

Let's Work! Gaining Experience Through Community Service Activity Guide



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我们一起工作



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Let's Work!
California Transition Alliance

Welcome to the Let's Work! CA Gaining Experience Through Community Service Guide

A small group of us got together to create this guide to help you understand how volunteering and helping out in your community will help you gain valuable experience. Whether you're new to community service or looking to make the most of your volunteer work, this guide breaks it down into easy-to-understand steps and activities. You'll learn how giving your time and effort will make a positive impact on your community and improve your own skills and opportunities.

In this guide, there are **4 steps for gaining experience through community service**:

1. **Determine Where You Can Serve**
2. **Apply to Volunteer**
3. **Get the Most Out of Your Service**
4. **Add Your New Experience to Your Resume**

In each section, we provide examples from our experiences that might help you think about ways you can get involved, too. When we started volunteering in our community and with organizations like the California Transition Alliance, we found people who wanted to help us and help others in our community. This was fun and also helped us find new people for our next opportunities.

It is also important to know that this guide is designed to be accessible and an easy read. Readers have more graphics and space for responses, and can use devices to read the content out loud, too. We also suggest asking a teacher, family member, or friend to help in reading and understanding the ideas in the guide!

Community service might be something you have never thought about doing before, but we have been there and it can be a great experience and lead you to new jobs and opportunities.

Give it a try. We did and it worked for us. It can for you, too.

Let's Work!

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Introduction to Community Service

Community service is when you volunteer your time to help others in your community. It's also an important way to gain experience that can support your growth and preparation for jobs and careers. When you volunteer, you can learn new skills, meet new people, and make a positive difference for other people in your community.

For example, if you volunteer at a local food pantry, you can learn how to cook, serve food, and communicate with a variety of people. This can help you in your personal life, like cooking for your family, or in your professional life, like working in a restaurant.



empathy
/ em·pə·THē /

The ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.

Volunteering can also help you develop a sense of social responsibility and empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. You can learn about the challenges that others face and become more aware of the needs in your community. This can help you become a more caring and compassionate person, which is a valuable trait to have in any aspect of life.

If you are interesting in volunteering and community service to give back to your community, gain valuable experience, and meet new people, consider using the below steps to get started. These suggestions are flexible, use what you think will work best for you!



Determine Where You Can Serve

First, think about what kind of service or volunteer work interests you. Would you like to work with children, animals, the elderly, or the environment? There are many different types of community service, so choose something that you're passionate about. When making this decision, you also need to look at your current resume and see what skills can be gained during this volunteering experience that will help you [find a job!](#)

2

Apply to Volunteer

Once you've decided what type of community service or volunteer work you want to do, research organizations in your community that do that kind of work. You can do this by searching online, asking friends and family, or visiting a local volunteer center.

Once you've found an organization that interests you, reach out to them to ask about volunteer opportunities. You can usually find contact information on their website or social media pages. Tell them your reasons for volunteering and how you want to help them!

It's also important to know that many organizations have all volunteers attend an orientation or training session before they can start volunteering. This will help you understand the organization's mission, rules and how to help.

3

Get the Most Out of Your Service

Once you've completed any required training, you're ready to start! Be sure to talk with your contact person about your availability and any scheduling conflicts you may have. When you start, consider keeping notes about the things you are learning – new experiences will lead to new skills which will help you later.

Remember, you are volunteering to help people, share your ideas and skills, and, to gain new experiences to help you get a job later on! It is a great idea to keep a "volunteering journal" to track everything you do, what you learn, and how you are helping people. You also need to make sure you have a proper etiquette and behavior while you volunteer. Make sure to be kind, listen to your supervisors and co-workers, and bring your best efforts to the experience.

4

Add Your New Experience to Your Resume

Volunteering and community service are about making an impact for others in your community. For this final section, you will create descriptions about the tasks you did, the new skills you learned, the impact you made, and what you gained from the experience as a whole. When you have these descriptions ready, you will then be able to update your resume with the experiences and skills gained from volunteering and community service.

