

CELEBRATING

Mississippians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

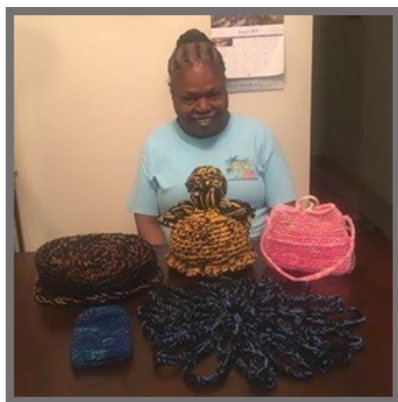
Lizzie's Story

Lizzie is an example of how employment and a meaningful day can enhance the life of someone with an intellectual disability. For the last 15 of its just over 20 year existence, she's been employed at one of the most popular eateries in the state, Ajax Diner in Oxford, Mississippi. Lizzie's job includes preparing the dining room for the hundreds of customers who dine there each day, and assisting chefs with food preparation in the kitchen. Ajax Diner's owner, Randy Yates, says that Lizzie is a hard worker and the heart and soul of the company. "She keeps everyone happy, and just between us, she could be Employee of the Month for one hundred straight months!"



As a side venture, Lizzie knits, but she's not your average seamstress. Lizzie works from memory, thinking of how something should look, and creating it using only her hands as her knitting needles. She has knitted items such as dolls, slippers, purses, and tissue box holders. When Ajax Diner needs items mended or sewn, the company gives Lizzie the job if she wants it. "I love knitting and started a long time ago," says Lizzie. "When I was a young girl, I pulled cloth from my mother's flour sacks and taught myself how to knit using just my hands. I've been doing it this way ever since."

Lizzie lives in Oxford in a home she shares with friends. She receives supports through the ID/DD Waiver Program that provides assistance to maintain an independent lifestyle and connections with the Oxford community. "I love my job at Ajax and making money to pay bills and keep yarn stocked for knitting is a big deal to me. Working allows me to be around people, which is one thing I really enjoy."



For more information about the ID/DD Waiver program, contact the Mississippi Department of Mental Health at 1-877-210-8513 or visit www.dmh.ms.gov



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