



Jacob Grouette | YMCA, Mason City

Jacob Grouette's pride in his work is obvious as he describes his job. "I am a maintenance worker, which means that I make sure things are clean and working," he says. "I have to fill out charts and lists to show when each area is cleaned and inspected during the day. I can choose which order I do each thing on the list, so I can pay attention to the most important things first." Jacob was hired at the YMCA in April and received initial training and coaching from his Joblink job coach. "Stephanie helped me learn my responsibilities when I started, and she checks in with me to make sure things are going well," he says. Jacob's outgoing personality is an asset to the YMCA team. "My favorite thing is chatting with the members. Most of the time, I don't even start the conversations, people just say hi to me!" he says with a laugh. "There are lots of friendly people here. The free membership for employees is great, too." The YMCA has offered Jacob opportunities for career advancement, as well. "I'll be starting a full-time schedule in October, and I'm going to be getting training on some of the pool maintenance tasks," he explains. "I never thought I'd have the chance to have special training and learn new things like that."

Katherine Decker | HyVee East, Mason City

Customer service skills have always been a strong point for Katherine Decker. As courtesy staff at HyVee East, she is able to make shoppers feel welcome and comfortable in the store. "My favorite part of the job is meeting people. There are regular customers who recognize me now, and I like to chat with them." Katherine gained work experience and practiced her skills by earning a Foodservice Skills Certificate at the Lunch Box training area and while working at Javaworks, located at the Mason City Public Library. From there, she was able to work with a job developer to start her job search. "My job developer helped me with the whole process," she explains. "We used the internet to find available jobs, went to businesses to pick up applications, filled them out together and returned them. We practiced interview skills so I felt prepared, and then we talked about how each interview went so I could learn from them." After several interviews and offers, Katherine accepted a position at HyVee East in March. "I decided to take the job at HyVee because it's such a friendly store, and I live close by," she says. "It is the perfect job for me."

Ashley Castino | Walmart, Mason City

Ashley Castino works as a stocker in the grocery department at Walmart, responsible for shelving thousands of food items during each of her shifts. "I like putting things away and helping customers," she says. "I know my way around the grocery department pretty well! I also shop there often, so I know where things are when people ask for help." Ashley was already working in the community and came to Joblink seeking help with finding a second job so she could work more hours and earn a better income. "Jenny was my job developer, and she helped me work on applications to make sure I was doing them correctly. When I started at Walmart, Kathy helped me get through the trainings on the computers. She checks in with me now to make sure that things are going well for me." When asked about the most important skill she brings to her job, Ashley is ready with an answer. "I can ask for help, and I can keep smiling."