Now that you have learned about community service, it is time to explore each of these four sections in more detail and complete the recommended activities!

1

Determine Where You Can Serve

There are many different types of volunteering that you can participate in. In this section, you will learn about the different areas you can apply to and determine which area makes the most sense for you! It is important to explore your possibilities and choose what you want to do based upon your interest(s). Below are some examples and the experience you can gain from each of them:



1. **Food pantries and soup kitchens:** Volunteering at a food pantry or soup kitchen (or any other kind of food bank) can help you gain experience in customer service, food preparation, and organization skills. You will also learn about food insecurity and how to help those in need.
2. **Animal shelters:** Volunteering at an animal shelter can help you gain experience in animal care, such as cleaning cages, feeding and walking animals, and providing socialization. You will also learn about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.



3. **Habitat for Humanity:** Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity can help you gain experience in construction skills, such as painting, carpentry, and plumbing. You will also learn about affordable housing and how to help families in need.
4. **Environmental organizations:** Volunteering with environmental organizations can help you gain experience in conservation efforts, such as cleaning up trash, planting trees, and restoring natural habitats. You will also learn about the importance of protecting the environment.
5. **Youth programs:** Volunteering with youth programs, such as after-school programs, can help you gain experience in mentoring, tutoring, and leadership skills. You will also learn about the challenges facing young people and how to help them succeed.
6. **Hospitals and nursing homes:** Volunteering at hospitals and nursing homes can help you gain experience in healthcare settings, such as assisting with patient care, providing comfort, and supporting medical staff. You will also learn about healthcare needs in your community.

7. **Schools and libraries:** Schools and libraries often need volunteers to help with activities like tutoring, book drives, and after-school programs.
8. **Community events:** Many community events, such as charity walks and festivals, need volunteers to help with set-up, clean-up, and other tasks.
9. **Religious organizations:** If you attend a religious organization, they may have volunteer opportunities available, such as helping with youth groups or community service projects.
10. **Government organizations:** Government organizations, such as parks and recreation departments, may need volunteers to help with events and programs. Further, there are opportunities to contribute to the development of public policies through community service positions on state, regional or local advisory boards or commissions. Explore some of these possibilities further in the Public Policy section that follows.

This is a great list of areas you can start your community service or volunteering!



TIP

There are many more options to consider. Picking something that you find interesting and care about is important and should help you in making your decision.

Gaining Experience In Public Policy



Volunteering in public policy means giving your time and energy to help with government decisions and actions that affect people's lives. It's about getting involved and making a difference in how policies are created and implemented. Volunteering in public policy helps contribute to creating a fairer and more equal society. There are a lot of things you can achieve through public policy community service. When you volunteer in public policy, you can:

1. **Advocate for Change:** You can speak up for causes you believe in, like education, healthcare, or the environment. By sharing your opinions and experiences, you can influence policymakers to make better decisions.

2. **Support Organizations:** Many groups work on policy issues, such as nonprofits, advocacy organizations, or political campaigns. When you volunteer, you help these organizations with tasks like research, organizing events, or spreading awareness about important issues.
3. **Get Involved Locally:** Volunteering allows you to make an impact in your own community. You can join local committees, attend town hall meetings, or participate in community projects to contribute to decision-making processes.
4. **Help Inform Policy:** As a volunteer, you can gather information, conduct research, and provide insights to policymakers. Your work can help them understand the needs of the community and make more informed decisions.
5. **Collaborate with Others:** Volunteering in public policy often involves working with a team of like-minded individuals. By collaborating with others, you can share ideas, pool resources, and create a stronger collective voice for change.
6. **Raise Awareness:** Through volunteering, you can raise awareness about important policy issues. By organizing events, campaigns, or social media efforts, you can engage the public and encourage them to take action.
7. **Learn and Grow:** Volunteering in public policy allows you to learn more about how policies are developed, how government functions, and how decisions impact society. It's an opportunity to expand your knowledge and develop new skills.

