**Marsha**

# Supported Employment Planning Meeting

On March 30 at 3 pm, a Supported Employment (SE) Planning meeting was held for Marsha at the local Workforce Solutions Office. In attendance were Marsha; her grandmother, Pearl Smith; Sandra Jones, the VR counselor; and SE specialist, Mary Poppins. Randy Miller, Bluebonnet Trails case manager, attended via Teams.

The VR counselor began the meeting by summarizing the information in the Career Planning Assessment (CPA). The VR counselor asked Marsha what she learned at the work observations held at HEB Blooms and Lowe’s. Marsha said that she enjoyed both but did not like the work experience with the landscaping business. Marsha said that she enjoyed arranging the flowers and grooming the plants at Lowe’s. The VR counselor then asked Marsha to explain the floral design classes she is taking at Austin Community College (ACC).

The VR counselor asked Marsha and the other attendees what potential job tasks they think Marsha could perform and would enjoy in a job. Marsha identified arranging flowers, grooming plants, and stocking flowers. The SE specialist asked Marsha if she would like to discuss flowers and plants with customers, and she said yes. Pearl asked Marsha how she felt about cleaning at work if it was related to plants and flowers, to which Marsha responded positively. The VR counselor asked Marsha if she thought she could process and load orders for customers if provided a list, and Marsha replied yes. The VR counselor asked if she could add arranging flowers, speaking with customers, stocking flowers/plants/inventory, grooming plants, processing, and loading orders, and light cleaning as potential job tasks; Marsha said that she thought she could.

The VR counselor then asked Marsha how much time she wanted to work per week, and Marsha replied part-time. The VR counselor asked the other attendees if they thought Marsha could work 20–32 hours per week, and everyone agreed, including Marsha. Then they discussed how many hours Marsha could work per shift. Marsha stated that she wanted to be able to continue to attend ARCIL classes and ACC floral courses, so she would not be able to work in the mornings. The VR counselor asked if working from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. or so would be a feasible schedule, and Marsha said yes. Pearl said that she could take Marsha to work during these hours but likes the idea of Marsha also learning to use the bus as long as only one transfer is required and travel time to and from work is only about 30 minutes. Randy said that the HCBS waiver could also be used to provide another transportation option.

Marsha and Pearl said that they want Marsha to keep her Social Security earnings and continue receiving her HCBS waiver. It was identified that she could earn approximately $3,750 per month without losing her benefits. According to O\*NET, $10 an hour is the starting wage for many entry-level positions that aligned with Marsha’s interests and preferences.

The SE specialist explained to the group that she recommends that Marsha not work with money and that she would do better with routine tasks. Additionally, the SE specialist said that use of job aids that do not require reading, such as pictures and videos on her iPhone, would help. The SE specialist mentioned that the use of a job coach to ensure that Marsha could meet the employer’s expectations would be beneficial. Pearl reminded Marsha that she does not like being outside when it is hot or cold. The VR counselor asked Marsha if she would like for coworkers to help her and provide positive reinforcement, and Marsha replied yes. Randy asked Marsha if she could lift heavy objects. Marsha said that she was not sure, and the SE specialist reminded her that at the Lowe’s work site she had trouble lifting 50 pounds of rocks but was able to lift 25 pounds of potting soil.

The VR counselor recorded these discussions as employment conditions, and the group identified what employment conditions should be negotiable and nonnegotiable based on the discussion and the results of the CPA.

The VR counselor also, based on the discussion, noted that Pearl and Randy could be considered “extended services” by supporting Marsha in her employment. Randy would not commit to providing such services but said that he would look into adding Supported Employment services and Transportation services.

The VR counselor expressed that she needed updates on Marsha’s case every 30 days. She obtained signatures from Marsha, Pearl, and the SE specialist.

# Job Development and Job Placement Benchmark

The SE specialist contacted HEB Blooms to see whether there were any employment opportunities. The SE specialist was told that there is a position available and that applicants need to apply on the HEB website. The SE specialist also contacted Lowe’s, which has the same procedure. The SE specialist met with Marsha to help her apply for the positions. To prepare, the SE specialist completed an Employment Data Sheet and résumé for Marsha, based on Marsha’s input. The SE specialist explained what a cover letter is and drafted a simple cover letter for submission with the applications. The SE specialist then completed the application for both the HEB Blooms and Lowe’s positions and submitted them with all other required documents. The SE specialist also found two other positions with local florists by searching online. Marsha was very excited, so the SE specialist worked with Marsha to apply for those positions as well.

