Outstanding Success: Ben Thrives in Competitive Employment at Tannerite

Ben wakes every morning with a booming smile, eager to get to work. Having a job isn't just part of his routine — it's part of his identity. He takes pride in earning a paycheck, depositing money into his bank account, and paying his share of the bills so he can continue living independently in a house with roommates. Even on weekends, Ben tells his mom he can't wait for Monday to arrive so he can return to work.



Ben at work on the Tannerite production floor.

Ben works at Tannerite, a nationally known maker of binary reactive targets used in shooting sports. Located in a small town outside of Eugene, Ben is proud to be part of a team whose products are known nationwide. Ben plays an important role on the fast-paced production team. Among his many responsibilities, Ben operates machinery, assembles boxes, packs boxes for shipment, and stacks boxes onto pallets that are then distributed to sporting goods retailers such as Cabela's.

"I love my job," says Ben. "I like physical labor and I am a hard worker. I also care about Tannerite and want the company to succeed."

His supervisors describe him as dependable, motivated, and team-oriented. Ben thrives on the physical nature of the work and the clear expectations of the production floor. He values being part of something bigger than himself and contributing to a product that reaches customers across the country.

Living in a rural community and navigating life with autism did not deter Ben from pursuing competitive, integrated employment. With determination — and the right supports — he achieved his goal. After his mother learned of an opportunity at Tannerite through a connection with the company's owner, Ben was able to explore employment with the support of a job coach.

The Arc Lane County provides job coaching support, ensuring Ben has the tools he needs to succeed. While Ben excels at hands-on tasks, he finds numbers and math challenging. His job coach offers assistance when needed, helping him double-check counts and navigate tasks involving calculations. Beyond technical support, the job coach has also helped Ben strengthen his professional communication skills, including learning how to resolve workplace conflicts respectfully and effectively.

Today, Ben is not just employed — he is thriving. His story is a powerful example of what is possible when high expectations, community partnerships, and individualized supports come together. Ben's success demonstrates that individuals with disabilities can and do make meaningful contributions to their workplaces and communities. Most importantly, Ben's pride in his work and his excitement for each new week are reminders that employment is about more than a paycheck — it's about purpose, belonging, and independence.