



Finding employment for people with disabilities

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TACOMA, Wash. -- At Metronome coffee shop in Tacoma, there is an undeniable rhythm - from the sound of baristas making coffee to the conversations of customers.

But on Monday and Tuesday you can find Kyle Cox, 26, someone who adds a valuable beat to the song of this coffee shop.

"I'm stamping cups. I'm putting the logo on there. So that people know where the coffee comes from," he said.

While this job may seem small, this is the first job for Cox, who is intellectually and developmentally disabled.

Kyle's Parents, Lori and Tim Cox, say this job has given him a sense of independence. It's something that they didn't know if he would ever have.

"It was July 22, 1995," said Lori. "We took him to the emergency room because he kept falling down."

Doctors learned that Kyle had a brain tumor the size of a fist. Once they removed it, Kyle would be intellectually and developmentally disabled forever.

"He went through chemo and radiation and more chemo for a year. To sit there and watch your son lose his hair, you know, we made it through," said Tim Cox.

Kyle attended school until he was 21. He eventually landed a few volunteer jobs, but his parents wanted to help Kyle's secure a paying job that would help him develop a sense of pride. They found a non-profit called Trillium that helps secure employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Western Washington.

"He told me straight up: I want to do a job where I get paid. I want to make some money," he told Alex Tapia, who works for Trillium. Tapia helped Kyle get a job at Metronome.



On Mondays and Tuesdays, you can find Kyle Cox at Metronome coffee shop in Tacoma, stamping coffee cups.
(Photo: KING)

"I took a stamp pad and some cups back to his house and had him try a few of them and sure enough he got it down."

Tapia said the job gives Kyle a sense of purpose.

"Having that job and having something that you're responsible for, he feels all of those things, he's a part of the team," he said.

Kyle gets a check like all of the other employees. While some of that money goes to the bank, the rest goes to Kyle's collection of bobble heads in his room. From Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Col. Sanders, Harry Houdini, KISS and Beatle Juice, he has more than 100 bobble heads that he's collected since high school

"They're fun to collect," he said.

In 2015 more than 100 new companies signed with Trillium to hire people just like Kyle

The non-profit has helped to secure nearly [1000] jobs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities [over its history]. They urge business owners to contact them if they have a job need that needs to be met.