

## True Meaning Jewelry – Pride and Accomplishment

We'd like to introduce you to Aimee, who is currently employed by New England Village's True Meaning Jewelry (TMJ) business located in Hanson, MA. Aimee has worked at TMJ since its inception in 2008, and has spent more hours with this business than any of the other 70 individuals supported through our Employment Supports Program. Aimee fulfills orders from all over the country, assembling items such as bracelets, necklaces, earrings and bookmarks for immediate shipping. Her supervisor, TMJ manager Jerome Hogan, recognizes the importance this type of work has for Aimee. She takes great pride in knowing that a piece of jewelry she has personally assembled is of top quality and will be enjoyed by one of our customers. Aimee is a very conscientious and diligent worker and has developed a great eye for what awareness items will likely be top sellers. While working on a recent line of handmade resin heart pendants, Aimee commented that this type of item is sure to be a hit among customers looking to support a worthwhile cause such as Autism. Aimee is so proud of the fact that as someone living with Autism, she can contribute to raising people's awareness while at the same time demonstrating a strong work ethic and developing a keen business sense. Aimee has been involved in the production of jewelry not just for our valued web-based customers but directly for Autism Speaks, the New England Patriots and other worthy foundations.

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disabilities are supported by New England Village (NEV) in receiving center based work, supported employment, competitive employment and the opportunity to work in one of our own business ventures such as True Meaning Jewelry, Village Landscaping and Village Cleaning. A new farming operation which will create work opportunities for all skill levels is due to launch soon. Funding sources vary for these programs, with the majority of referrals funded by MA Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS). Aimee works closely with the TMJ manager, her case manager and other team members to continuously improve work skills and focus on areas such as attendance, work performance and social skills. In addition, case managers provide education and support to the individual and family with regard to Social Security benefits and setting realistic future goals for employment.

New England Village recognizes the critical importance in accommodating individuals to maximize their success with each job they perform be it on-site or in the community. Adapting equipment, the environment or the process for completing a job (if applicable) helps to facilitate success, increase self-esteem and sharpen one's skill set. Our employment specialists work with each individual on a variety of jobs, conducting initial orientation and training and providing varying levels of support, guidance and quality assurance throughout. Each individual, regardless of the type of work they are performing, receives a paycheck and their rate of pay is determined by conducting time studies and assessing the prevailing wage according to established Department of Labor standards. True Meaning Jewelry and Village Landscaping both pay at an hourly rate, making them the highest paid positions in-house (and very popular with our workers). Although we support individuals at various points in their vocational development, all share the goal of eventually finding meaningful and enriching work in the field of their choosing.

To view or purchase an item produced by Aimee or one of her peers, please visit the [True Meaning Jewelry](#) web site. 20% of the net proceeds from the sale of Autism Awareness Jewelry directed from this link will be donated to Autism Speaks.