



Interning with the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) has been amazing. It is such an honor to have this opportunity. Each Thursday at my internship I complete certain tasks, including updating weekly job openings, the weekly Open Line newsletter, and gathering weekly news clips. I find those tasks very interesting and my supervisor Krystyne tells me that I do well. I have two supervisors and their names are Krystyne Brown and Cara Kumari. They have helped me learn about clerical work skills and networking skills at DIDD events.

*"If you have employment opportunities then you need to do your best and make it count."*

During my internship, I recently had a great opportunity to attend an event in Chattanooga where the governor of Tennessee Bill Haslam was presented with the 2018 Expect Employment Report. The report was created to highlight the state's progress for providing employment for people with disabilities. Governor Haslam took a short tour of the University Center at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) and I got to follow him around with other people to take pictures. Then we heard the governor, DIDD Commissioner Debra K. Payne, UTC leaders and other agencies speak. I was also interviewed by a Chattanooga TV station called News Channel 9. It was the first time I had been interviewed and I felt honored.



I could not have gotten this internship without the help of the Igniting the Dream, Education, and Access at Lipscomb (IDEAL) Program at Lipscomb University. I am a second-year student in the IDEAL Program. It is a two-year program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It helps us develop adult skills, professional job skills that are needed for employment, and gives us the chance to enjoy life as college students. I joined IDEAL because I have an intellectual disability and need additional support with processing information and my academic work. There is one person who specifically helped me get placed with DIDD. Chandler Ashcraft is Lipscomb IDEAL's Program Manager for Job Development and I am grateful that she is helping me find jobs that are guiding my career path.

While being in the IDEAL Program, I held on-campus internships at the Lipscomb Security Department, where I helped an officer write parking tickets, and at the Lipscomb Information Technology Department, where I took hard drives out of computers and drove a golf cart full of recycling to the dumpster. Through these internships I have learned about what it's like working in different professional settings.

Before I joined Lipscomb IDEAL, I grew up in Franklin, Tennessee. I like to play card games, watch movies, spend time with friends, and play with my dog. I went to high school at Currey Ingram Academy in Brentwood, Tennessee, which was specifically made for people who learn differently. It was a privilege to be able to attend Currey Ingram. It was there where I realized going to schools that provide additional support for academics is what I will need to achieve my career goals.



I hope to land a job with a car rental service as a leasing agent after I graduate from Lipscomb IDEAL in May. The reasons why I want this career are because I have a passion for learning about cars and clerical work. Some companies I have looked into are Alamo, National, and Enterprise, and I think this kind of job suits me well. I feel that employment means being hired to work hard in a professional environment and is needed in order to make a living.

