In 1997, after an infamous ice storm downed acres of trees, four friends started Windfall Lumber to mill the downed timber into lumber for people across the region. In the ensuing 20 years the company has grown and continues to making beautiful, sustainably-sourced products. Windfall Lumber wood products can be seen at restaurants, pubs, and the lobbies of corporate offices across America. This ecologically sound company has also been named Outstanding Employer by Morningside. Caring for people is as critical as caring for the environment and making use of motivated individuals such as Bill Murphy is sound business practice for this innovative company. Bill is a janitor at Windfall. He cleans the sales office and other offices in company headquarters in Tumwater. In addition, he cleans restrooms, the break room and takes out the trash and recycling in the warehouse.

Windfall Lumber, like so many businesses that employ clients supported by Morningside, makes accommodations in work schedule due to transportation which is the most frequent challenge faced by individuals with disabilities in the communities where we serve. The other employees not only support Bill but are always sure he is integrated fully into the team. They even ensure the dates of company functions are set so Bill can attend. Through the course of Bill’s seven years on the job he has made many friends that he enjoys working with and is thrilled to see them in the community to say hi and chat. Isn’t that what work is all about? Being included, productive and sharing life with co-workers. It all happens for Bill at Windfall Lumber!

Many workers will never reach this major milestone in their work life, but this month Bruce Carr celebrates his 20th Anniversary with Olive Garden! In 1997 Bruce was working in our sheltered workshop when he was hired by Olive Garden and he’s still there! (The sheltered workshop was closed in 2004 so everyone can have their own job in their community.) In an industry that often experiences high turnover Bruce’s tenure is quite unusual. But that may be because the Olympia Olive Garden Team is so great to work with that they were awarded a 2004 Outstanding Employer award for positive co-worker support!

Way to go Bruce! Congratulations on your determination and dedication (and happy birthday as well)!
Transitioning to Adulthood….

Joshua graduates this June after participating in the Yelm Transition program (SITE House) in his final year. In 2016 Joshua met Morningside when he joined the Summer Youth Internship program, an 8 week grant-funded program that included Uplift! a soft skill class and a 55 hour internship at the ESD 113 Bus Barn. Rather than just a passive participant, Joshua jumped in headfirst and became really involved in the Uplift! program. He was always willing to participate in the group discussions and had great insight to offer. During his 55 hour internship, Joshua helped ESD 113 and the Olympia School District get school buses ready for the new school year by detailing and washing them. His colleagues remarked that Joshua could always be counted to do a great job and pay attention to detail. He took pride in his work and enjoyed making new friends with other students during the summer program.

During his final school year, Joshua volunteered at several different volunteer locations with SITE House, including Wilcox farms, Southworth Elementary School, and Yelm Farm and Pet where he was able to complete a six week internship. Joshua was also an active participant in Morningside’s weekly Job Club, where he was able to learn and develop his job skills as well as social skills. Joshua decided he wanted to apply at Yelm Farm and Pet as he enjoyed the environment and loved the work he did there while participating in his internship. Morningside approached Tammie, Yelm Farm and Pet owner, to discuss what job opportunities might be available. Yelm Farm and Pet had an opening completing tasks just right for Joshua - unloading freight, stocking shelves, assisting customers with orders and maintaining store cleanliness.

Currently, Joshua works four hours per week and once he’s mastered his job the owners will consider helping Joshua grow into more hours at their second location. We are so proud of the skills Joshua has developed! Initially someone who was challenged translating personal interactions at work, Joshua has blossomed to learn to read social cues and feel more comfortable in customer interactions, utilizing his Job Coach mainly for check ins and problem solving.

Joshua has stated that he loves working at Yelm Farm and Pet because it is a place where he feels comfortable and has a lot of natural supports to help him develop the skills he needs to succeed. He uses his paycheck to attend events like Comic-Con, and enjoys building models and all things Godzilla related. Morningside is honored to help Joshua and other young adults with tons of potential grow to be the next generation of our workforce!