

## AD ASTRA: TO THE STARS...AND BEYOND!

At age 19, Levi Heisinger is a full-time educator at Alamogordo's [New Mexico Museum of Space History](#). He works in the Space Theater, makes social media videos, and teaches students about the constellations both at the museum and at their schools.



Through the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) Pre-Employment Transition Services, Heisinger secured an internship at the museum. He impressed the bosses so much that when the internship ended, they created a position just for him—one which was recently extended for another six months.

“It brings my spirits up and lets me know there’s more to me than I initially thought,” Heisinger says. “I don’t have a lot of confidence. It made me believe in myself when they told me they wanted me back.”



The native of Indiana became interested in astronomy from his grandfather, “a major astronomy nerd,” according to Levi. “He started showing me the stars and pointed out constellations. It got me fascinated to the point where I studied it every single day and became obsessed.” Levi considers it a lucky coincidence that his father is from Alamogordo, and he ended up in a town with a space museum.

In addition to his work at the museum, Heisinger is in his second year at New Mexico State University-Alamogordo. NMDVR also helped Heisinger—who has been diagnosed with autism and ADHD—with funding his college education.

He’s already giving back to fellow New Mexicans with disabilities. One of his current projects is creating plates of all 88 major constellations for students at the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The stars are slightly raised so students can feel the outline of the star groups.

While enjoying teaching others, Heisinger also likes to learn—and his interests go beyond astronomy. “I want to get many fields of study in, so I have more opportunities,” he reasons. He studies languages and would like to work in a hospital. Eventually, he hopes to live in Vermont. “That place is perfect for astronomy when it comes to night sky conditions.”

If he has a regret, it’s not reaching out to NMDVR sooner. “I had a problem asking for help,” he recalls. “They made the first move. From there everything went smoothly.” So, he advises, “If there’s anything somebody might want to do for a career or future job, and they don’t know the process, DVR is the best place to go.”



For information about NMDVR programs, contact your nearest office. There are two dozen locations across the state: [dvr.state.nm.us/locations/](https://dvr.state.nm.us/locations/).

*The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps individuals with disabilities find suitable employment. Vocational rehabilitation is a voluntary program supporting people who want to work. With a long history of success and proven methodology for making the best fits, NMDVR is committed to helping participants thrive in their communities. For more information, visit [dvr.state.nm.us](https://dvr.state.nm.us) or call 505-954-8500.*

*The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2024, the total awarded is \$24,698,300. The remaining 21.3% is funded by state appropriations and transfers from the Commission for the Blind and Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.*

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