On April 4, the SE Specialist was contacted by HEB notifying that Marsha had been scheduled for an interview with HEB Blooms. The SE specialist met with Marsha for interview training. They role-played and discussed what kind of questions might be asked. Marsha was a little nervous, but very excited.

The next day, the SE specialist met Marsha at HEB Blooms before the interview to review some of the questions that might be asked and to encourage her. During the interview, Marsha was very nervous and needed some questions explained to her before answering.

On April 8, the SE specialist was notified that Marsha was offered the position at HEB Blooms. Her first day was April 10.

The SE specialist met Marsha at HEB on her first day and helped Marsha complete forms, including those for the W-4, I-9, tax withholding, and direct deposit. Additionally, the SE specialist helped Marsha navigate the HEB employee site to complete an emergency contact form and sign acknowledgment forms. The SE specialist attended the onboarding orientation with Marsha to explain the content of forms that required Marsha’s signature. She also watched mandatory videos and ensured that Marsha had a basic understanding of the content. The SE specialist reviewed the employee handbook with Marsha and explained the dress code, badge requirements, attendance, and clocking in/out procedures. She demonstrated how to locate her work schedule using the HEB app. Marsha will require ongoing assistance to master the processes to receive her hours and to clock in and out of her shifts.

The SE specialist told the manager of HEB Blooms, Susan, that it would be beneficial for Marsha to have routine job tasks and to be able to use apps on her iPhone for cues to remember job tasks. Additionally, the SE specialist explained that job aids would most likely be required with Marsha when she learns new tasks and that Marsha responds well to positive reinforcement and support of coworkers.

HEB Blooms offers a video orientation on the basic floral department processes and procedures. Susan said that other coworkers would be scheduled at the same time as Marsha to watch the video. Susan agreed that a Job Skills Trainer could be on-site to help teach Marsha the basic requirements of her position.

The manager stated that Marsha’s routine tasks would include grooming the flowers, stocking within the department, arranging standard fresh flower bouquets, and cleaning the department area. Future opportunities could include making boutonnieres and corsages and preparing for special events. Susan said that there is no requirement to life more than 25 pounds in the position.

The SE specialist and the manager discussed the process of noting Marsha’s learning preferences and possible support needs. Susan referred the SE specialist to the Human Resources (HR) manager, who requested a letter for Marsha's file that outlines any special needs. The SE specialist drafted and sent the letter to the HR manager.

After Marsha’s first shift, the SE specialist spoke with Mary and said that she thought the job would be a good match. However, the SE specialist expressed concern that Marsha might not be able to identify her work schedule. Mary was hopeful that long-term job coaching would be available, given Marsha's HCBS waiver.

The SE specialist met Marsha for her second shift, on April 13 and worked with Marsha on pulling dead leaves off of flowers on display and stocking the work area with materials needed for creating flower arrangements.

On April 17, the SE specialist helped Marsha make a checklist of all the duties to be completed every day, such as removing dead leaves, stocking the work area, and stocking the sales floor.

Two days later, the SE specialist reviewed the checklist with Marsha. The SE specialist had to redirect Marsha somewhat when Marsha was clearing the flowers, which is Marsha’s favorite part of her shift. The SE specialist reminded Marsha how important the other tasks on the checklist are as well, and Marsha indicated that she understood.

On April 20, the SE specialist shadowed Marsha as she went through her duties. On that day she was asked to clean the glass doors of the flower case, which Marsha did very well.

VR1633, Supported Employment Job Development and Job Analysis Report, was completed during Marsha’s first five shifts. The SE specialist observed other employees in the same position twice before Marsha began her first shift. This enabled the SE specialist to understand the work environment, learn how to complete the required job tasks, and identify employees who could be potential natural supports in the future.

After VR1633 was completed, Marsha’s goals for the training plan were added to VR1634, Supported Employment Training Plan and Job Retention Report.

# Job Retention

Marsha’s Job Retention Benchmark began on April 21 and ended on May 18.