Volunteering in public policy is a way to actively participate in shaping the rules and regulations that govern our lives. It's about using your time and efforts to create positive change and contribute to a better society for everyone.

There are several public policy organizations in California where people with disabilities can volunteer. Here are a few examples:

- [The Advisory Commission on Special Education \(ACSE\)](#): The California Transition Alliance provides a CATA Student Commissioner opportunity to provide advice on new or continuing areas of research, program development and evaluation in CA Special Education. This is designed for students 16 to 22 years old with a disability who are interested in taking on a statewide leadership role.

- [Disability Rights California](#): Disability Rights California is a nonprofit legal organization that advocates for the rights of people with disabilities. They offer volunteer opportunities in areas such as legal research, outreach and education, and policy advocacy.
- [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers \(CFILC\)](#): CFILC is a statewide organization that works to improve the lives of people with disabilities through advocacy and support. They have a variety of volunteer opportunities available, including advocacy and outreach, event planning, and fundraising.
- [Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund \(DREDF\)](#): DREDF is a national disability rights legal center based in California. They offer volunteer opportunities in areas such as research, writing, and policy advocacy.
- [The California State Independent Living Council \(SILC\)](#): SILC is a federally-mandated council that works to promote independent living for people with disabilities in California. They have volunteer opportunities available in areas such as outreach, event planning, and policy advocacy.
- [The Arc of California](#): The Arc is a national organization that promotes and protects the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc of California advocates for inclusive policies and provides services and support to individuals and families. Volunteers can get involved in public policy advocacy, community outreach, or fundraising events.



TIP

Community service provides a unique opportunity to gain experience in a variety of areas, all while making a positive impact on your community. By volunteering, you can develop new skills, learn about different issues and perspectives, and make a difference in the lives of others.

Now with these options in mind, you should take a look at your work goals and the job openings you are looking at and see what community service experience can help you get that job you want! This is an opportunity for you to make an impact and help community while also boosting your resume in the right places to get you the job you've been wanting!



Recommended Activity: Deciding to Work

Now that you have learned about the different areas you can apply for community service in, you can figure out which one is right for you! In the [Finding a Job Activity Guide](#), you created your work goals, resume, and looked at job openings. In this activity, you will determine what skills and experiences are missing from your resume and then select the community service that will help fill in that gap!



This activity allows you to create a list of careers you may want to start and who can support you in making it happen. In this activity you will answer the below questions.

- What are your job goals?
- What training and experience are you still lacking?
- Which volunteer experience
 - Who do I know that can help me find a job?
 - Do I have family members or friends that can assist me?
 - Who do I know that is in a good position to help me?

Complete each section by answering the questions. If a question is hard, use the examples to help you think about your answers.

Question 1: What are your work goals? (refer to Section 6 of the [Finding a Job Activity Guide!](#))

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples: "I remember my work goals from the [Finding A Job Activity Guide](#) were a worker at target, a salesman, and a chef!"



New to Work? What things do you enjoy? What do you want to be when you grow up / begin your work journey?

Question 2: What training and experience (skills) are you still missing to achieve your work goals? (refer to section 4: Accessing Training and Education from the [Finding a Job Activity Guide!](#))

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples: "I remember in section 4 of the [Finding a Job Guide](#) I needed more communication and time management skills to achieve my work goals!"



New to Work? What skills can you start working on to get a head start on your resume and career path? If you like writing and think you might want a job that involves writing, can you help write a school newsletter? If you like gardening and think you might like a job involving plants, could you job shadow at the local home improvement center in the garden department?

Question 3: Now that you remember your work goals and what training and skills you want to access, which areas of community service will help you the most?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples: "Since my work goals are to be a salesman and I need to work on my customer service skills, then volunteering at a food bank or shelter could be perfect for me!"

Now that you have your answers to the three questions, move to the next page to create your Community Service Opportunities List!



Community Service Opportunities List

Now, using the above answers, create a list below of the types of work you want, your needed experience and skills, and the types of service that will help you access the missing experience.

