

## Ronald's Story

### interviewed by Janis on April 1, 2015

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#### PHYSICAL DOMAIN

Ronald did not have any physical disabilities. He was hearing voices.

#### STRUGGLES

Ronald's burden was how to get started in the workforce and, once his dream job ended due to no fault of his own, how to get started a second time. One barrier he faced was his reckless driving violation, which was listed as a felony in his background. This and the fact that he had no computer skills to complete online applications made him dread the job search. When not working, he was sedentary and had no self confidence. The lack of financial independence weighed heavy on him.

#### TURNING POINTS

Ronald was living at a group home when his caseworker suggested he check out the SHAMA Clubhouse – there he learned about Working Wonders Supported Employment. The employment specialist helped him believe in himself and that he could successfully work. Supported employment helped Ronald to see that his driving mistake happened when he was not getting help for his mental illness – voices were telling him to speed up. Working Wonders helped him to expunge this record which happened long ago and helped him to understand he has been pardoned.

#### STRENGTHS

Ronald's strengths are that he has a valid Oregon Driver's License and a perfect driving record with exception of the one reckless driving violation. Ronald has a work history and his employment specialist summarized his experiences in a resume. Ronald's brother and a contractor friend are emotional support and put him to work on small projects from time to time. Ronald also keeps all of his mental health appointments to take care of his illness.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

With the help of supported employment, Ronald got a job as a driver in what he considered a dream job. He achieved a regular paycheck which allowed him to pay bills buy groceries and keep medical appointments and more. He also overcame his fear of driving over the McCullough Bridge which is narrow and very high. He felt the fear but, with encouragement from his employer and supported employment, learned to drive over it anyway. He keeps a pair of sunglasses on his person at all times and wears them as an extra precaution when needed.

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When he was laid off from his driving job after 5 years of employment, Ronald was very discouraged. However, he kept his goal of wanting to work. He partnered with supported employment again and showed up for all appointments. It took awhile, but eventually Ronald was offered a Peer Driver job. He helps consumers access peer delivered and supported employment services. His driving schedule is full and peers trust him. Ronald states he likes this job and is making lots of friends. He has gained financial independence again.

### TOOLS

Ronald used patience, perseverance, supported employment, skills he learned from his past jobs, and the support from his brother and friend. Tips and techniques Ronald uses are keeping a record of his schedule, staying alert and keeping his sunglasses with him at all times.