



## Todd and Michelle's Story



Husband and wife, Todd and Michelle, both utilize Cascade Connections: Home Care services to find the best Home Care Professionals. Todd, a customer since 2015, and Michelle, a customer since 2016, have made many memories with their Home Care Professionals over the years, from exploring Whatcom County to finding the perfect gifts for each other.

Todd was born and raised in Bellingham, Washington. Although he has moved from place-to-place within the region, Todd has kept Bellingham his home for his entire life. Todd works for Development Disabilities Administration (DDA), where he answers the phone, completes administrative tasks, and helps keep the office organized. Todd also regularly volunteers at his church. He enjoys greeting, ushering, as well as, carrying the cross and bible during services. When asked, Todd's most important things include his wife, his job, and his church.

*What activities and tasks do you enjoy doing with your Cascade Connections Home Care Professionals?*

Todd: Going shopping with caregivers.



*What is one of the best experiences you have had with your Cascade Connections Home Care Professionals?*

Todd: Christmas shopping with caregivers. One of his best memories includes finding the perfect Christmas present for his wife, Michelle.

*What is one goal you have for the future?*

Todd: Explore career options and job opportunities as well as owning his own home.

*How do your Cascade Connections Home Care Professionals assist you in achieving your goals?*

Todd: Caregivers can help encourage Todd with his goals and support him by helping him get to the places he needs to go.

Michelle is fairly new to the Bellingham area. She was born in Mount Vernon, then lived in Kent and Sedro-Woolley before moving to Bellingham to live with her husband. Michelle works at Hardware Sales, where she completes a variety of tasks from sweeping and dusting to facing items.

When she isn't working, Michelle can be found at her church volunteering as an usher.

The three most important things in Michelle's life include her husband, her family and her dog, Bruce.

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*What activities and tasks do you enjoy doing with your Cascade Connections Home Care Professionals?*

Michelle: "Let's see.. I like cleaning my room, French braiding my hair, doing my nails, and karaoke!"

*What is one of the best experiences you have had with your Cascade Connections Home Care Professionals?*

Michelle: "Going to Lynden and Ferndale with

my respite person."

*What is one goal you have for the future?*

Michelle: "Go to Disneyland and to go to Friday Harbor for a week."

*How do your Cascade Connections Home Care Professionals assist you in achieving your goals?*

Michelle: "Because you (caregivers) help me stay on track and we work as a team and work together. We always make a list."

Cascade Connections appreciates Todd and Michelle's willingness to share their story. We are honored to provide services to such an amazing couple!

## Cascade Supported Living New Office Update

Cascade Supported Living (CSL) has moved its base of operations from Lynden to the Cascade Connections' administrative office in Ferndale. While change can be a little challenging at first, this is a positive move allowing us to serve our community better.

To better serve clients and support staff, CSL coordinators are moving into a "site manager" position, with all sites divided geographically between three managers. Each manager will now spend the majority of their time at their sites working directly with the staff they supervise and the clients they serve. When they're not on site in Lynden, they are in the new CSL space upstairs in

the Ferndale office. Janne Sleeper, CSL's Program Director, now has her office at the Ferndale location. We hope that these changes will help staff feel more supported and listened to by having managers on site and more closely connected with smaller groups of clients and staff.

We also hope that by having all residential departments based in the Ferndale office, we can increase teamwork and communication between each of the departments. Being in the same physical office space will help us connect and work together more effectively to further our mission.



### Thank You For Your Donation

**Donations from Businesses:** Expedia Group, Harbor Lands Company, Kroger, RPM

**Churches and Foundations:** AmazonSmile Foundation, Christ the King, Network for Good, Third CRC

**Memorial Donation for Harold W Mousel**



# Alcoa Foundation Grant



Cascade Connections received the great honor of becoming a recipient of an Alcoa Foundation Grant in 2018.

The Alcoa Foundation invests where Alcoa has a presence, partnering with communities

to address local needs in a sustainable manner. With their nonprofit partners, they contribute to environmental excellence, economic success, and social responsibility around the globe.

Cascade Connections sought funding to expand an interviewing skills workshop (ISW) program in Whatcom County. People with disabilities have historically been marginalized and excluded from meaningful participation in the community. Societal attitudes, segregated living, and limited educational opportunities created a world of isolation for many.

People with disabilities are no different than anyone else. Everyone wants to live a life where their hopes and dreams can be fulfilled. Employment opportunities allow people to be a part of their community, make friends, earn money and become a contributing tax payer. Although there is a shift to provide more opportunities, there continues to exist fewer employment opportunities for people with disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2017, 18.7 percent of persons with a disability were employed. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for those without a disability was 65 percent. People with disabilities want to be a part of the workforce. Work provides not only a paycheck, but self-worth, relationships, and a feeling of contributing to the world.

Cascade Connections had relied on support from individual donors to fund this program previously. The results of this workshop have helped support individuals with disabilities to gain confidence and the skills needed to find employment.

