Jeanie is a great employee—highly conscientious, responsible and reliable, steadily working through the list of her responsibilities when she comes to the office. We’ve all watched her grow… She makes our workplace a better, happier place.”

~LORI WARD (VP OF COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS, TN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER)

“The thing that’s unique to Carrie is she has a wonderful attitude about her work, and it is infectious and it brings all of us up a notch everyday.”

~KIP BENNETT (MANAGER, VU DINING SERVICES)

“I’ve really enjoyed working with Will. We don’t have any problems to just say, ‘Oh, Will can do it!’ You know, he can do anything in the store that we can do.”

~KERRI ANN (BOOKSELLER, BARNES AND NOBLE)

“Quite frankly, Bud is setting a model for our other student media producers that they should follow in terms of production, work flow, and the reliability of their content.”

~JIM HAYES (ASST. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MEDIA, VSC, INC.)

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Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action. The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center mission is to facilitate discoveries and best practices that make positive differences in the lives of persons with developmental disabilities and their families. 6/2013

VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER
FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Assisting Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Securing Meaningful Paid Employment
WHAT IS NEXT STEPS?
Next Steps at Vanderbilt is a 2-year nonresidential certificate program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ages 18-26. Educational, social, and vocational experiences are provided to prepare students for employment and independent living.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS
At Next Steps, an employment specialist works to match students and employers in mutually beneficial job placements. While enrolled in Next Steps, students develop resumés and are trained in completing job applications and interviewing skills. Next Steps staff provide initial supports to the student as he or she gets started in a position.

JOB COACH SUPPORT
Next Steps provides job coaches that offer support for students at their jobs. These coaches eventually fade-out to have students working completely on their own. Support is personalized to the student and is based on the student’s skills and the work place. Coaches work with the staff to create a support system for students that may include, but are not limited to:
- modeling duties
- creating checklists
- managing schedules
- creating task analyses

Job coaches also act as a liaison for communication among staff, the student, and his/her family.

WHY IS EMPLOYMENT IMPORTANT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES?
People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the desire to work and live independently. Having a job can give a person a sense of purpose, help to connect him or her with the community, and contribute to independence and financial self-sufficiency. Employment fosters independence, enhances social skills, increases responsibility, and helps students learn and identify what is expected of them in an array of career fields.

Next Steps students have valuable skills to contribute, such as performing office tasks, providing customer service, using computers, organizing, and cleaning.