

# Full Circle:

## How PROVAIL's Commitment to Inclusion Connects Special Olympics and Employment

*This story of connection embodies the essence of inclusion: building bridges, creating opportunities, and fostering relationships that last a lifetime.*



**AN EMPOWERMENT  
IN ACTION STORY**

At PROVAIL, inclusion isn't just a goal—it's the core of everything we do. Sometimes, stories emerge that perfectly capture how that mission comes full circle. One such story comes from Skye Kalil, an Employment Consultant on our South Sound team, who shared a personal connection that spans from her high school years to her current work supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

### A Journey of Inclusion

Skye recently read an article celebrating West Seattle High School's recognition for its Special Olympics program, an honor given to schools committed to fostering inclusion and unity. This recognition meant a lot to Skye because she and one of the individuals she now supports, Andrew Higashi, both attended West Seattle High and were part of the same Special Olympics soccer team.

*"I graduated in 2013, and Andrew in 2016. We played soccer together during the first year of the program," Skye shares. "A few friends and I helped launch the program, and it's incredible to see how it has grown 11 years later."*



*Skye - 4th from the left, top row. Andrew - center, head resting on arm, bottom row.*



*Skye, Andrew, and Trader Joe's co-worker, Westley.*

***"Andrew and I are still connected, now working together at PROVAIL."***

Today, Andrew is a valued employee at Trader Joe's in Burien, where he's worked since 2017. Under the leadership of his manager Gina, the Burien store has become a model of inclusion, reflecting PROVAIL's mission to empower people with disabilities to thrive in their communities.

### The Power of Inclusive Workplaces

Andrew's success at Trader Joe's is a testament to the long-lasting impact of inclusive environments—starting with programs like Special Olympics and continuing into adulthood through meaningful employment. Gina's dedication to creating a supportive, inclusive workplace aligns perfectly with what we strive for at PROVAIL. By supporting clients working with inclusive employers like Trader Joe's, PROVAIL creates opportunities where individuals with IDD can contribute their strengths to a supportive team.

As we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October, Andrew's story shines as a reminder of how inclusive workplaces can make all the difference.

At PROVAIL, inclusion means more than just making space for everyone. It's about fostering environments where people can grow, succeed, and be valued for who they are. Whether through community services, supported employment programs, or placement with companies like Trader Joe's, we're proud to help individuals like Andrew thrive.

### Meaningful Connections

This story of connection—between Skye, Andrew, West Seattle High School, and Trader Joe's—embodies the essence of inclusion: building bridges, creating opportunities, and fostering relationships that last a lifetime. From high school soccer fields to the workplace, inclusion is a lifelong journey, and at PROVAIL, we're here for every step.

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