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Quarterback Turned Lineman

By Jennifer Reyes, NFJP Client Service Agent

When the quarterback for Central Heights High in Princeton, Kansas graduated; he grew eager to jump into the workforce. Shortly after, he became interested in becoming an electrical lineman. That's when Anthony Detwiler discovered he needed to complete a commercial driving license course in order to begin his journey. Having done hay baling and cattle raising since 2018, he was referred to SER Corporation by Leah Masters from KansasWorks. Thanks to his work on the farm, he would be the perfect candidate for the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) and was able to get help with tuition costs for the course.

While in high school, when he wasn't at work on the farm raising cattle and baling hay, Anthony enjoyed duck hunting and spending time with his family and friends.

Anthony was my first participant in the NFJP. When I met Anthony, he was excited about the opportunity and was appreciative of the program. His heart was set on working for PAR Electric as an electric lineman. It was moving to witness a determined young man embark on his journey into adulthood with such willpower and purpose.

During his CDL course, Anthony was wonderful to work with. His instructor was amazed by his dedication and focus during the course. He passed the coursework with flying colors. Anthony has the necessary determination and drive to be successful in any industry and will, without a doubt, succeed in his chosen career. He will begin working the beginning of October 2022 and will be traveling nationally.



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From Custom Cutter to Heavy Equipment

By Vicki Needham, NFJP Client Service Agent

Samuel Hall grew up in a town in central Kansas that was founded on farming principles. When he was old enough, he joined a custom harvesting crew which traveled from state-to-state harvesting crops for other farmers. He worked for the season and when he returned home, he enjoyed the work so much that he found another job working for a local farmer who both farmed and ranched.

He got quite the education about the effort which goes into custom cutting, farming, and raising cattle. While on the custom cutting crew, he worked long hours in sweltering heat and very dusty conditions. When the crop was ready and the crew traveled to the location of the job, they would cut, and haul the crops to the grain elevators for hours on end. There was always a timeline to get the job done before a rainstorm.

Migrating meant being away from family and friends for a few months at a time. With this type of work, he travelled and lived with the people daily, but the job came to an end at the season. Samuel enjoyed working with the big machinery and found himself another farm job.

On this farm job, the farmer he worked for had both cattle and raised crops and hay. Samuel learned how to plant crops and even learned how to harvest different types of crops. He learned to swath, rake and bale the hay. He learned how to work around the cattle and attend to their needs in all types of weather.

Even though he was learning a lot of different tasks that go with the job working with the big machinery like combines, tractors, grain carts and such was what he was most interested in. He knew he wanted a job that would provide him with benefits. Samuel learned about the SER Corporation, National Farmworker Jobs Program and contacted Vicki Needham, Client Service Agent, to see if there was any assistance he could qualify for.

Vicki met with Samuel and completed the intake process. During the intake, Samuel described what his career goals were. After determining that he qualified for services, Vicki and Samuel laid out a plan to help him meet those goals. Samuel would need to attend North Central Kansas Technical College (NCKTC) for Heavy Equipment Operation. SER Corporation was able to pay for a portion of the tuition for the training.

Samuel met with Vicki monthly, and he excelled at his training. He successfully completed the 10-hour Construction Safety and Health Program through OSHA and even obtained a class A Commercial Driver's License. Toward the end of training Vicki helped Samuel obtain employment as a Heavy Equipment Operator for a major Construction Company and utilizing the On-The-Job Training (OJT) program where SER Corporation reimbursed the employer 50% of Samuel's wages. Samuel successfully graduated from the Heavy Equipment Operation program at NCKTC.



Samuel completed the OJT and was placed in a full-time permanent position as a Heavy Equipment Operator. Not only does he now not have to worry about a season ending and losing his job, but he also got a full benefit package with his new career! Samuel will earn more than \$44,800 in his first year alone. This was a dream come true.

“Vicki always encouraged me to do my best and checked on me monthly to see how I could use help to achieve my maximum potential,” stated Samuel. Vicki continues to check up on him at his employment and continues to get great reports of his work.

Samuel will go far in his chosen career! He was able to take his knowledge from working on the farm and his education from NCKTC and make a career that he is excelling at.

Best of Both Worlds

By Henry Coronado, NFJP Client Service Agent

Dylan Oehrke grew up in Stover, Missouri, a small community with a population of a little over 1,000 people. He grew up working on his family farm and also for a local farmer. Growing up on a farm, Dylan knew what the phrase “hard work” meant. Dylan considers himself to have a good work ethic and has a lot of farming experience. After completing high school, he decided to pursue a career as a John Deere Technician. Dylan stated that he was always interested in farming and working on equipment. He thought this type of job would be the best of both worlds.

Dylan learned about the National Farmworkers Jobs Program from the SER Corporation, Client Service agent, Henry Coronado. He learned that he qualified and was able to receive some financial assistance to help with his tuition. He put in two years at Fort Scott Community College to get his degree in John Deere Agricultural Technology.