Work Goals

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples: "I want to be a graphic designer." "I would love to work in social media." "I want to increase access to housing for all people."

Needed Experience and Skills

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples: "I need a degree and experience in this field." "I need to learn how to make accessible posts in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter." "I need to learn how communities help people find housing and what isn't working well."

Types of Service to Gain Needed Experience

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Examples: “Volunteering with an organization that includes art will help me achieve my work goals.”
“Serving at an organization where I can help develop and post social media will give me experience and confidence.” “Providing project assistance for a housing organization or city/town advisory board will help me gain experience and related skills.”

Use this list as you move forward to the next step on your way to Community Service!

2

Apply to Volunteer

Now that you've decided what kind of community service you want to do, the next step for you is to apply! This section will teach how to reach out to your organization and fill out an application. Here are the steps you can follow to apply:

1. **Find a community service organization that matches your interests.** You can do this by searching online, asking friends or family for recommendations, or checking with your school or local community center.
2. **Contact the organization and ask how you can apply to volunteer.** Be sure to ask any questions you have about the volunteer opportunity, such as how much time it will take, what your responsibilities will be, and what kind of impact you can expect to make.
3. **Fill out your application and submit to the organization!** A lot of the information they will ask you on the application you can find in your resume you made!



Don't Forget to Follow Up

Sometimes, you may not hear back or get a response from the organization after you fill out and submit your application. If this happens, there are ways you can connect and follow up with the organization to check on the status of your application and what else you can do. Here are a few strategies you can use:



1. **Phone Call Follow Up.** One strategy is calling the organization and asking if they received your application and what its status is.
2. **Email Follow Up.** Another strategy is emailing the organization if they provided one or have one listed on their website. You can ask them if they received your application and what the status is through this email as well.

3. **Go to the Organization in person and ask.** If you are able to, you can also go directly to the organization and ask about your application status in person.
4. **Contact someone there if you know an active volunteer or coordinator.** If you have someone in your network who is volunteering at or coordinating the organization, you can reach out to them and directly and see if they have any information that can help.

Now that you know the steps of how to apply to a community service organization, you are going to fill out a sample application to get you started and used to the process!



Recommended Activity: Applying to Serve

This Applying to Serve Activity allows you to fill in a sample application for community service. This worksheet can be downloaded, saved and/or printed.

Complete each section by filling out this example application form. This will give you an idea of how to fill out community service applications.

Community Service Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Once you've completed the application process and been accepted as a volunteer, be sure to show up on time and be ready to work hard and learn new things!

Emergency contact name and phone number: _____

Are you over the age of 18? (select one) Yes No

Do you have any physical or medical conditions that would affect your ability to perform community service work? If yes, please describe: _____

Availability (please check all that apply):

- Weekdays
- Weekends
- Mornings
- Afternoons
- Evenings

What type of community service are you interested in? (please check all that apply):

- Food bank/soup kitchen
- Animal shelter
- Habitat for Humanity
- Environmental organization
- Youth program
- Hospital/nursing home
- Other: _____

Do you have any previous experience volunteering? If yes, please describe:

Why are you interested in community service? _____

References: Please provide the name and contact information of two references who are not related to you.

1. Name: _____ Phone number: _____

2. Name: _____ Phone number: _____

By signing below, I acknowledge that the information provided in this application is true and accurate. I understand that any false statements may disqualify me from community service opportunities.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

3

Getting the Most Out of Service

Now that you have applied and found the organization you will volunteer at, it is time to prepare for your community service! Coming in with a plan to get the most out of this experience will help you develop your skills, meet new people, and move one step closer to finding your job.

