

OPPORTUNITIES BUILD CONFIDENCE



Jessie Gonzales was referred to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program by DVR, after he was identified as a teen with significant barriers. Jessie was nearing his high school graduation and was excited for his future. Although unsure of his plans, he was eager to enter the workforce and ready to learn new skills.

His career coach discovered Jessie was anxious and intimidated about work due to his disability. He was not confident he would be able to complete required tasks and he was concerned about where he would fit in. Without a clear career path, conversations focused on various avenues to continue his education and learn new skill sets to aid in finding employment. Jessie thought he wanted to learn to become a welder or work in an office where he could meet different types of people. With his career coach, Jessie created an individual employment and training plan that would both allow him to be successful and bring valuable skills to an employer.

It was apparent that Jessie's smile was infectious, and his friendly demeanor would be an asset to any employer willing to hire him. Jessie was given a **work experience opportunity** with **Monarch Properties/Lovington Trails Apartments in Lovington**. Sharon Young, Jessie's immediate supervisor, was impressed by his enthusiasm to learn new skills and he quickly became an amazing asset to the business. Sharon is always very complimentary of Jessie and says she could not have picked a better work experience participant. Jessie's being bilingual in English and Spanish makes him an instrumental part of the team, Sharon adds.

His growth throughout his work experience gave Jessie the confidence he once lacked and boosted his employability skills. He has already learned how to complete leases and operate office machines, as well as do basic building maintenance and pool maintenance. He anticipates continuing his work with Lovington Trails through an **On-the-Job-Training** program, where he can expand on his skills and begin to **pursue a career in property management**. Jessie is an inspiration to everybody around him and does not let his disability stop him from doing what he loves.