



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **Individuals with disabilities deemed “essential workers” during Stay at Home order**

(Lebanon, OH) –During the Stay at Home Order, Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD) provided on-the-job support and retention services to enrolled individuals considered essential workers. With the assistance of Job Coaches and Employment Developers, WCBDD worked diligently to ensure employees were successful in their jobs and business staffing needs were met.

Enrolled individuals Zack Hahn and Ben Smith work as Food Preppers at Pizza Hut. They are also students in WCBDD’s Transition Program which prepares them for the transition from student to adult life through work study training. Ben enjoys working during the pandemic because it enables him to “help feed people”. Zack practices daily safety precautions by wearing his mask and gloves, and washing his hands.

Transition student Kacie Ryan works as a Housekeeper at Mason Christian Village (an assisted-living facility). When asked how she felt being referred as an “essential worker”, Kacie humbly responded, “I feel confident and blessed.” She added, “I work to make the residents smile. I care for everyone and want to make them happy.”

Meijer Utility Worker, Ari Leibman found his job with the help of an Employment Developer. His responsibilities include collecting and returning carts from the parking lot, changing the trash, and disinfecting cart handles. Ari also benefits from job coaching. Stressing the importance of a job coach, Ari commented that his job coach “helps me work through any issues that I may be struggling with, and also supports me if I need it with work.”

Nikki Prater works as an Apparel Sales Associate at Rural King. Job Coach, Leslie Thompson currently provides retention services to ensure Nikki remains on task and adheres to her employer’s expectations. Nikki elaborated, “She helps me out by explaining how to do my job in a way that I can understand”.

In addition to stocking clothes, Nikki maintains the safety and cleanliness of the store by cleaning the changing rooms every shift at 11AM. Eyes brightening above her “Nightmare before Christmas” mask, Nikki adds, “Rural King gave me gloves and hand sanitizer; lavender and mint scented!”

When asked what inspires her to continue working during uncertain times, Nikki replied, “I am motivated to work so I can help out my family with groceries and other expenses like pet care, and streaming services, like Netflix.”

The Warren County Board of Developmental Disabilities provides services and supports to almost 2,000 individuals with disabilities and their families, through Early Intervention, Employment Services, Social, Recreational, Residential, Service Coordination, and other programs.