

6-13-14

**To: Employment First stakeholders**

**From: Statewide Employment First Coordinator Mike Maley**

**Re: Employment First: Sam's Story**

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

A job changed Sam Branton's life.

A young man with high energy and a zest for life, Sam was involved in a car accident at the age of 16. He suffered traumatic brain injury as a result of that accident.



Sam Branton works at RideSource Lane Transit District.

(Photo: Lightflies)

Sam spent two years in a coma, and many years in therapy. A young man who previously enjoyed living on the wild side, Sam struggled to deal with his disability.

Before he got a job, Sam needed 24-hour behavioral supports. For the past three years, however, Sam has worked at his job at RideSource Lane Transit District and his

need for behavioral supports during the work day disappeared.

“He loves the guys he works with at RideSource,” said Liz Fox, executive director of Alternative Work Concepts. “He has a macho side so he just enjoys the work so much, hanging out, and getting to be one of the guys.”

Sam uses a wheelchair and is non-verbal, but he expresses himself freely, shaking his head when he is displeased and smiling broadly when he is happy. He does shredding of confidential paperwork for RideSource, using a special shredding machine supplied by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).



Sam Branton at work.

(Photo: Lightflies Photography)

Sam has decorated the shredder with his favorite stickers, including ones for Rockstar Energy Drink and the United States Army.

Sam currently works four days a week at RideSource. He enjoys a feisty friendship with his co-worker Peggy. The two enjoy teasing each other, with Sam expressing pleasure when Peggy jokes with him.

“He has a Behavioral Support Plan at home, but he doesn’t need one at work anymore,” Liz said. “Having this job has changed his life.”

Thank you all for your continued involvement, support, and advocacy for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon. If you have comments or other questions, please email them to [employment.first@state.or.us](mailto:employment.first@state.or.us).

~ Mike

- More photos from the Employment First’s recent trip to Eugene to visit with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at work can be found at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dhsoregon/sets/72157644056678210/>