Importantly, it is also a way for you to give back to your community! Community service is a great way to help others and make a positive impact in your community. Here are some tips on how to get the most out of your community service experience:



1. **Choose a cause that you are passionate about:** When you care about the cause you are working for, you will be more motivated to put in your best effort and make a difference.
2. **Be consistent:** Regularly volunteering your time and energy will not only benefit the community, but it will also help you to develop important skills and build relationships with others.
3. **Be open-minded:** Community service can expose you to new people, ideas, and experiences. Be open to learning new things and be willing to step outside of your comfort zone.
4. **Take initiative:** Don't be afraid to take the lead and propose new ideas for projects or events that can benefit the community.
5. **Reflect on your experiences:** Take some time to reflect on what you have learned and how you have grown through your community service experience. This can help you to identify areas where you can continue to improve and develop as a person.

Preparing to Serve

Another important part of getting ready to volunteer is knowing what to do and how to act in the workplace. Here are some guidelines for you to consider before you begin your community service!



Listen and Follow Instructions: Pay attention and listen carefully to the instructions given by the volunteer supervisor or staff members. Follow their guidance and ask for clarification if needed.



Be Respectful: Treat everyone you encounter with respect, including fellow volunteers, staff, and clients. Use polite language, be considerate of others' feelings, and show kindness and empathy.



Take Responsibility: Take your role as a volunteer seriously. Show up on time and be reliable. Complete your assigned tasks to the best of your ability and take responsibility for your actions.



Work as a Team: Collaborate and cooperate with fellow volunteers and staff members. Communicate effectively, share ideas, and contribute positively to create a supportive and productive environment.



Follow Rules and Policies: Understand and adhere to the rules, policies, and safety guidelines set by the volunteer workplace. Respect any confidentiality requirements, dress appropriately, and follow procedures as instructed.



Use Appropriate Language and Behavior: Use polite and respectful language while volunteering. Avoid disruptive or disrespectful behavior, and treat everyone with kindness and consideration.



Seek Help When Needed: Don't hesitate to ask for help or clarification if you have any questions or concerns. Reach out to your volunteer supervisor or staff members for guidance and support.



Respect Boundaries and Confidentiality: Understand the importance of respecting privacy and confidentiality. Don't share personal or sensitive information about clients, other volunteers, or staff members outside of the workplace.



Show Gratitude: Express your gratitude and appreciation to the organization, staff, and fellow volunteers. Say thank you, write a note of appreciation, or participate in any appreciation activities organized by the workplace.



Maintain a Positive Attitude: Approach your volunteer tasks with a positive attitude. Be open to learning, try your best, and contribute your enthusiasm to create a positive experience for yourself and others.



Use Observational Skills: Watch and learn! One of the best ways to learn how organizations do things is to watch and learn. And when you view activities or hear discussions and want to learn more, be sure to ask your supervisor, mentor, or colleagues to understand "why" or "how" things happen the way they do. This will be helpful to you as you apply for and work in other positions in your career!

Remember, it's okay to make mistakes as long as you learn from them. Be respectful, responsible, and willing to learn, and you will have a meaningful and enjoyable experience in the volunteer workplace. Be patient with yourself, you are learning.



Recommended Activity: Getting the Most Out of Volunteering

This activity will help you get the most from your community service. This form can be downloaded, saved and/or printed to help you prepare to meet with people who ask the following questions:

- What new skills did I learn?
- What new personal or professional contacts did I make?
- How will I use this experience on my own path to a job and career?

While you think about your community service opportunity, you should also consider the below examples of different activities you can do to get the most out of your experience!

- Preparing in advance of meetings.
- Taking notes and keeping a journal of learnings and new skills.
- Contributing to the organization's mission through your official role.
- Reporting on social media about your activities and learnings.
- Meeting people and asking them about their jobs and careers.

Complete the below form by answering the questions. Refer to the hints if you need some help!

Question 1: What skills and training did I learn?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



HINT

Think about your favorite things you did during your community service!
Examples include: talking to people, using computers, providing technical assistance and advice; taking notes.

Question 2: Who did I meet and what did they do for the organization or community?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



HINT

Did you keep a list of meetings? Who attended and what were their names and titles? These could be commission members, advisors, community members and many other individuals that were involved with the service organization.

