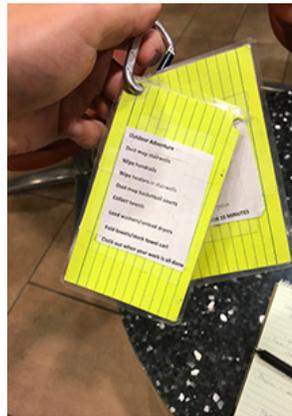


*This month Business Connections wants to recognize April Lynch for the excellent work she's done to place and train her client, Sam.*



This past Spring Sam started working at the VCU Cary St. Gym as a Housekeeper and Rec Sports Assistant. After only 3 months of job site training he was ready for follow along. Sam loves sports. He loves working at the gym because he is surrounded by active people and gets to participate in the activities himself when he's not on the clock. He gets to play some of his favorite sports at the VCU gym such as kickball, volleyball, bocce ball, dodge ball, basketball and soccer. Another great perk – Sam gets to join the Rec Sports' weekend outings and go on outdoor adventures around the James River Park System.

The environment at the Cary St. Gym is a big part of what fosters Sam's independence there. It's an integrated workplace where Sam works with other employees who also enjoy sports. He has a commonality with his coworkers and this gives them something to bond over. The staff recognize the good work Sam is doing and see the value in accommodating him when barriers may arise. Autonomy is a top priority to Sam. Having the support of his staff is huge, this means he doesn't have to see his job coach as often and can have more direct interface with his coworkers and supervisors.



April Lynch was matched up as Sam's job coach at the beginning of April, 2018 to start job development services. By the end of the month April would have Sam placed at the Cary St. Gym in a new customized position that she crafted in collaboration with the management team there. This part-time position did not exist when April first met this employer. Not only that, but the gym had a policy of only employing undergraduate students. April saw an opportunity for Sam based on the sports theme and the gym's need for housekeeping services. April developed a list of tasks for Sam that other employees did not have time to do or did not enjoy doing. April convinced the management team that hiring and training Sam would be beneficial to them because he would be there to stay, he would be reliable, he had the skill set for the job, and he would be motivated to work in a sports-themed environment. The management team bought the pitch and have been satisfied with Sam's work performance since his first day of work. Way to go, Sam!

VCU-RRTC gives a big shout out to April for her resourcefulness and skillful ability to match her consumers with jobs that fit their interests, abilities and personality! Thank you, April!!!