



ANDREW'S STORY

Andrew is a 21 year old man who lives at home with his parents, Kateri and Steve and his brother Keo. In 2011, Andrew started receiving services from Cascade Connections Home Care when his mother was told about our services through the state.

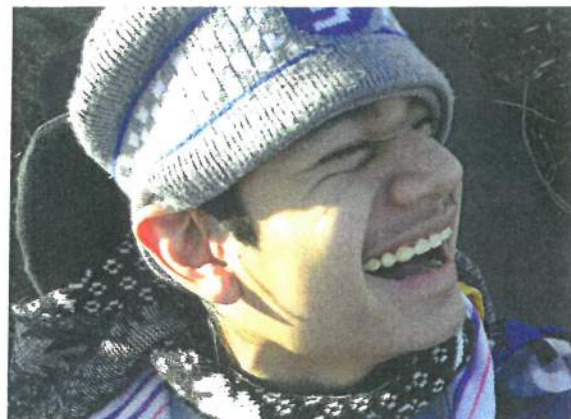
Andrew was born in Brownwood, Texas and lived there for the first three years of his life. He moved around quite a bit during his childhood, living in Hawaii, Iowa and Illinois before his family decided to call Bellingham home in August of 1996.

Andrew's aunt was the one who inspired his mother, Kateri, to move here when she said "Bellingham is the best place to raise a family." Andrew started at Carl Cozier Elementary then went to Shuksan Middle School. When he started high school he went to Sehome High School first, and then, moved to Bellingham High School where he graduated from the Life Skills program in 2014. Now that he is done with school, Andrew enjoys spending time at home with his family. Andrew spends time with Home Care Aides most days of the week. His mom describes him as really laid back and easy to be with. His Care Aides spend a lot of time listening to music with him and reading to him. When Andrew really enjoys something he is hearing, he will let his Care Aides know by smiling, laughing and exclaiming loudly. He enjoys most types of music and especially enjoys Hawaiian, classical, country and heavy metal.

Andrew also enjoys watching television, especially comedy and cartoons, but he responds even more positively to reading. When his Care Aides read him books he almost always has a smile on his face. If he doesn't like what they are reading he has been known to scowl, which they take as a sign to pick a different book.

When the sun is shining, Andrew and his Care Aides have been known to take a walk on the local trails or sit in the backyard and enjoy the breeze. Andrew really enjoys going on long walks, especially the bumpy trails! Sometimes they just appreciate the peace and quiet and sometimes they read together.

Kateri says there have been many moments that have been special with his Care Aides and specific scenarios really stand out. One occasion was when Andrew really needed a haircut. His care aide accompanied him to the hair dresser with Steve. Both Steve and Andrew received haircuts and the care aide helped Andrew during



the activity. Afterward, Andrew was in a smiley mood and looked great! His care aide made the process easier by supporting him and communicating with the hair dresser.

Another occasion was a summer camping trip. Andrew's Care Aide met Andrew and his family at Larrabee State Park for their scheduled shift. His Care Aide being willing to meet them at the campground which allowed Andrew's parents to have some time alone knowing Andrew was in good hands having fun and hanging out with someone he had a great relationship with.

On Sunday evenings when Andrew's Care
Story continues on Page 2

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Andrew's Story Continued...

Aides leave for the day, Andrew and his family enjoy having Luau's in the backyard and spending time together. When Andrew hears the voices of his family members as they enter the house for the get together he gets a huge smile on his face. It is clear that family plays a very important role in Andrew's life!



We asked Kateri what she would share with another parent who was considering working with Cascade Connections Home Care. Her response was "It's a wonderful group of caring people who really do care about my son, Andrew. I'm grateful for all our care aides. Our care aides have helped in so many ways. I'm so thankful."

We are so grateful that Kateri took the time to share her son's story with us. It is a gift to be able to spend time with Andrew and Cascade Connections Home Care has greatly enjoyed getting to know him and watching him grow up over the past five years. We look forward to the experiences we will get to be a part of over the next many years.

For over 35 years Cascade Connections has been empowering people with all types of disabilities in Whatcom County. Your prayers and financial support are needed now to help us provide residential and vocational services to people like Andrew. Please consider making a donation this holiday season and help make a life changing difference in someone's life!

The Inaugural The Hamster's Ball Raises Awareness to Empower People with Disabilities in Whatcom County

200 attendees had a ball at the inaugural the hamster's Ball on Friday, November 6 with event proceeds benefiting Cascade Connections. This was the first event that the agency sponsored under the agencies new name.

The Bellingham Cruise Terminal provided the perfect backdrop and atmosphere for this fabulous evening of wine, beer, and culinary specialties. Event partners who donated their products and services included: Aslan Brewery, Boundary Bay Brewery, Chuckanut Brewery, Dickerson Distributing, Unique Wine Company, Bayou on Bay, Casa Que Pasa, Rock and Rye, Hilltop Catering/Windows on the Bay, Haggen Catering, Cakes by Emily, Shari's Restaurant, Albertsons and Wood's Coffee.



