

FAMILY IMPACT



Jack W.'s Family

Kathy Westgate

Jack has been involved with Good Foot since the early days of the organization. Jack is someone who needs activity, needs to be socially engaged, and needs to always be learning. Jack was coming out of a vocational program through George Brown college right after high school, and it was a stressful time. There's not a lot of support for people like Jack when child support systems end, so **Good Foot really came along at the perfect time**. Right away, the organization welcomed Jack in. He already had really good navigational skills, so this kind of work lent itself really well for him.

In the beginning, the work at Good Foot was part time, so Jack was involved in a number of other things. He worked a few other jobs that could either be extremely stressful or incredibly boring and demoralizing. At one point, he had to take a step back from all of his work, after a particularly overwhelming work environment in another job. But Good Foot was happy to take him back on, especially since they had picked up more steam by then, and had more work available. Jack is the eldest of four, and I'm a single parent. **It's been a tremendous burden lifted to have Jack be encouraged and challenged and happy in this way**. It just sort of starts the tears right away.

I look back and I realize how little support there really was for Jack before Good Foot. His other jobs were certainly learning experiences, but it's just been such a positive experience to be working with a community and management that have training in neuro-diversity. Even through COVID, he was able to continue working as soon as it was safe, and carry on with a semblance of normality. I could just sit in the gratitude of it all when I think about it.

Jack has amazed me, because he's taken on all these new challenges at Good Foot, and learned these new technologies for navigating and interacting with staff and clients. That's really helped develop his confidence in his abilities to get around. He has a newfound confidence and independence in social settings too. He's able to ask for what he needs. He really does love social gatherings and will attend every single one if he's able.



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Having activity and purpose and meaning is so important. He always feels like he's contributing value to the organization. Even though he's only working three days a week right now, having a structure is really valuable. He's a visual learner, and does need a lot of visual reminders to remember things. One time, a Good Foot employee made a chart for him to put on the fridge, with little visual reminders of everything needed to get ready in the morning. **I loved that Good Foot understood how just getting out the door can sometimes be a big task, and they were able to go the extra mile to get a tool that really helped him.**

Jack has been one of the lucky ones to be able to continue with Good Foot deliveries through this past year. The organization has been able to figure out and train Couriers to safely navigate these difficult times. There's so much need for people in the neuro-diverse community to be learning, socially engaged and offering their skills in the workplace. **Funding for Good Foot to creatively promote its services to a wide audience of potential customers is crucial!**

It's sometimes tough for me to have the resources to keep my own life and family and work together. Having work at Good Foot really has benefits that extend out to the whole family. Good Foot has really improved the quality of life for us all. Jack has been learning how to be resourceful and independent, and is held in a supportive environment for his social skills. It's really given his life meaning and purpose, and it's such a joy for our family to see. It's a great gift to be able to see him able to provide a service and develop new skills and know that there's a team that's here for the long term. Thinking about the long term future has become hugely reassuring. **I couldn't begin to think of a situation where Good Foot went away, because it would be a tremendous loss to so many, including Jack and our family.**

For people like Jack, there's no life without places like Good Foot. Having a job gives you a reason to get up in the morning, and is a huge component of good mental health. **Having a chance to feel like you're part of a team and that you're growing and learning and have a purpose....I mean, we all need that.** Jack has been given the opportunity here to have a full and meaningful career. He is so capable, but he just needs to be given the chance and opportunity.