Question 3: How will I use this experience on my own path to a job and career?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



HINT

What new skills or experiences did you gain that help you in qualifying for your work goals? Try to connect those experiences to your desired job or career!

4

Putting Your New Skills and Experiences Into Your Resume

Congratulations!

At this point in time, you have now completed your community service experience. You wrote down your thoughts on the experiences, the people you met and their experiences, and the skills you gained throughout the process. You chose this organization and type of community service because it aligns with your passion, your work goals and needed experience to achieve those goals.



Now it's time gather this information and put it into your resume!



Recommended Activity: Putting Your New Skills and Experiences into Your Resume

This activity will allow you to update your resume adding the new skills and experiences gained during your community service experience. If you need assistance, consider working with a peer mentor or adult ally to help.

Go back to the Community Service Opportunities activity and put the work goals below! Are they the same? If they have changed, be sure to update them below.

Work Goal(s)

Next, it is important to add the service itself to your resume.

Organization's Name: _____

Dates of Service: _____

Position or Title: _____

3 Key Activities Performed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3 New Skills Learned:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now that you have added your community service experience to your resume, you are closer to the job and career you desire!

If you haven't yet, please consider accessing the [Let's Work! Networking Activity Guide](#) and [Let's Work! Finding a Job Activity Guide](#) to explore those subjects.

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About the Authors and Contributors

Dani Bowman



Dani Bowman—who is on the autism spectrum founded her company, DaniMation Entertainment, at age 14 in 2009 and launched DaniMation UK in 2019. She graduated with a BFA in Animation in 2018 and an MBA in Global Strategy and Leadership in 2020. Dani has premiered 11 animated short films, a PSA, and a music at San Diego Comic Con.

Over the next 14 years, Dani has led summer animation camps and around the country, initially with Joey Travolta’s Inclusion Films, and then expanding out on her own, adding programs at the University of

South Florida, Plymouth University and Brunel University London in England, teaching over 2500 youth with autism and other different abilities. In 2020, Dani pivoted to teaching animation from in-person to online with 1-Week Animation Workshops and One-on-One classes.

In addition to teaching animation, Dani works with her students as a role model and mentor, encouraging them to follow their dreams. In 2021, Dani and her team participated in the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge, where she won for “Best Editor” with her film “The Home Office”.

Dani is currently working on getting a Ph.D with thesis on how much the impact her program has had in the autism community.

Sean Keilberg-Tucker

Sean is a Project Assistant on the Let’s Work! Initiative for ForwardWorks Consulting, a partner of the California Transition Alliance. Sean is a graduate of Fairfield High School (California) and a recipient of the Solano County Office of Education Adult Transition Program Certificate of Completion. In November 2018, he was a featured speaker at the Bridge to the Future Institute, a [Let’s Work! California Networking Activity Guide PAGE 27](#) conference of 2,000 attendees organized by the California Transition Alliance. He also joined actor RJ Mitte and Derek Shields of the National Disability Mentoring Coalition to deliver a workshop for youth with disabilities on networking skills as part of a selfdetermination youth strand. From that experience and using the self-determination skills he learned, he returned home and conducted a self-determination workshop to help “pass the baton” of self-advocacy as it was passed to him at the Bridge to the Future Institute by two of his mentors.

Kayla Smit



Kayla Smit joined the Let's Work! Networking Team during the Summer of 2020. Graduating from Tokay High School with high honors, Kayla was in National Honor Society and received the Principal's Award and Scholarship for her academic achievements. Kayla is currently a student at Delta College working on her Associate's Degree in Art. Kayla's other areas of interest are surfing, history, reading, drawing and music. She gained work experience at farmer's markets through a family business, including product staging and sampling and is currently learning point of sale services. Kayla was a 4-year member of her high school's Japanese Club and helped coordinate activities and is a volunteer for Surfer's Healing, a surfing program for youth with autism.

