

2014 Chet Perry Breakthrough Achiever Jennifer Glawe

When Jennifer Glawe was referred to Goodwill by Southwest Florida Works, the then 24-year-old had a limited employment history and was struggling to find a job because of a high unemployment rate and learning difficulties. Although Jennifer lives independently, she depends on public transportation, another barrier to her self-sufficiency.



In 2011, Jennifer began training with Jesi Cason, at the time a Goodwill occupational skills trainer, at a Goodwill Retail & Donation Center in Fort Myers. Jennifer learned some new retail skills at Goodwill, but both recognized that a different type of position would better meet Jennifer's needs.

"It just wasn't my type of work," says Jennifer.

"Because of Jennifer's transportation barriers, not every opportunity would work for her," explains Jesi. "Plus, no one had ever trusted her to find her own way of working. She needed the right supervisor who understood her needs and abilities."

That supervisor—and opportunity—came when Goodwill's janitorial/floor care manager Brad Ellena needed a day-shift custodian to work at Lynx Services in North Fort Myers. Jennifer would be the only custodian on the shift, working with limited supervision.

"At first, I wasn't sure how she would handle working independently, but she's done an incredible job," says Brad. "It's a 72,000 square foot facility, and she covers every bit of it."

It's been more than three years, and Jennifer still gets rave reviews for her work.

"Everyone in the call center adores her," says Karen McDaniel, facilities supervisor at Lynx. "She's always on task and quick to respond to everything. Really, she's a joy to work with."

"I like to stay busy, and it makes me happy to have a job," says Jennifer. "I can pay bills, be on my own, and be more responsible."

Jennifer's strong work ethic is further evidenced by her commute. She rides the bus nearly three hours round-trip to get to work, sometimes for just a four hour shift. But she has a plan for dealing with that long commute.

"Next, I want to get my license and get a car," she smiles. "That, and I'm trying to save up to get a house!"