

2020 OUTSTANDING EMPLOYER AWARDS

Morningside's Outstanding Employer award is given to employers who exemplify a vision of the future in which people with disabilities have access to the same opportunity as all other citizens – working in the community. Our 2020 Outstanding Employers have all demonstrated sustained efforts to support and encourage Morningside clients on the job. They have also demonstrated the flexibility to make accommodations when necessary, which translates into productive and valued employees. Morningside is very appreciative of employers who are willing to step forward and say “yes” as well as our other partners, such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and counties whom we collaborate with to make people's employment dreams come true.

Grizzly Den, Hoquiam



L-R Tracy Kimbro, employee; Tiffany Emery, Manager; Rachelle Murray, employee; Stacey Bonell, owner; Jonathan Pleger, CEO Morningside

Morningside is pleased to present to Grizzly Den in Hoquiam an Outstanding Employer award for 2020. This establishment has been located across from the high school for many years now. The current owner, Stacey Bonell, bought the store 23 years ago. Stacey is a very affable person and deserving of the award, as they have included both April “Rachelle” Murray and Tracey Kimbro into their workforce. Rachelle has been off the job because of COVID, and they quickly brought Tracey onboard to fill in. The job entails restaurant prep. They do a variety of jobs, such as portioning out French fries and other food items, filling condiment cups and stamping takeout bags with the company name. Stacey said that they fill important roles so that cooks and servers can get orders out quickly. Tiffany Emery, manager, said, “Tracey comes each day eager to work, puts her gloves on and starts her job.” Congratulations, Grizzly Den!

Island Market, Steamboat Island

Andrew Sorrell has worked at Island Market located on Steamboat Island Road for over 12 years. His employer has supported him throughout this time by increasing his work hours and making accommodations, such as allowing Andrew to use an Android Tablet to help him manage inventory as well as expiration dates when he is stocking shelves with product. These accommodations, along with their inclusive attitude, are why they are recognized as an Outstanding Employer for 2020. Tom Lee, owner, said, “Andrew is more independent, which was the goal because, in part, of Morningside's staff who do a phenomenal job.” Andrew stocks shelves, handles inventory and fills propane tanks. “He is a value to us and fills a need. He is very dependable,” Mr. Lee said. Congratulations Island Market!



L to R Jonathan Pleger, Morningside CEO; Tom Lee, owner Island Market; Mike Horn, VP Employment Services Morningside

Jack-in-the-Box, Lakewood



L to R Jonathan Pleger, President/CEO Morningside; TJ Goldsby, Jack in the Box employee; CeCe Hartman, Restaurant Manager

Morningside is pleased to announce that Jack-in-the-Box, on South Tacoma Way in Lakewood, as one of the 2020 Outstanding Employer Award recipients. They have hired Travis Nollete and TJ Goldsby to do a variety of tasks at the restaurant, from stocking and unloading delivery trucks to cleaning the restaurant. During COVID, CeCe Hartman, Restaurant Manager, has been very open and flexible in allowing Travis and TJ to cover each other's shifts and share duties. CeCe, who has a son with autism, is familiar with individuals with developmental disabilities and understands the need to be patient at times. CeCe hugged the plaque that was presented close to her chest and said, “I am very proud and honored to have received this award.” Congratulations CeCe and Jack in the Box!

McDonald's Restaurant, Olympia

McDonald's Restaurant on Cooper Point Road in Olympia is being recognized with an Outstanding Employer Award in 2020 for their dedication to employing and including individuals with disabilities in their workforce. Kim Crest, owner has employed several persons with developmental disabilities in her various restaurants. Becca Drummond, store manager, said, “They do so much here to help us, such as making French fries, prepping, getting product ready so servers and cooks can keep working. They also keep the floor clean for safety reasons and our lobby area clean for customers.” Becca is very positive and encouraged other businesses to hire individuals with disabilities because, “Everything is possible. There is always a place for someone,” she said. Congratulations McDonald's!



