

**CASCADE CONNECTIONS**  
*opportunities for everyone*  
**TRAINING**

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RUSSELL’S STORY



Russell arrived in Bellingham on a February afternoon in 2013 with a bag, cell phone and laptop. He had no job, little money, no place to live and nothing but his hope and optimism. When remembering this time, Russell says, “I came to Bellingham and found out I couldn’t stay at my girlfriend’s house. I went to the shelter the next day and stayed there for a while.” The homeless shelter helped Russell make a plan, get connected with medical and housing services and eventually, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Russell’s Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor contracted with Cascade Connections in October 2013 to provide Independent Living Services for Russell. From the start, Russell was very proactive in participating in services, always on time or early, following up when asked, and working hard on whatever projects were at hand. In November 2013, Cascade Connections helped Russell procure a job at Soy House and was on hand to help him learn and maintain a dishwashing job. Since Russell had to walk home from work late at night, his job coach helped him purchase a bicycle. Russell now enjoys the freedom of riding it all over Bellingham. Russell remembers that, “Lan was my coach until I got a job at Soy House. Then Joe became my job coach. He comes and sees me once a week on Thursday and talks to me and my employer. Now I get to wear gloves and white T-shirts and all.”

Cascade Connections also helped Russell obtain his own housing last summer. With a job, a home, furniture,

friends, and a bicycle, Russell truly had a home! To help him in keeping his new home, Russell became a client of CC’s Home Care program. Now a client of two programs with Cascade Connections – Vocational and Home Care – Russell has flourished with the support he receives at home and at work.

With two Home Care Aides, Russell says that some of his favorite things about having them come are that “Cascade caregivers take me to places”, and “I like cooking lasagna with my caregiver”. Cascade Connections’ care aides help Russell with problem solving, medical issues, going to appointments, meal planning and preparation, and so much more. Care aides enjoy working with Russell as much as he enjoys working with them. Russell shared, “There are many people like me. They should work with Cascade.” We couldn’t agree more with Russell!

Russell’s success would not have been possible without your prayers and your generous financial support. By partnering with us you help us provide the needed supports and training to help people like Russell develop their gifts and talents so that they can live independently and thrive in their community.

Autism continued...

The consensus among mainstream autism researchers is that genetic factors predominate. Environmental factors that have been claimed to contribute to autism or exacerbate its symptoms (or that may be important to consider in future research), include certain foods, infectious disease, heavy metals, solvents, diesel exhaust, PCBs, phthalates and phenols used in plastic products, pesticides, brominated flame retardants, alcohol, smoking, illicit drugs and vaccines. Vaccines have attracted much attention, as parents may first become aware of autistic symptoms in their child around the time of a routine vaccination. Parental concern about vaccines has led to a decrease in childhood immunizations and an increasing likelihood of measles outbreaks. However, scientific evidence has not shown a causal relationship between the Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism, or that the vaccine preservative thimerosal contributes to the likelihood of autism.

In our culture the Autism Spectrum Disorder is often thought of as a childhood condition. Focus is placed on children and the importance of early detection and intervention. However, autism is a lifelong condition. Because people change as they move through the different

phases of life, appropriate treatments and support change as well. Because each person is a unique individual affected in a unique way, our goal is to provide programs and support across a person’s entire lifespan. Quality of life depends not only on a good foundation provided in childhood, but also on ongoing support tailored to an individual’s educational, medical, social, recreational, family and employment needs.

- 1.Buescher et al, 2014
- 2.www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/symptoms

For a perspective on what it feels like to have this disorder, check out the following YouTube videos:

<https://youtu.be/ZfzqBCC3oas>  
<https://youtu.be/vNZVV4Ciccg>

CASCADE CONNECTIONS  
UNVEILS NEW LOGO, BRAND  
AND VISION

Cascade Connections unveiled their new logo, brand and vision at two ribbon-cutting ceremonies in Bellingham and Ferndale. Cascade Connections’ Ferndale office ribbon cutting ceremony, held on March 12, was sponsored by the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce. Cascade Connections’ Bellingham of- fice ribbon cutting was sponsored by the Bellingham/ Whatcom Chamber and Commerce, and held on March 24. Chamber members, government officials, community supporters, agency staff and friends cel- ebrated these events with beer sponsored by Bound- ary Bay Brewery and sampled delicious food. Two lucky attendees won Seattle Seahawks Jerseys, while others won gift certificates and all received a com- memorative mug. Thanks to all the people who made these events a success.

