinate activities and is a volunteer for Surfer's Healing, a surfing program for youth with autism.

Looking ahead, Kayla plans to go to college and continue studying her fields of interest.



Sean Spence

Sean is a graduate of Willows High School, Butte College, and California State University, Chico, having earned his psychology degree in May 2020. In November 2018, the California Transition Alliance invited Sean to the *Bridges to the Future Institute* to participate in the Youth Strand.

From that experience, and using the self-determination skills he learned, he returned home and conducted three presentations to college students at Chico State University to inform future teachers and psychology students of self-determination, self-advocacy and potential of people with disabilities or differences. During his last semester of school, Sean interned at Disability Action Center and was coordinating and expected to present resource information at school assemblies before Coronavirus shut down the program.

Sean joined the Let's Work! California team in the Summer of 2020 to support the creation of the Let's Work! Networking Activity Guide and share his story.



Sean enjoys participating in Public Service Announcements that promote workability skills and education about persons with disabilities. Storytelling about his life as a person living with disabilities is also something he enjoys because it brings connections amongst all people.



PJ Swan

PJ is a former student in the Lodi Unified School District and is proud of her successful transition to be a Job Coach Assistant. Growing up with Cat Eye Syndrome, PJ learned sign language at a young age and learned a great deal about accommodations and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) throughout her elementary, middle and high school years.

She began leading her IEP meetings and took her confidence and skills into her Workability I experiences, including jobs at CVS, Marshall's and even the Lodi Unified School District's Superintendent's Office. Next, PJ participated in the Transition Partnership Program Job Club and Boot Camp, learning new self-advocacy skills, preparing her resume and applying for an internship with the school district. After the internship, PJ set her goal to obtain a full-time job and applied to be a Job Coach Assistant. After being hired, PJ has successfully completed the job tasks, finds great enjoyment in work and expanded her role to include teaching students to use the Person Centered Planning application.

PJ spoke to over 1,000 attendees at the *Bridges to the Future Institute*, arranges her own transportation, enjoys learning and selfies and is proud to always be on time.

During the Summer of 2020, PJ joined ForwardWorks Consulting as a Technical Assistant on the Let's Work! California initiative.



Notes

This page is provided for you to take notes.



Notes

This page is provided for you to take notes.



CA Transition Alliance

Visit the California Transition Alliance online at www.catransitionalliance.org.





Printing Services

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References

ii Adapted from BRAG! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It by Peggy Klaus



¹The Four Tools of the Creative Hero is adapted from techniques shared in 1999 by Laurie MacPherson, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Masagung Graduate School of Management at the University of San Francisco.