Many attendees had a blast dancing to GMB Entertainment and Gary Berg who spun the music. Fun was had at Oh Snap! Photo booth and Jennifer Bonstein Photography captured the evening in photographs. *Story continues on Page 3*



EMPLOYER OF THE QUARTER WINTER 2015

CASCADE CONNECTIONS
opportunities for everyone
VOCATIONAL



Avamere Bellingham Healthcare is Creating Opportunities for Everyone

Cascade Connections has the opportunity to work with many employers throughout Whatcom County. It is our pleasure to meet new people, learn about industries and promote opportunities for everyone within our community. Each quarter we honor one employer who has gone above and beyond to assist in our mission to empower individuals with disabilities to enhance their quality of life.

This quarter it is our distinct honor to recognize Avamere Bellingham Healthcare. Cascade Connections first began working with Avamere in 2011. At that time we were able to learn more about their mission, their values, as well as their hiring needs. Avamere's mission is to enhance the life of every person they serve. Their core values include:

- Integrity above all else
- Passion for the quality of people's lives
- Quality that is obvious
- Innovation, not emulation
- A culture of trust and respect
- Reaching to learn, grow and embrace change
- Teamwork, camaraderie and fun!



Meghla setting up for
Bingo with the residents

Our Employment Specialist, Chris Notaras, knew right away she had some applicants that met both the skills and abilities required for the job, but more importantly had applicants who had the right values for this company.

Avamere staff have been open to performing informational interviews with people to help them to understand a little more about what it is like to work in a skilled nursing facility, what skills they are looking for in applicants and what different types of positions may be available. Avamere staff have performed many informational interviews and hired more than six people through Cascade Connections services.

One of the people hired is Meghla. Meghla obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Human Services from Western Washington University. After working with Cascade Connections to set up a volunteer opportunity at Avamere she was hired as an activities assistant. She is able to assist with activities with the residents including Bingo. Meghla says that she enjoys the interaction with the residents and her job is never mundane, "I enjoy getting to know all the residents at Avamere. I love working there!" Meghla, who experiences cerebral palsy, worked with Cascade to help her find a job which met her strengths and abilities. "Cascade Connections helped connect me with a position that I ordinarily wouldn't have found on my own."



Rita has worked as a dietary aide at Avamere for more than a year. Rita came to Cascade with previous caregiving experience. She knew that the long hours of caregiving work would no longer match her abilities, but she still wanted to work. Cascade helped Rita match up with a part-time position in the kitchen at Avamere. Rita states that the short shifts are perfect for her and she really enjoys working with the residents.

Bonnie Karb, Avamere Activities Director, indicated she was looking for caring people who were interested in becoming activity assistants. Cascade was able to connect Avamere with Meghla and another applicant, both were hired. Bonnie indicated both of the individuals were very flexible with their availability which made it very easy for scheduling. Cascade Connections staff was able to assist with orientation and supports until the employees were comfortable in their positions. When asked what advice she would give to other employers who might be interested in supported employment she said, "Try it, it's a great experience for both the employee and the employer. You'll get some great employees with lots of support."

Ken Cadman, the Nutritional Service Manager has also worked with Cascade Connections to connect him with qualified applicants. He said, "At first I was not sure how well it would work, but with the support offered through CC it has been a very easy and smooth process." Cascade Connections staffs were able to learn about the organization, the different departments and their potential hiring needs. When we feel we have a qualified applicant we contact the department manager to let them know we might have a good fit for them. Ken feels this is a great opportunity to help people to gain some confidence in the workforce. He stated, "This has been a good experience and I would recommend working with Cascade Connections."

Congratulations to the Executive Director Daniel Waddell and all of the Avamere Bellingham team of employees on being selected as Cascade Connections Employer of the Quarter.



Barron and Company designed the event posters and the evening would not have been made possible without the many table sponsors and individual donors.

Paul Oleniacz thanked event sponsors while George Beanblossom thanked guests, spoke about the mission, and introduced a heart-warming video about Cascade

Connections. Five lucky attendees walked away with spectacular prize packages of wine, beer, chocolates and other items and one winner walked away with a gift basket provided by The Real McCoy.

A big thanks to Cascade Connections volunteers: Tamlyn Munson, Ashlie Quintanilla, Dora Lee Snavelly, Janne

Sleeper, Mary Nestle-Kline from Supported Living; April Zylstra from Residential, Allison Hill from Training, Lan Totten, Julie Stockton, Larissa Garcia Halbert (intern), Molly Thompson, Carrie Carron, Joe Pruitt, and Kristin Nguyen from Vocational and her friends Kori Olsen, and Amanda Scott.

We are grateful for the generous support of our community and were amazed at the number of people who came out to support our organization and raise funds. More importantly we were able share a little more about our mission: To empower people with disabilities to enhance their quality of life.

The Hamster's Ball

BENEFITTING
CASCADE CONNECTIONS

Thanks to all the sponsors and attendees for making the inaugural "The Hamster's Ball" a fabulous evening of **WINE, BEER, and CULINARY SPECIALTIES**, a great success!

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Also, mark your calendars for the first **Hamster Crawl** to be held on Saturday, May 21st, 2016 in Downtown Bellingham.

CASCADE CONNECTIONS
opportunities for everyone



Visit cascadeconnections.org or call 360-714-9355 for more information on the 2016 Hamster Crawl



SATURDAY MAY 21, 2016
CASCADECONNECTIONS.ORG

Winter 2015 Newsletter

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We would like to thank the following people, businesses, churches and civic groups that have partnered with us and make a difference in the lives of the people that we support:

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