

# MOMENTUM

The Newsletter written by residents who are Moving Forward

March 2019

## “Success Spotlight”

Moving Forward’s residents have many vocational success stories. Each of our residents work hard to learn job skills, volunteer, gain work experience, become job ready, and gain competitive employment. This month, ‘Momentum’ is shining a spotlight on one of our very hard working and successful residents:

**Alison K. is the ‘Momentum’ employee of the month!**

*Here is Alison’s “success story” in her own words:*



Alison

I started my job at the Meritage Hotel on July 17, 2006. I started out working in the lobby, but later moved into the laundry room. Moving Forward helped me learn job skills, prepare for my job interview, and helped me to get this job.

Now, I am a laundry attendant. I wash laundry, separate items, iron, and fold. There is always something to work on in the laundry room. I like that my job is full of work. It keeps me busy. I enjoy my coworkers and the laundry is a great environment to work in. ‘

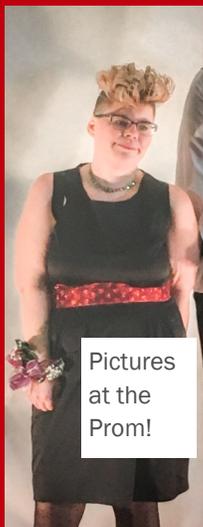
Having a job is great because I can pay for things independently with the money that I make. It is also good for making more friends. I can’t believe I have been at my job for almost 13 years! It is amazing. I am proud of this accomplishment.

If I could give advice to someone to help them be successful at their job for many years, I would tell them to find something that interests them. I would tell them to do their best to work hard, be a cheerful and helpful worker, and to show a willingness to learn. Also, I would tell them to get to know their coworkers and to befriend them. Treat your coworkers as your family so that it is nice to go to work every day!

## “A Night To Remember”

In early 2019, a large dance was held at Justin Siena High School. Those in attendance were students from Napa and the surrounding areas, and the Napa Disability Community. The “Better Together Prom” turned into a huge success and was a truly spectacular night for those that attended. Live music, dancing, a red carpet, food, drinks, a photo booth, and corsages and tiaras for all were some of the highlights of the evening. Below are some pictures of our Moving forward residents preparing for the evening and enjoying the dance:

Resident reactions:



Pictures at the Prom!



Fun with friends!

**Colin:** Jillian, the Moving Forward staff, helped me pick up my tux that was donated by Men’s Warehouse. Two beautiful ladies walked me down the red carpet! I had a great time dancing with the ladies I met at the dance!

**Jill:** Sharon, the Moving Forward staff, helped me get ready for the dance. Wonderbread 5 played at the prom! I liked the food and dancing with my friends! Nice boys walked me down the red carpet and I had a great time at the prom!



Tux time!



Ready for the big night!!!

Thank you to Erica Conway and her committee (including Moving Forward’s Barbara Montaldo) for putting this event together!!!

# “World Down Syndrome Day - Luncheon and Fashion Show” - by: Ellen S.

On the 23rd of March, an event was held at Crosswalk Community Church in Napa to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day with a luncheon and fashion show. I participated in the event last year and really enjoyed it. This year I was a part of the event committee that planned the luncheon. It was also an honor to give the welcome speech at the luncheon. Here is my speech:

“It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.”

-Albus Dumbledore

Hi, my name is Ellen. I am an independent young adult with Down syndrome. What I have learned about living with a disability is a new level of confidence in myself; the confidence to live on my own and find my place in the world.

As we unite together to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, let’s gain awareness of how proud we are to be different. We will prove to the world the beauty that we have on the inside is what matters.

Today, as we enjoy the luncheon to follow, we will be hosting a fashion show. Our models vary in age and stand before you today as children and young adults living with Down Syndrome.

## We had a great event. I want to thank the following sponsors and individuals:

ParentsCAN, Moving Forward Towards Independence, Crosswalk Community Church, Justin Siena High School, Congressman Mike Thompson, The members of the Down Syndrome Support Group, and our event committee: Margarita Contreras, Erica Conway, Barbara Montaldo and Lynette Stagner. Thanks to them we had a beautiful day.

Also, thank you to Liz and Sharon, Moving Forward staff, and two volunteers from Amplify Salon (Alex Luna and Marie Wilhem) who helped our models with their hair and makeup before the fashion show!

## We had a great fashion show. Here are the Moving Forward fashion models:

**Ellen:** On the fashion runway



Ellen serves on the North Bay Regional Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities. She created a mentor program at Napa Valley PSI, spoke at the Mayor’s breakfast and has appeared on the Arty Party Show.

“I decided to walk the runway for cancer patients and cancer survivors. I wanted to let people know that even people with Down Syndrome can fight and become cancer survivors.

I had a great time and I thank my friends for helping me pick my outfit for the fashion show.”



**Jill:** Bronze medal for basketball!

Jill is very active in the community through Special Olympics and has won a variety of medals, including gold. Jill recently was awarded a bronze medal at the basketball tournament.

“I decided to become a model to let other people with disabilities know that they too can walk in a fashion show. It was my first time participating at the event and I felt very excited about it!”



**Chris:** Active in the community! Great advocate!

Chris is very active in the community. He is a mentor advocate for people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities.

“I chose to participate in the fashion show because my life is built around advocating for public policies to help people with disabilities be more accepted and to have inclusion in schools and the workplace.”



The newsletter, **MOMENTUM**, is written and created by the residents of Moving Forward Towards Independence.

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More information about Moving Forward Towards Independence can be found on our website:

[moving-forward.org](http://moving-forward.org)