

True Colors

A Story of Career Success

True is a handsome young man who has been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. He is extremely charming, polite and friendly with anyone he encounters. True came to [CIP](#) with the desire to become a UPS delivery person. He had a fascination with inventory systems and delivery services. True wanted a job working in this field so he could help people "get what they needed".

When the opportunity arose, True accepted an internship at the Bradley Farm in Lanesboro, Massachusetts to assist the farm staff and learn pre-employment skills. True met with his career counselor and coach at CIP to identify what was important for him to learn. He asked many questions and wasn't afraid to try new things.

During the first year of his internship, True worked two mornings a week performing a variety of tasks including seeding trays, planting seedlings, weeding, irrigation, weeding, propagation of succulents, feeding chickens, weeding, and collecting eggs. Although True completed these tasks sufficiently, he ultimately wanted to work in the farm's store located on the property. During the second semester of his internship, True was allocated time to work in the store doing inventory and learning to operate the cash register. After a couple of months, the owner made an agreement with True. If he could learn public transportation or get a vehicle, he would be hired full time to work in the store during the next season.

True set out to take the necessary steps to make his dream come true. He obtained his driver's license and his parents helped him purchase a car so he could drive to his job at the farm. True was

not originally from the Massachusetts area, and needed to learn the route with his career coach and practice a number of times with and without assistance to increase his confidence in driving. True traveled over thirty minutes in each direction to get to work. He always arrived on time to open the store in the early morning hours. On the first day of the new season, he was given an iPad and asked to put all of the store's products into categories, price them and put them on the store register. He was able to accomplish these tasks with minor assistance.

True was taught how to take credit card transactions and in one week, he was capable of handling all customer transactions. He was taught how to open and close the cash register and make daily deposits.

Areas where True received assistance:

- In order to help True with social interactions with customers, his employer put a sign in front of him at the register, reminding him to smile and talk to customers. He mastered this skill in a short period of time.\
- To keep busy during downtime, he was given a list of things he could do when there weren't any customers in the store. His tasks included watering plants, sweeping, organizing, trash, and making coffee.
- Although True was excellent at completing assignments that had clear instructions, he could become flustered if a situation arose that was not fully explained. To resolve this issue, he was given a list of phone numbers to text or call. This was helpful, since it's not possible to plan for every life situation.
- True needed to learn how to handle requests for time off and anticipate holidays when he may have to work. This was a learning process for him. True needed to learn that work commitments came before social activities. This was a challenge for him.

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True steadily improved his skill levels and completed the entire season with only minor problems. His self-esteem and confidence grew each day. With every challenge or setback, he learned to problem solve and grew in maturity.

After completing the season and dedicating his days to a full time position working both weekdays and weekends, True was able to procure a full-time job at an organic market in the local area. He chose to stay in the area and not to return to his hometown with his parents and siblings. He was ready to begin his adult life by living independently, working and become self-sufficient.

True is literally one of the many TRUE success stories of the CIP program. When he has free time, he visits with alumni, spends time at local libraries and coffee shops and volunteers at organizations. He is an excellent member of the community who contributes his skills, joy and kindness to the world. We are fortunate to have worked beside True through part of his wonderful journey of life.

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CIP ([College Internship Program](#)) is a national transition program for young adults with autism and learning differences, serving students at five locations nationwide.