The goals that were added to the training plan after the completion of the Job Analysis focused on the following:

1. Locating, reading, and following the work schedule

2. Clocking in and out of work and using the HEB employee app

3. Performing job responsibilities (arranging bouquets, grooming flowers, stocking, and cleaning (with use of job aids and natural cues)) well enough to meet the employer's expectations

4. Getting to and from work using the bus

5. Training extended services providers and natural supports

The training techniques to be used with Marsha would include, but not be limited to, indirect gestures, modeling, picture/simple word instructions, visual cues, job shadowing, and use of iPhone apps.

Marsha’s first Job Retention Benchmark began on April 21, 2022 and will end on May 18, 2022.

First VR1634:

For the reporting period, Marsha received ongoing supports on the following date:

* April 21—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 5 hours: addressed goals 1, 2, and 3.
* April 23—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 3 hours: addressed goals 2 and 3.
* April 23—Mary Poppins, SE specialist, 75 minutes: required customer and employer visit.
* April 24—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 5 hours: addressed goals 3 and 4.
* April 25—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 2.25 hours: addressed goals 3 and 4.
* April 26—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 4 hours: addressed goals 1, 3, and 5.
* April 30—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 1.5 hours: addressed goals 3 and 5.
* May 2—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 1.5 hours: addressed goals 1, 3, and 5.

Marsha continues to clean glass doors to her boss's satisfaction and has demonstrated the ability to successfully remove dead leaves from flowers. Additionally, she is learning how to recognize when the flowers need to be taken out of the display case due to lack of freshness. Although Marsha watched the video detailing the HEB Blooms techniques, she still requires cues to distinguish fresh from unfresh flowers. Marsha needs daily cues to read and understand the display plans of the materials that need to be stocked. On the other hand, Marsha has demonstrated the ability to stock the flower arrangement station with only occassional cues when she overlooks something.

HEB Blooms has provided training videos on distinguishing fresh and unfresh flowers, training by peer coworkers on how to read the display plans, and training on how to gather the flowers for one type of prepackaged flower arrangements.

The Job Skills Trainer created a training video on the technques of identifiying fresh and unfresh flowers for reference so that Marsha can meet the employer's expectations. He provided verbal and indirect cues, as well as modeling to remind Marsha of the steps necessary to complete various work tasks. The trainer also identified list of items to stock for the arrangement station and taught Marsha to use the list using a cell phone app. Additionally, he created job aids to help Marsha with clocking in and out each day and with locating and reading her work schedule.

Marsha says that she contiues to be happy with the position. She verbalized that she hopes to be able to arrange flowers some day.

Continue training.

Second VR1634:

* May 4—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 1.5 hours: addressed goals 3 and 5.
* May 6—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 1.5 hours: addressed goal 3.
* May 9—Mary Poppins, SE specialist, 45 minutes: customer required visit
* May 15—Mary Poppins, SE specialist made a call to Marsha’s manager to check in.
* May 15—Charlie Brown, Job Skills Trainer, 1.5 hours: addressed goal 5.
* May 16—Mary Poppins, SE specialist, made a home visit, 30 minutes, to check in with Marsha and Pearl.

Marsha has shown great improvement. She is using the job aids (videos and a checklist) with only occassional indirect cues. Marsha is meeting the manager's expectations and cleaning glass, grooming plants/flowers, stocking flowers, and gathering the flowers for coworkers to make five different types of arrangements. Marsha also has demonstrated the ability to arrange flowers for two of the preprepared arrangments while working side-by-side with a coworker who is a natural support. She has mastered locating and reading the workweek schedule by using her job aids, in addition to mastering the clocking-in-and-out process. Marsha is able to ride the bus, but the bus schedule does not coincide with her current work schedule. Marsha has decided to work with ARCIL to continue to master her bus-riding skills.

Coworkers continue to provide natural support to Marsha as she learns new skills and carries out job responsibilities.

The Job Skill Trainer provided verbal and indirect cues in addition to modeling in order to remind Marsha of the steps necessary to complete various work tasks and to use her cell phone app. He educated Marsha's coworkers on how to best support her in the completion of job tasks and management of any anxiety.

The SE specialist and the VR counselor worked on arranging the transportation services and someone to routinely check in with Marsha to evaluate her performance with Bluebonnet Trails.

