

Employer Award - 2006

Starbucks of Tifton and Valdosta

1204 US Highway 82 W
Tifton, GA 31793-8031

Manager: Ms. Megan Rousey

1305 N. St. Augustine Rd.
Valdosta, GA 31601-3535

Manager: Ms. Pat Faulk

Nominated by: Dru Fentem, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for Transition
Presented by: Georgia's Statewide Transition Steering Committee

Starbucks has created a culture of diversity that honors individuality, and managers of the Starbucks stores in Tifton and Valdosta, Ms. Megan Rousey in Tifton and Ms. Pat Faulk in Valdosta, go the extra mile to provide work opportunities in their stores for students with disabilities. Both managers are very involved with their local Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, and they not only place students with disabilities in jobs, they also mentor them.

Two examples demonstrate how closely and carefully they attend to the needs of their student hires, accommodate their needs, yet keep busy stores running and caffeine-craving customers happy.

Ms. Rousey hired a Tift County High School student who had a severe auditory processing disorder. Accommodations were made on each shift so the student's duties flowed naturally and smoothly, and no other employee felt "put upon." In addition, the accommodations were implemented so quietly and naturally, there was no embarrassing attention directed at the student. In fact, those accommodations were so smooth and the student so successful on the job that although he has now gone to college, his job is held for him whenever he comes home for long weekends or vacations. What a manager!

In Valdosta, Ms. Faulk employs a student with severe Attention Deficit Disorder, and the student recently made the choice to discontinue her medication. Naturally, such a decision affects many aspects of a small store where several employees are behind the counter at one time – with who knows how many on-the-go customers in front of the counter, wanting coffee NOW. Ms. Faulk has worked to ensure this student's success by scheduling her for shifts of no more than 6 hours at a time, during the time of day when she is most productive, and when she can work with a seasoned shift crew. Ms. Faulk has not only arranged accommodations for an employee with a disability, she has shown profound respect for that employee's right to make decisions about the management of her disability. What a manager!

Beyond employing individual students, the Tifton and Valdosta Starbucks stores became the corporate sponsors of the Georgia High School/High Tech Youth Leadership Forum/College Preparatory Experience. Both managers Faulk and Rousey gave up a weekend to attend the program and talk to students about leadership, goal setting, positive thinking, and looking past your disability.

In addition, both stores and their managers supported a project called ***Dare to Soar***. This is a transition project designed to help students make informed post-secondary choices. They gave it their time, enthusiasm, and money! Pat Faulk and Megan Rousey continually support students in their stores and, through positive examples, are teaching their other employees to honor diversity. They demonstrate their whole-hearted commitment to the motto that “Every Partner Has a Story” by valuing the story and dream of each transitioning student. For their demonstrated initiative in establishing partnerships and employment opportunities that facilitate the employment and successful transition of students with disabilities – with our deep appreciation – we present these Employer Awards to the Starbucks Stores of Tifton and Valdosta and to their managers, Megan Rousey and Pat Faulk.