

Inspiring Lives

24 year old Hannah Richey is an individual served by MORC with a truly inspiring story. Diagnosed with Autism around the age of three, Hannah has always viewed her Autism as a gift rather than as a barrier. She has embraced the unique qualities it brings to her life in helping her achieve her goals.

Several years ago, Hannah began volunteering at her local library with support from her CLS staff. She took to the role so well that eventually, the library said that Hannah could volunteer on her own, without her CLS supports. Over time, Hannah was able to demonstrate her skills and was hired for a paid position with the library. Hannah has worked on average 20 hours per week over the past two years, depending on her very busy social schedule. Since she started working there, her responsibilities have increased and her co-workers and supervisors have expressed how happy they are with her as an employee. Hannah has been working with natural supports at the library for the past 2 years. Working there has really helped Hannah open up her communication skills with community members and increase her self-confidence.

Hannah has also been attending the Art Experience in Pontiac for a number of years. Hannah struggles with anxiety and began going to the Art Experience to have an outlet for reducing her anxiety. Since attending, she has increased both her art skills and her confidence. Eventually, Hannah utilized her art skills to start a small business called Hannah Joy Spectrum Designs. Hannah has attended art Shows, craft shows, started a Facebook Page to host online events and sales, communicated with customers, managed her inventory and costs/income, and has an area of products she sells at a local store called Yellow Dog Marketplace. Her hobby has expanded into a business that provides her with income each month. She has built connections with others over social media and has begun selling her products to people out of state as well. This experience has provided Hannah with many independent living skills, as well as increased her confidence and connection to others in her community.

Recently, Click on Detroit found some of Hannah's artwork on Instagram and reached out to her for an interview. Hannah was featured on Click on Detroit's Autism Awareness segment in April. Her story can be seen here and it is a great piece! <https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/local/2021/04/02/clarkston-woman-says-her-autism-is-a-gift-shares-atwork-with-the-world/>

Prior to her time at the Art Experience and working at the library, Hannah was experiencing quite a bit of anxiety and worry. With support from a loving family, her MORC Support Coordinator Aaron Winston, and a great CLS support staff, Hannah was able to gain skills to address her anxiety, and to greatly increase her independence in her home and community.

You can see Hannah's work by searching for Hannah Joy Spectrum Designs on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube.

