

Dante's 'On-the-Job' at RiteAid

"I really like my job. I love getting paid, and I have friends at the store!" says Dante Candelora, a stock clerk at a RiteAid store in Center City. "I work four days, and I have weekends off. Some days I bring my lunch, and sometimes I go out." Dante is supported by Community Integrated Services (CIS), a provider of employment supports, assisting people to reach their employment goals.

"Tuesday is truck day. I get the crates off the truck, and I stack the empty crates outside for pickup." In addition to these duties, Dante is responsible for many tasks at RiteAid. He stocks the cooler and rotates dated products. He operates the



One of Dante's jobs is to keep the cooler stocked.

"baler" that binds cardboard boxes for disposal and returns overstock items to inventory. He has performed functions in the photo development lab. Dante likes to provide excellent customer service. "I like to help people find the things they are looking for," says Dante.

Kelly Carroll, Employment Specialist Supervisor at CIS, noted that Dante celebrated his two-year anniversary at RiteAid in April. "Dante was referred to CIS by OVR (Office of Vocational Rehabilitation)," said Kelly. "OVR works with schools to make sure people who will benefit from

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transition services receive the information they need. OVR will provide funding for transition services for 90 days, including an assessment, job development, and on-the-job support." Because Dante was already registered with MRS (Consortium is his SCO), funding for continued employment supports was available through ongoing transition initiatives.

Dante's first job was with Kmart as a seasonal hire. Then, as that job was ending, CIS supported him to get his current job at RiteAid. "At first, Dante had support the entire time he was at the store," said Kelly. "Because he was becoming

responsible for a variety of tasks, he needed to learn various duties, and sometimes he would lose focus. However, with support, once Dante learned the details of the various tasks he was responsible for, and how those tasks fit into the operation of the entire store, maintaining focus is no longer an issue.” Now, Dante’s job coach checks in with him and the store manager for just a few minutes each week to see how he is doing.

Maurice Teal, RiteAid Assistant Manager, said, “Dante does his aisle well. He knows what to do, and there’s never any problems.” The Store Manager, Anthony Horton, said that Dante is always ready to help and always completes his assignments. “Dante fits in just like everybody else,” he said. “He’s dependable, never late, and never calls out. Just as important to me as the manager, Dante gives excellent customer service. He doesn’t stop until a customer finds what they need. Dante is smart ... a good reader. Sometimes, he reads words I have trouble with!”



RiteAid Assistant Manager Maurice Teal and Dante prepare to work on greeting card display.

Kelly noted that Dante has always been willing to work. “He wants to learn, he’s willing to do what is needed each day, and he is a team player,” she said. Dante is a member of an employees union, and receives paid vacation time. When asked what he likes to do when he’s not working, Dante said, “I like to relax at home and being on the computer. Also, I collect Jim Henson and Muppets items.” Dante mentioned he recently purchased a DVD of highlights of shows through the years.

“RiteAid really worked out well for Dante, and he really works well for them,” said Kelly. “They

agreed on a set schedule, without weekends, which was very important to Dante, but not always easy to accommodate in the retail industry. I know RiteAid is pleased to have Dante, a reliable and punctual employee, and they’ve been supportive in hiring many people with disabilities supported by CIS.” Dante lives in South Philadelphia with his parents and rides a SEPTA bus to and from work.

Successful employment stories, such as Dante’s, have many features in common, including:

- ❑ Supporting individuals and families to consider employment
 - ❑ Transition and the importance of planning ahead
 - ❑ Partnering with OVR and the School District
 - ❑ Focusing on individuals’ goals, strengths, and interests
 - ❑ Providing necessary supports
 - ❑ Partnering with employers
- Dante’s success story touches on many aspects of the message we’re sharing about the power

and benefits of employment for everyone. These efforts are the foundation for realizing successful community employment outcomes for all individuals, and success stories are the energy fueling the efforts of Vision for Employment 2010 – “We’re On the Job!”

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