The interviewing skills workshop consists of a six-week course focusing on the interviewing process. This series of classes is designed to help the people

that attend to better compete with other applicants in the job market.

People attending these classes learn:

- How to answer common interview questions
- How to clearly communicate abilities, skills, and job experience
- What is appropriate to say and not to say during a job interview
- How to cope with stress
- How to increase self-image and self-confidence “from the inside out”
- Social skills, listening skills, appropriate language, and body language

Students are provided an opportunity to perform two mock interviews as a “dress rehearsal”. Local businesses volunteer their time to provide the interviews. Students are provided with life experience and immediate feedback from real employers.

By involving the community businesses in the interviewing classes we have seen the following outcomes:

- Employers meet applicants they may not have considered
- Employers develop personal relationships
- Employers involved set up job shadows and work experiences
- Exposure to people with disabilities builds networks of new applicants
- People with disabilities find employment in our community

Cascade Connections would like to thank Alcoa Foundation for their generous grant to expand this program. We would also like to thank the many community businesses who have participated in the Interviewing Skills Workshop mock interviews.



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Please visit us on the web at  
[cascadecconnections.org](http://cascadecconnections.org)  
to learn more.



### Fall 2018 Newsletter

Cascade Connections  
PO Box 3174  
Ferndale, WA 98248  
(360) 714-9355  
[cascadecconnections.org](http://cascadecconnections.org)

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## 4th Annual Hamster Ball



Haggen Food & Pharmacy and KISM 92.9 present The Fourth Annual Hamster Ball benefitting Cascade Connections. The Hamster Ball is an elegant and fabulous evening featuring an exciting silent auction, live music, culinary specialties brought to you by Haggen Market Street Catering, and a great selection of both wine and beer to be sampled throughout the evening. The event will be held on Friday, November 9, 2018 from 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm at The Bellingham Cruise Terminal.

Admission to the Hamster Ball is \$55/person and entitles you to all of the food, one drink ticket (with more drinks available to purchase at the event), evening festivities and a chance to win raffle prizes.

Tickets are available at: <https://events.cascadecconnections.org>

# EMPLOYER OF THE QUARTER

FALL 2018

CASCADE CONNECTIONS  
*opportunities for everyone*

VOCATIONAL



## Cascade Connections has selected Walmart as our Employer of the Quarter for Fall 2018.



Cascade Connections is pleased to announce that our Employer of the Quarter for Fall 2018 is the Walmart in Bellingham, WA.

Walmart has employed many participants of Cascade Connections' Vocational program over the years. Each of the applicants hired has had unique interests, skills, and abilities. Walmart has been able to work with Cascade Connections to assess each individual and find the position that would work best for them.

Recently, Walmart has hired three Cascade Connections applicants, including Tia. Tia has been working at Walmart since June 2018. She works in the apparel department, sorting clothes, straightening clothing, and handling go-backs. Tia has been highly appreciated by management because she is always working and she asks for additional tasks when she finishes the tasks she was doing.

When asked how she likes working at Walmart, Tia said "It's been great, I love it! I enjoy working with different clothing departments like young girls and boys and baby clothes. I also like working in shoes. Walmart has been great about scheduling me within my hours and the management is really nice too."



Kevin, who works in Human Resources at the Bellingham Walmart, said that he appreciates that Cascade Connections takes time to support applicants in finding jobs that will be a good fit, and filling out job applications.

When asked about how Cascade Connections participants such as Tia add value to the business, Kevin commented that Cascade Connections participants bring a lot of unique skills and benefits to the workforce. "They definitely broaden the horizons of people working within





Walmart. We've had numerous Cascade Connections participants in the past, and they've moved up. I've seen various people graduate to not needing a job coach because they're successful at their job. There's a lot of value in the business because it promotes diversity and equity."

Kevin says that he thinks other businesses should be open to trying supported employment. "Other businesses should give it a try. It has been very successful for us!"

Thank you to Walmart for your commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce. Together we are creating opportunities for everyone.

## THOSE THAT ARE DOING IT RIGHT!



Since 2005, Cascade has been selecting employers in our community who are doing it right by honoring them with what is known as the Employer of the Quarter. In order to be selected by our team as the employer of the quarter these employers have had to have made an impact on our mission. They have helped us to empower individuals with disabilities to enhance their quality of life by providing them the opportunity for meaningful employment.

What does it mean to do it right? It means these employers have been open to looking at their hiring practices a little differently. They have been willing to work with our employment consultants to create partnerships that will benefit their business and our applicants. Together we are changing the face of employment in our community.

Please join us in thanking all of the former recipients of the Employer of the Quarter in Whatcom County for helping us to provide Opportunities for Everyone.

***A Child's Life Learning Center  
Anvil Corporation  
Avamere Bellingham Healthcare  
BAAY  
Bellingham Pet Supply  
Cascade DAFO  
Costco  
Denny's  
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