

DraftHouse Bar and Restaurant

By Carrie Kotlowski and Denis Collins, Edgewood College

Many times people overlook some of the “good” that businesses, particularly bars and restaurants, do for their local communities.

Autism is a developmental disability that results from a central nervous system disorder, limiting the person’s communication abilities and social interactions. Individuals can be classified as low to high on the autism spectrum. Many people with autism are excluded from the job market. That’s why offering a job to someone with autism is just as important as providing financial contributions to the autism community.

There are many basic job tasks businesses have that would be very rewarding for some individuals with autism, such as stacking shelves, rolling silverware, busing tables, greeting, and handing things out.

The DraftHouse Bar and Restaurant in Verona, Wisconsin is one of those businesses willing to provide job opportunities for people with autism. DraftHouse, a bar within a restaurant, was established by Mike Franklin about two years ago. DraftHouse currently employs, Nick, who has autism.

Mark Franklin, one of the owners, was contacted by the Verona Area School District to see if he was interested in having Nick as part of his team. According to Mark, “Having Nick on our staff is a huge asset to our restaurant’s operation. We all know Nick and enjoy the qualities he brings to work each day he’s with us.”

Nick has worked at DraftHouse for two years. Mark provides Nick opportunities to work independently. Nick’s job tasks include clocking in on the computer, filling soda, rolling silverware, and wiping tables.

Though it might be challenging for one business to do the many things needed by the autism community, every business can help a little by following the DraftHouse win-win model.

For these reasons, DraftHouse Bar and Restaurant is among the Madison area businesses being recognized with the 2007 Good Samaritan Award offered by Edgewood College and the Samaritan Counseling Center.

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