Marsha showed excitement because she was allowed to help with the arangement of the preprepared flower arrangements.

Pearl has agreed to take Marsha to work, but she hopes that the HCBS waiver will be the primary resource used to provide transportation, with Pearl being the backup.

Marsha’s second Job Retention Benchmark began on May 19, 2022, and will end on June 15, 2022.

* May 20—Mary Poppins, employer contact, 15 minutes.
* May 25—Mary Poppins, customer visit, 30 minutes.
* May 28—Charlie Brown, training and extended services, 1 hour
* June 6—Charlie Brown, training and extended services, 1 hour
* June 13—Mary Poppins, customer visit, 30 minutes.
* June 18—Mary Poppins met with Marsha to review paperwork and obtain signatures.

Marsha appears to be meeting the expectations of her manager and coworkers. She continues to need help from natural supports and requires the use of job aids.

The SE specialist trained the extended services provider, Connie, from Bluebonnet Trails, on Marsha's responsibiities and manager's expectations. The SE specialist reviewed the job aids and expressed that additional job aids would have to be created as additional responsibilities are added. The SE specialist suggested that Connie check in at the jobsite with Marsha and the manager at least two times per month and encouraged the manager to contact her if job responsibilites are added or if there are issues with Marsha's job performance. The SE specialist also prepared the Natural Support and Employer Extended Support forms.

Marsha expressed happiness with the job but a little nervousness about supports transferring to Connie. The SE specialist explained that there was a 90-day period to work out any issues.

The SE specialist requested that the Job Stability Meeting be scheduled.

# Job Stability Review Meeting

Marsha’s Job Stability Review Meeting was held on June 6.

At the meeting, Marsha and her grandmother expressed satisfaction with the job. The VR counselor reviewed the job and determined that it continues to meet the definition of competitive integrated employment. The SE specialist reviewed the employment conditions with the group, and Marsha’s position meets all of the negotiable and nonnegotiable employment conditions that are important to her. Randy, the Bluebonnet Trails case worker, said that transportation has been added to Marsha’s HCBS waiver and money has been allocated for the service. The SE specialist reported that the manager of HEB Blooms and Marsha’s coworkers are satisfied with her performance. A letter was provided to the HR director that outlines Marsha’s support needs. The employer was provided a handout that lists VR as a contact if the customer needs support at a later date. The natural support handout was also provided to the three coworkers who agreed to support Marsha at work.

Job Stability was determined to be successful, and the Job Stability Review Meeting date is June 15.

# SE Closure Meeting

Marsha’s 90-day period of Job Stability to achieve SE Closure was June 16 through September 13.

First 30-day period: June 16 through July 15

* June 27 and July 10: customer visits
* July 3: employer contacted

Marsha reported that she is still enjoying her job. She said that her coworkers have helped her when she needs support. She said that Connie, her Supported Employment specialist with the HCBS waiver, has stopped by to check on her. She also said that Connie has arranged transportation for her to and from work.

When the manager was contacted, she stated that she was pleased with Marsha’s performance and that she had also spoken to Connie.

Second 30-day period: July 16 through August 14

* July 24 and August 7
* August 7: employer contact at the jobsite

Marsha reports that she is still enjoying her job and has learned to arrange two new types of bouquets. She said that her coworkers continue to help her when she needs support and that Connie has stopped by to check on her. Marsha also said that Connie has continued to arrange transportation for her.

Third 30-day period: August 15 through October 13

* August 28 and September 12: visits with Marsha
* September 5: employer contact

Marsha reported that she has still been enjoying her job and has learned how to inflate the balloons. She said it was hard at first and that Connie came in and taught her how to tie off the balloons so that they would stay inflated. Connie created a job aid for Marsha to outline the steps necessary to complete the task. Marsha’s coworkers have also helped her when she has gotten frustrated with the balloons. Marsha said that Connie has continued to arrange transportation for her.

The SE Closure Meeting was held on September 18. (It must be held after the 90 days of Job Stability.) Marsha reported on her success with the position and that Connie has been providing her supports. Connie reported that she has visited Marsha and explained the job aid she made for Marsha. Marsha reported that either her grandmother or Bob from HCBS takes her to and from work. The VR counselor determined that Marsha remained Job Stable for 90 days and achieved SE Closure Status on September 18.