



**COLUMBUS
SUCCESS STORY**

**Meet Geniel Wright,
A Columbus Success Story**

In 1986, Geniel Wright came to Columbus Community Center, where she lived in the center's supervised apartments and worked on-site in the employment program. After spending several years with Columbus, Geniel "graduated" to her own apartment. "She really loves living on her own," said Heidi Jentzch, Columbus residential specialist. "It gives her so much satisfaction."

About four years ago, Columbus placed Geniel with a local Einstein Bros. Bagels shop through the center's competitive employment initiative. "Geniel is wonderful with customers," said Justin McCarruth, assistant manager at Einstein's. "She talks to them, and knows most by name." Geniel also sweeps, stocks, cleans tables, and assists with food preparation. She has even helped train new employees.



Geniel Wright with assistant manager Justin McCarruth

Geniel's fellow workers respect her solid job skills, great work ethic, and genuine interest in other people that she brings to the workplace. "Geniel really makes a difference in the work environment," said McCarruth. "We all love her."

Community-Wide Impact

The work Columbus does has far-reaching effects:

- *Participants* learn new skills, become more self-sufficient, and enjoy a better quality of life. Most importantly, however, they find dignity and purpose;
- *Families* of people with disabilities find peace of mind for themselves and opportunities for their loved ones;
- *Local companies* benefit from reliable, cost-effective contract services;
- The entire *community* benefits when participants in Columbus' work programs decrease their dependence on government services. And individuals working and living in the community help raise awareness of the contributions people with disabilities are making every day.

"I like the friendships I have made... We work together and look out for each other. We tell some great jokes. This is my first job... Where I lived before, they didn't think I could work. When I moved here, I got this job."

— PATTI MATEJ, COLUMBUS COMMUNITY CENTER PARTICIPANT

"I have been working with the Columbus team since 1992. They are hard working, dedicated, and eager to please. They care and have concern about the quality and quantity of work that they do. They are like family and we miss them when they aren't here. Joe Ham, the Columbus team supervisor, goes the extra mile. He has talent and patience for directing special needs adults."

— MELODY MOULTON, CELL COORDINATOR, PARKER EPS DIVISION



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**A Mission
of Hope**

*Serving People with Disabilities
for Over 35 Years*



RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
DAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMS



Columbus Community Center offers a variety of services for disabled people ages 16 through retirement.

A Mission of Hope

The Community Foundation for the Disabled (CFD) was founded in 1968 by a group of parents who wanted more and better choices for their children with disabilities.

Today, the CFD, in collaboration with the Salt Lake City School District, operates the Columbus Community Center. No other service provider in Salt Lake County addresses such a broad spectrum of needs for people with disabilities.

Staggering Need

The demand for opportunities for individuals with disabilities is strong:

- 1 in 5 people in the U.S.—or 20 percent of the population—have disabilities;
- People with disabilities face many obstacles in their daily lives—they have a harder time accessing health care, transportation, education, and the daily social activities that many of us take for granted;
- The unemployment rate among people with disabilities is 65%, which has far-reaching effects—a higher poverty rate, isolation from the larger community, and a limited opportunity to develop skills.

“People with disabilities and their families are faced with many obstacles that keep them from receiving adequate education, training and employment...I am amazed at the number of people who have adult children with disabilities and are looking for the kind of respite and fulfillment for their children that Columbus provides.”

—PATRICIA JONES, UTAH STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DISTRICT 40

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Residential services are a major issue for families transitioning loved ones from home to more independent living situations. Columbus’ Residential Services include three levels of support:

- *Residential Homes* provide round-the-clock care;
- *Supervised Apartments* offer supervision, education and training programs;
- *The Supported Living Program* serves individuals who have developmental disabilities and need minimal support to live independently.

“The staff from Columbus help me with grocery shopping, taking walks for exercise, planning healthy meals, and taking care of our two cats. The staff read our mail to us and go over all our bills with us. It’s fun living on our own.”

—LORI RASBAND AND HER HUSBAND, NOEL, ARE LEGALLY BLIND, AND MANAGE HOUSEHOLD DUTIES WITH HELP FROM THE COLUMBUS SUPPORTED LIVING PROGRAM

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Based on a “social enterprise model,” Columbus’ Community Employment Services balance the center’s social mission with solid business goals. Services include:

- *Training Programs* in specific areas such as custodial, food and laundry services, warehouse services, and grounds maintenance;
- *Supported Job-Based Training* provides job placement and coaching and temporary employment and follow-up services;
- *Supported Employment* creates partnerships between businesses and Columbus to train workers for specific jobs;
- *Production Services* provide supervised employment at the Center or various business locations.

“[Stephen] is quite capable of a lot of things. He works hard [at Columbus] and earns every penny he makes. He comes home so proud. It really does something for an individual to be able to make his own way in life.”

—ARLENE DIAL, MOTHER OF STEPHEN, WHO HAS BEEN A PARTICIPANT AT COLUMBUS COMMUNITY CENTER FOR OVER 30 YEARS

DAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

Day Activity Programs are for individuals who cannot work due to severe and multiple disabilities. The program also serves people of retirement age. Highlights include:

- *Accommodations* ensure that participants enjoy many activities at both Columbus and in the community;
- *Staff* are trained on specialized equipment to assist individuals with personal care;
- *Planned activities* include field trips, outdoor recreation and skill-building activities;
- *Combined work and leisure activities*, depending on individual interests and needs.

“I have found that the staff and participants at Columbus are like a family helping each other to reach their full potential. Because Ben can’t speak, it was hard to let him go. I needed to feel a sense of trust with the people who were working with someone I love so much. In no time, I was at ease with the staff.”

—ESTHER MARTIN, MOTHER OF BEN MARTIN, 23

A Mission of Hope