L to R Jonathan Pleger, Morningside CEO; Michael Barth, McDonalds employee; Becca Drummond, McDonalds manager; Mariah Ruffner, McDonalds employee; Mike Horn, Morningside VP Client Services



L to R Debi Payton, Morningside Job Coach;
Vicki Knapstad, Store Manager;
Jonathan Pleger, Morningside CEO

Michaels, Chehalis

Michaels is a specialty retail company focused on art supplies, crafts, and framing. The store in Chehalis has been selected as an Outstanding Employer by Morningside and presented with a plaque signifying this achievement. Robert Delesdernier has worked at the store for approximately four years, cleaning the store and stocking as well as assisting with deliveries. Store Manager Vicki Knapstad said that "he has been flexible and is conscientious and cares about his work." Vicki was very open to hiring an individual with a disability. She said, "It is a partnership with Morningside. They are there to support the client and the employer. It wasn't a risk." Vicki is very modest, as are most of the recipients of this award, about her integration of Robert into the workforce and embracing his unique contributions to the store. Congratulations Michaels!

People First of Washington

People First of Washington (PFW) has been presented with an Outstanding Employer award for employing two people Morningside supports. People First is a self-advocacy association, where everyone from the members, board of directors, to staff are all people who experience disabilities. They were presented the award because of the numerous accommodations made to Joel Bumstead and Blake Geyen, especially during COVID that allowed the two to work from home. They invested in computers and internet connection so they could keep working from the safety of their homes. By way of full disclosure, Krista Milhofer, PFW's Program Administrator, is a former employee of Morningside who worked at Project SEARCH for several years. Krista said, "We are honored and grateful for this award."

Several People First staff were appreciative and gave credit to Krista for her work and being recognized. Jonathan Pleger, Morningside CEO said, "We are pleased to present the award to this organization because of its important mission." Congratulations People First of Washington!



Picture credit Krista Milhofer, Program Administrator People first – holding plaque.
In background (top L-R): Lori Erwin-Johnson,
Krista Milhofer, and Blake Geyen.
Middle row: Joel Bumstead, Anthony Nash.
Bottom row: Michelle Broekling, Bill Fale



L to R Margaret Cox, Shipley Center board president;
Jonathan Pleger, Morningside president/CEO; Michael
Smith, Shipley Center executive director; Wayne Bartz
(in back) Morningside employment consultant and
Shipley Center employees Lee Bond and Kyle White.

Shipley Center, Sequim

The Shipley Center, the facility that houses Sequim Senior Services Corporation, is a 12,000 square foot building that provides a variety of senior services, from a recreation center to a café. This service company is recognized as a 2020 Morningside Outstanding Employer. They have hired two individuals with disabilities to clean the facility, Kyle White and Lee Bond. Lee has been supported by Morningside for many years and his main occupation has been custodian. Known for his strong work ethic, Lee gets up at 4:30 to arrive at work on time. The Shipley Center was open to bringing on Kyle while Lee was at home when the COVID "stay home – stay healthy" order was first announced, and Lee wasn't allowed to work. They have been very supportive of Morningside and consider Morningside as a strategic partner. The Shipley Center has tried other custodial firms but have come to appreciate the reliability and quality of hiring individuals with disabilities supported by Morningside. Congratulations to the Shipley Center!

Walgreens, Lacey

Walgreens, located on the corner of Pacific and College St. in Lacey, has been awarded an Outstanding Employer award in 2020 for their support of Morningside's Transition Program, serving students with developmental disabilities in obtaining employment following their formal schooling. A key element for the success of a student is an internship, where they can see if that type of work is a good fit and a field of interest for potential future employment. Paige Johnson, manager, makes sure that students are integrated into the workplace and accommodates work schedules. She has also advocated for community-based assessments at the store.

Paige said "I love the program. My first exposure to working with individuals with disabilities is through the Best Buddy program, with my sister when I was younger, volunteering to take individuals with disabilities to activities and sporting events. I am glad we were able to start this program at the store and expand it to other stores in our area. We have had excellent interactions with Morningside, it is a good service."



L to R Paige Johnson, Manager;
Jonathan Pleger, Morningside CEO