



## The Rome Bakery and Market is Selected as Employer of the Quarter for Spring 2025



You may have heard of Rome Bakery and Market, located on Mount Baker Highway. Known for over 100 years as the Rome Store, the Market has recently made the name switch to Rome Bakery and Market. The establishment has long been a pillar in the East Whatcom Community. It's more than just a corner store, the Market serves artisan pizza, delicious pastries, quality coffee and beer on tap, in addition to offering your typical grocery items. The Rome Bakery and Market is also notable because they have been selected as Cascade Connections' Employer of the Quarter for Spring of 2025. Congratulations Rome Bakery and Market!

The Rome Bakery and Market began collaborating with Cascade Connections in May of 2023 through a Work-Based Learning experience for Jacob, a local high school student enrolled in the Pre-Employment Transitions (Pre-ETS) Program. In August of 2023, the Rome Bakery and Market officially extended a job offer to Jacob, and for the last two years, Jacob has carved out a niche for himself at the store.

Jacob works on Tuesdays and reports his favorite part of his job is connecting with the customers. Andrea, the owner of Rome Bakery and Market, shares, "a fun piece that has evolved as Jacob has become more comfortable here is his enthusiasm for chatting with the customers." Jacob has a special interest in garbage collection, and often engages customers with questions about their garbage collection routine. His duties at the Market align with his interests and include washing dishes, taking out recycling and trash, and breaking down cardboard.

According to Andrea, working with Cascade Connections Vocational Services has been a great experience, "Collaborating with the coaches feels like we are all on the same team. They make it clear that yes, they are supporting their client but they're also here for us. They are incredibly well skilled in communication and it's truly a joy to work with them."

Rome Grocery prides itself on being a pillar in the community it serves. It's not unusual that you'll stop by and find them hosting a fundraiser for a local cause, whether for the local PTO or marching band. So, working with Cascade Connections Vocational Services also aligns with their values. "We value honesty, hard work, a positive attitude and the understanding that we're all just humans trying to do our best. Jacob aligns with every one of those pieces." Andrea goes on to say, "At first there was a feeling of giving Jacob an opportunity. But he has earned his position, does it well, and I'd love it if he could work everyday."





For Jacob, working at the Rome Bakery and Market has given him an opportunity to earn a paycheck. Especially meaningful to Jacob is that he receives a physical check for his wages and not direct deposit. Jacob likes to cash the check and see his earnings. But of course, a job is more than a paycheck. Thanks to his experience at the Rome Bakery and Market, Jacob has learned new skills, built friendships and community, and learned a little more about himself.

Andrea shared that, “The Rome Bakery and Market was built in 1915 and first served as a dance hall. Ten years later, it was rolled up Sand Road by horse and log, to its current location on the corner of Mount Baker Highway and Sand Road. Since then, the little store has changed hands, hired new help, and served the East Whatcom Community.” According to Andrea, the Rome Bakery and Market “draws the right people, and always has.” Cascade Connections is honored to be among those drawn to the market.

If you find yourself on Mount Baker Highway, be sure to make a stop at the Market, you can grab a slice of pizza or a pastry. And if it’s a Tuesday, you just might run into Jacob!

## 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  
Among Friends Adult Family Homes  
Anvil Corporation  
Avamere Bellingham Healthcare  
BAAY  
Blaine Ace Hardware  
Burlington  
Cascade DAFO  
CHS Northwest Bellingham Farm & Home  
Connections Speech Language Pathology  
Costco  
Denny’s  
Downtown Bellingham Partnership

Elenbaas Country Store  
Family Care Network  
FastCap  
FitEvo  
Fred Meyer  
Haggen  
Hannegan Home and Farm  
Justesen Industries Inc.  
Marlin’s Auto Service  
Marshalls  
Millard Mall Services  
Northwest Health Care Linen  
Park Bowl

Pickford Film Center  
Red’s Aquarium & Pet Supply  
Rome Bakery and Market  
Rusty Wagon  
Safeway (Lynden)  
Samuel’s Furniture  
Soy House  
Target  
The Seedlings Early Learning Center  
Walmart  
Whatcom Transportation Authority  
Woods Coffee