



HER story MATTERS!

So, I feel like a broken record. Seems like every week I say to anyone who will listen that this year is an IMPORTANT year. Our family is anxious to say the least. Sometimes we just need to hear that ALL IS and WILL be WELL! Just as I was having one of those overwhelming days, I received an article that lifted my spirits.

Ms. Kymera Mitchell is a young, brilliant, vibrant autistic person who, despite the odds, was accepted into 19 colleges! That is an incredible achievement for any student, but when you must excel with your hands behind your back it is well... **OUTSTANDING!** .. What resonated the most were **her mother's comments:**

“If you have a kid that’s autistic, never ever let anyone in the medical community or the school community tell you that your child ‘cannot’ anything,”

Kalaveeta Mitchell told the Chicago Tribune. “There may be levels to what they can do, but I can assure you that they are, a lot of times, smarter than you.”

Kalaveeta Mitchell, the post Chicago Teen With Autism Accepted to

Kymera's mother speaks for so many families who have children on the spectrum. In essence her statement is what every mother wants to say - HER story MATTERS!



Chicago Teen With Autism Accepted to 19 Colleges and Universities

Watch the Good MorningAmerica Report

It's about the money honey EVERYONE has to eat!

I am always reading. Lately I have been focused on legal rights for adults with disabilities. While scrolling I came across an article that certainly caught my attention. Specifically, this statement.

“Recent studies focused on stigma have found that “the general public tends to view disabilities that they perceive as controllable yet unstable (such as mental-behavioral disabilities) more negatively than they do disabilities that they perceive to be uncontrollable but stable, such as physically caused disabilities.”...Other studies found that employers tend to perceive individuals with physical disabilities more favorably than individuals with mental, emotional, or neurological disabilities.”... Regardless of whether an individual with ASD has the necessary education, experience and skills to perform a job, the low employment rate of individuals with ASD raises the question as to whether employers are discriminating on the basis of disability.

ADA Knowledge Translation Center Legal Brief No. 4

Sharan E. Brown

Published in the National Network

YES - that is a lot! It makes you really ponder humanity and one's value. To be fair -everyone does not have an obligation to be tolerant- Free Will and all, but it certainly makes for a better community when we recognize the strengths of every human. Persons with ASD and others with Neuro-diversity can be tax-takers or tax-makers. I personally prefer their contribution and am not alone.

Beaver Shriver, a Sarasota entrepreneur, recently opened Rise & Nye's, a coffee shop and ice cream parlor to give persons with developmental disabilities employment opportunities.

With Rise & Nye's, Beaver Shriver Created a Workplace of Dignity for People With Developmental Disabilities -
by Cooper Levey-Baker



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Shriver's innovation says the community money creates an employment model and re-invests into the community. Sometimes we make assumptions about people without ever thinking about infinite possibilities.



"It's about the money honey- EVERYONE has to eat! Sometimes we make life more complicated. Training, support, and communication is generally a formula for success"

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Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder and Employment: Application of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Title I Standards - by Sharan E. Brown

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Affirmative Action - STILL LIVES!

So here we go. As I was pondering the topic of Affirmative Action with colleagues across the board, I began to wonder about the repercussions for persons with disabilities. In 2017, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a Final Rule on Affirmative Action for Individuals With Disabilities in Federal Employment.

The Agency explained the purpose as one of necessity for Federal Employers to model best practices.

"Section 501 imposes two distinct obligations on federal agencies. First, it prohibits agencies from discriminating against individuals with disabilities pursuant to the same standards that are "applied under title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 . . . and the provisions of sections 501 through 504, and 510 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 . . . as such

sections relate to employment...

Second, the section requires each federal agency to maintain, update annually, and submit to the Commission an “affirmative action program plan for the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities.” - 29 U.S.C. 791(b).

It further directs the Commission to approve an affirmative action plan (Plan) if “the Commission determines . . . that such plan provides sufficient assurances, procedures and commitments to provide adequate hiring, placement, and advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.” - 29 U.S.C. 791(b).

Federal Register, the Daily Journal of the United States Government.

I was speechless after reading this rule for several reasons. No one gives you a roadmap for assisting your loved one with ASD and you definitely do not get a step-by-step guide which outlines and identifies rules, opportunities and options. So- discovering that there is support for federal employees with disabilities was a WOW moment.

The rule defines what reasonable accommodations are and why they are important and do not create a due hardship such as a job coach and support which will specifically aid an employee with their job functions. It makes sense! In truth - everyone utilizes accommodations in many ways. VaryDesks, flex employment, day care, and sensory spaces.

Reasonable Accommodations

Requiring Federal Agencies To Establish Procedures To Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation

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Affirmative Action- STILL LIVES! In short it is reassuring to know that the federal government believes in giving persons with disabilities an opportunity to thrive and enter a career they value.

Increasing Federal Employment for Persons with Disabilities

[Read all About it](#)

Full disclosure- this is a very LONG rule. But if you need to view this rule in its entirety- see below.

Affirmative Action for Individuals With Disabilities in Federal Employment

[Read Article](#)

No matter where you fall ideologically on this issue - I can say with full confidence that I am grateful the Federal Government recognizes that dignity in the workplace matters.

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Laurie Hill



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