

EMPLOYER OF THE QUARTER

SPRING 2023

CASCADE CONNECTIONS
opportunities for everyone
VOCATIONAL



Justesen Industries Inc. Wins Employer of the Quarter



Cascade Connections Vocational Services is pleased to announce Justesen Industries Inc. as our Employer of the Quarter for Spring 2023! This family-owned business opened its doors in 1981, just one year after Cascade Connections began serving individuals with disabilities in Whatcom County. Located in Blaine, Justesen Industries manufactures residential, commercial, and glass-door screen mesh products. They have earned our Employer of the Quarter award for their amazing support of Aaron, one of our Vocational Services customers, who has worked at Justesen since March of 2021. Aaron was very happy to find work just 15 minutes from his home, and his successful work performance and relationships at Justesen have boosted his confidence and his social life.

Kelly, the Cascade Connections Employment Consultant who supported Aaron in getting his job at Justesen, reports that Aaron's personal growth has been remarkable since starting this job. Before he started at Justesen, Aaron often seemed nervous about interacting with people, particularly those he did not know. Now, after two years of supportive interactions at Justesen, Aaron uses his break time to visit with each of his coworkers. He likes to talk with them about football and the other shared interests he has discovered as he has gotten to know them.

Aaron's coworkers have stepped up again and again to support Aaron as he learns his work tasks. When he was learning how to use a ringing tool, one of his coworkers welded the tool to a size that would better fit Aaron's hand. When Aaron was learning how to put pulls into the screens he was processing, his coworkers made him a jig (a device that holds the screen and guides the tools operating on it). This device helped Aaron to line up his product and get the pull placed in the right spot. As is the case with many accessibility-related innovations, the new jig worked so well that his coworkers began creating them for their own work stations as well. Excited to have learned this new production step, Aaron asked Kelly to let the Cascade Connections community know that he is developing some additional skills at work!



A close up of a jig Aaron's coworkers made for him.



Aaron absolutely loves his job – he's always early to work, and he almost runs in the door. Kelly enjoys seeing how happy Aaron's job makes him: "The smile on his face when he gets to work is so cool. He just beams." Aaron has a very strong work ethic, and when the whistle blows to signal the end of break time, Aaron announces loudly to everyone: "Alright, it's time to get back to work!" He is very precise about the difference between personal time and work time, which he sometimes calls "Wolfgang's time." Wolfgang, the owner of Justesen Industries, has commented on Aaron's exemplary



employee behavior: “He’s the quickest one to get back to work, he rarely misses days, and he doesn’t loaf around or get distracted when he’s at work. He sets an example.”

Kelly advocated for Justesen Industries to receive the Employer of the Quarter award because “they are so supportive, not just with the customer they hired, but with all of Cascade Connections. They’ve opened up their space for informational interviews and site visits, and Wolfgang has given tours to other customers of ours as well. His approach to supported employment says a lot about him and his business.”

Congratulations, Justesen Industries, for this well-deserved honor! We are grateful for your contributions towards a diverse and inclusive workforce in Whatcom County. Together, we are helping to create opportunities for everyone.

THOSE THAT ARE DOING IT RIGHT!

Since 2005, Cascade Connections has recognized local employers who are “doing it right” in their hiring of employees with disabilities. Employers who receive this recognition have contributed substantially to Cascade Connections’ mission. By offering meaningful employment, these local partners have helped us to empower individuals with disabilities to enhance their quality of life.

What does it mean to do it right? Our recognized employers have been open to looking at their hiring practices a little differently. In collaboration with our employment consultants, these employers have formed partnerships that benefit business and support our applicants. By working together, we have changed the face of employment in our community.

Please join us in thanking all of Whatcom County’s current and former employer recognition recipients for helping Cascade Connections to provide opportunities for everyone.

A Child’s Life Learning Center	Elenbaas Country Store	Safeway
Among Friends Adult Family Homes	Family Care Network	Samuel’s Furniture
Anvil Corporation	FastCap	Soy House
Avamere Bellingham Healthcare	Fred Meyer	Target
BAAY	Haggen Food & Pharmacy	The Seedlings Early Learning Center
Bellingham Pet Supply	Hannegan Home and Farm	Walmart
Burlington	Justesen Industries Inc.	Whatcom Transportation Authority
Cascade DAFO	Marlin’s Auto Service	WFC Country Store
Connections Speech Language Pathology	Marshalls	Woods Coffee
Costco	Millard Mall Services	
Denny’s	Northwest Health Care Linen	
Downtown Bellingham Partnership	Rusty Wagon	

Cascade Connections Vocational Services has been providing employment services throughout Whatcom County since 1992. We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce. Join us to create opportunities for everyone. For more information, contact us at **360-647-9087** or visit our website at: cascadecconnections.org/services/vocational-services