

My name is Trevor Hawkins and I've been a developmentally disabled caregiver (DSP) for almost 11 years now. A bit about myself, I graduated high school in 2007 and went to work as an aerospace engineer as an apprentice under my father for QPM Aerospace in Gresham. While that job was quite difficult and paid very well, it lacked the rewarding feeling I craved. A friend's grandmother did respite care for a young boy. He was born with an array of conditions but that didn't stop him from having a great time. He would love to hear the sounds of games me and my friend would play. My idea was to hand him a controller so he could feel the rumble of the controller in his hand so he could feel the experience of the game with us. The young boy would ask "Are we getting bad guys, I hear all the noises and it sounds like we're winning". At that point that's what drew me into being a caregiver. That small action made his day; this child was blind, but because he could hear the sounds and feel the vibration, he was right in the game with us being a vocal teammate making sure he was doing his job to help.

My first job in caregiving was in Rainier, Oregon with 4 guys with varying levels of supports needed. A big thing for them all was movies and sports. The individuals loved Wrestling and college sports. The over the top personalities that came with professional wrestling became heroes to them. John Cena, The Rock, The Undertaker, Kane, etc. Every Monday and Thursday night, they got to see their heroes perform on TV. Thankfully the WWE came to Portland, Oregon and I got the pleasure of taking one of the individuals to go see the show. To say it was a life changing event for him is an understatement. The heroes on TV came to life. The villains on TV also got to be boo'ed and thumbs down pointed at them.

My current job is support 3 ladies with varying levels of supports needed. These 3 women have taught me as much as I've taught them. I've learned considerable amounts of patience and an entire new level of understanding. I consider myself a very lucky man to have found this job and to be around these women. I got to take one of the ladies I support to a concert at the Moda Center in Portland to see Hall and Oates 3 rows from the front row. It was all very overwhelming in the best of ways. The individual I was with got to toss up a beach ball that the crowd was bouncing around, sing some of her favorite songs and be around a group of strangers that was there for the same thing, the love of music.

One thing I've always tried to show anyone looking for a new job or a new experience would be my line of work. It's not conventional at all but I wouldn't have it any other way. One of the biggest factors in me being able to try to get someone to give this field a shot has been pay. I'm incredibly thankful at CAS to work beneath a wonderful amount of people who advocate on the behalf of their staff. But at the end of the day it's still not enough for some people. I know some in my line of work have to work a 2nd job to make it. I'd love to see pay become enough for those people so they can actually relax during a day off. Many of my past coworkers only left due to not making enough money here. I totally understand you have to do right by your family and your own personal means but it always saddened me because over my 6 years at CAS we've lost some really good workers who's only issue at all was pay. I work out of a Group Home in Scappoose, Oregon.

I work with what I believe to be some of the most genuine people that will grace this earth. Nothing would make me happier than to see everyone else thriving so they wouldn't need to work a 2nd job. Single moms being able to only need one job so they can spend more time with their families.

This line of work is my calling in this life. I hope these words find their way into your heart. Let these 2 stories of happiness show you that sometimes the little things in life make the world a better place.