

One door closes; many more open

He goes by "Sam" or "Samuel," but right now, he also goes by happy and proud. Sam recently received "Employee of the Quarter" honors at the new Marshall's at 78th and State Ave. The recognition was especially rewarding because it came from a vote of his co-workers.

For Sam, a Wyandot Center consumer, the award affirms that he's doing his job well. Tricia Peterson, Sam's current vocational consultant, says, "Sam has a great work ethic. He goes in and does what he needs to do and puts forth good effort. He's on top of it, yet he knows when to seek help if he needs it."

Sam has worked at Marshall's since April 2015. He's survived reductions in staff who were involved in the pre-opening and start-up of the new retail location. In fact, Sam, who is the backroom coordinator for the shoe department, oriented his new supervisor to the job responsibilities. Sam also helps with translations, sales and cashiering. He's a jack of all trades.

And he's deeply appreciative of the support he's received from Wyandot Center since he moved to Kansas City from Chicago four years ago. Within a week of his referral to Wyandot, Sam had a case manager, a therapist, a peer support specialist and a vocational consultant. He was impressed that Nathan Horak-Hern, his first



Sam appreciates the coaching and support provided by Tricia Peterson, his vocational consultant, and by the entire Wyandot Center team that has worked with him.

vocational consultant, agreed to meet with Sam every week until he found a job and that they developed a plan together. This resulted in a retail position that Sam held for two and a half years until a misunderstanding about the rules led to his dismissal.

Nathan and then Sandy Munson, now the Vocational Team service coordinator, helped Sam keep his head up in his hunt for new employment. When Tricia met Sam, he had already secured his job at Marshall's. She's coached him through some difficult times, and with Sam's permission has discussed his concerns with his supervisor at the store. This follow-along support has meant a lot to Sam and to the staff at Marshall's.

"If I didn't work and stayed at home, I would isolate myself," Sam

says. "The job helps me a lot to be productive. One door closed, but many more are opening. I know I'm not alone here. I have a great Wyandot Center team that I can call on and count on to help."



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