Sean Spence



I am Sean Spence. I have a B.A. in Psychology from Chico State University and my goal is a master's degree. My philosophy is to help people improve their life. Two accomplishments are: Invited to speak to the CA Advisory Commission on Special Education as a contributor, October 2022; invited to write a life story article, published in The Special EDge Newsletter, June 2022. My location is in Northern California. My hobby is traveling.

PJ Swan



PJ is a former student in the Lodi Unified School District and is proud of her successful transition to be a Job Coach Assistant. Growing up with Cat Eye Syndrome, PJ learned sign language at a young age and learned a great deal about accommodations and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) throughout her elementary, middle and high school years.

She began leading her IEP meetings and took her confidence and skills into her Workability I experiences, including jobs at CVS, Marshall's and even the Lodi Unified School District's Superintendent's Office. Next, PJ participated in the Transition Partnership Program Job Club and Boot Camp, learning new self-advocacy skills, preparing her resume and

applying for an internship with the school district. After the internship, PJ set her goal to obtain a full-time job and applied to be a Job Coach Assistant. After being hired, PJ has successfully completed the job tasks, finds great enjoyment in work and expanded her role to include teaching students to use the Person Centered Planning application.

PJ spoke to over 1,000 attendees at the *Bridges to the Future Institute*, arranges her own transportation, enjoys learning and selfies and is proud to always be on time.

During the Summer of 2020, PJ joined ForwardWorks Consulting as a Technical Assistant on the Let's Work! California initiative. Recently PJ has been learning about the Disability Autism Awareness Spectrum. She also enjoys time with her friends, cousins, and the Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Caley Versfelt



Caley Versfelt promotes acceptance and inclusion as an advocate, public speaker, actress, and correspondent. Caley dreams big and never gives up. She believes, "Having Down Syndrome is a gift."

Caley's entertainment interests are limitless. She guest starred on *The Good Doctor*, performs *The Sound of Musical* opening improv, co-hosted the Media Access Awards live, and was an assistant camerawoman in Easter Seals Disability Film Challenge's.

Caley is passionate about her advocacy work with many organizations. Caley is a Global Ambassador for Best Buddies International and a previous Los Angeles Advisory Board member. For Special Olympics SoCal, Caley is a Global Ambassador, a prior Board of Directors member, a Games Associate and Correspondent for Special Olympics World Games LA.

As a media correspondent, Caley annually interviews celebrities at the Easter Seals Disability Film Challenge Awards. Additional events include the Media Access Awards, Reel Abilities Film Festival and Special Olympics World Games.

Caley lives everyday embodying that everyone should be treated with dignity and value. She is passionate about sharing these values speaking at events and through her company, Tides of Kindness, which promotes, "Kindness is contagious."

About Let's Work! California

Designed to increase access to information for Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families and supporters to obtain competitive integrated employment (CIE), Let's Work! is an initiative of the [California Transition Alliance](#).

Originally funded by the [California State Council on Developmental Disabilities \(SCDD\)](#), the project is consistent with the SCDD mission to advocate, promote and implement policies and practices that achieve self-determination, independence, productivity and inclusion in all aspects of community life for Californians with IDD and their families.

Let's Work! also supports the [SCDD State Plan](#) goals for Employment and Self-Advocacy and also enhances four best practices as identified by the [National Technical Assistance Center on Transition](#) and the [Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center](#).

By creating activity guides and the [Let's Work! California YouTube channel](#), the California Transition Alliance is reaching youth, your families, your teachers and other resources working with you, businesses, and community partners to encourage self-advocacy, create person-centered plans and inform you on work options.

The project uses best practices, things we know that work well for people:

- Share employment and self-determination information
- Tell personal stories to help youth think about the possibility for work
- Build a network of adult allies through instructional videos and mentoring
- Provide work experience to more youth
- Help youth develop skills through projects

Expanded in 2022, the Let's Work! California initiative is now designed to share stories and tools to encourage and support more youth and students with all kinds of disabilities throughout Californian. Let's Work! CA is about helping you to access the work you want!

Notes

This page is provided for you to take notes.

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Each one of us can make a difference. Together we make change!



Let's Work!
California Transition Alliance