After receiving his Associates degree, Dylan started working full-time with Sydenstricker Nobbe Partners in Tipton, MO. The SER CSA contacted Jeremy Schneider, Director of Aftermarket Sales, to discuss the company participating in the On-The-Job (OJT) program, which reimburses the employer 50% of the participant’s wages. Sydenstricker agreed to enter into an OJT reimbursement contract.

At the start of the program, Dylan is currently making \$20.00 per hour with benefits. Dylan’s goal is to save enough money to buy and own his own farm.

Henry Coronado, the SER Client Service Agent, will continue to work with the John Deere program at Fort Scott Community College to bring in highly motivated applicants. In fact, after seeing Dylan’s success, his older brother is now currently enrolled at the John Deere course in Fort Scott as well.

Mr. Coronado asked Dylan, how the grant helped him out during school. Dylan stated, “The grant helped me out quite a bit. It was used to assist with my tuition and other expenses. It was very helpful to me, and it would be very helpful for others who are looking for assistance.” Dylan would highly recommend other students to apply for the SER Grant.



Small but Big

By Mike Medina, NFJP Client Service Agent

Born in Liberal, a rural community in southwestern Kansas, Kyle Wagenseller grew up knowing he wanted a career which would provide him with skills that would enable him to get a good paying job wherever he lived. At a young age he often visited his grandparents farm, wander into the shop, and see diesel mechanics working on farm equipment. He understood that working on such large equipment required special training and a passion for tinkering with engines. Surely, he thought, this knowledge would be useful wherever he went. Kyle loved the shop environment and decided early on he wanted to fix engines.

While in high school, he often worked part-time summer jobs often on a farm helping to care for the animals and maintaining the fields. Kyle was so ambitious he also ran his own lawnmowing service which is where he made most of his summer money. He would cut grass, spray for weeds, and occasionally remove trees. Later as he grew older, he worked for a septic service. This was another part time summer job where he had an opportunity to service and maintain company trucks as a shop hand. Here Kyle gained a lot of experience and basic knowledge about diesel engines. Kyle said, “even though the engines are different from farm equipment, I just loved to get my hands dirty. My biggest dream in high school was to become a mechanic.”

When Mike SER Client Service Agent, asked Kyle what was it that inspired him to attend and finish the John Deer Program at Garden City Community College Kyle said, “the inspiration to finish my certification was the fact I could go anywhere I want and find a job easily. Once my training contract at Keating Equipment expires, it is up to me to decide if I want to move somewhere else. If I leave, I know wherever I go, I will be making good money and will always be employable.”

Kyle is currently working full-time and making \$18 per hour as a Shop Technician. With commission he can make up to \$23 per hour. His job also provides him with health insurance and retirement benefits. Kyle shared that the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) with SER Corporation provided him with that small but big help he needed to cover training cost. Kyle said “ after I received the help, I was able to focus on my training and finish what I set out to do. Everyone could use a little help now and then. Knowing that programs like the NFJP, are out there, just makes reaching your career goals easier to manage.”



Remote Job Opportunities for Rural Residents

By Roberta Pianalto, NFJP Client Service Agent

On September 22, 2022, three SER Client Service Agents attended a summit held in Hays, Kansas (KS) put on by the Northwest Kansas Economic & Innovation Center (NWKEIC). This summit was paid for through a grant from the Dane Hanson Foundation in Logan, KS. The concept behind this summit was to inform attendees about opportunities available to rural residents to work remotely from their homes.

Scott Sproul, President, and CEO of NWKEIC, welcomed the group and emphasized how proud NWKEIC is to provide rural Kansans with solid remote job opportunities. These opportunities are paving the way to a life only one dreamed of. It's not always easy to find work you love in rural areas. "Rural and remote work can provide the best of both worlds by helping clients soar in their career while keeping their feet planted firmly where they feel most at home", stated Gretchin Staples Rural and Remote Program Coordinator.

The Rural and Remote Program helps people gain paid work experience while working for various community partners. Gretchin talked about a four week "remote certification" which teaches working from home successfully. The class guides participants through the steps needed to work remotely including infrastructure, supplies and expectations. Gretchin also took their coding academy which helps equip students with the necessary computer science skills to become Junior Full-Stack Developers. The coding academy is a rigorous journey, but well worth it for those who want to become successful web developers or software engineers. Once training is finished, NWKEIC continues to provide support and guidance that includes job research, resume' coaching, and job application support. NWKEIC is hoping to entice people who have moved out of rural Kansas to move back and work remotely. "Northwest Kansas is a beautiful place, people are very nice, and it is the perfect place to raise a family", stated Gretchin Staples.

Mike Rutz CEO of MakeMyMove from Indiana, spoke in the afternoon about how they are attracting people to move back to rural areas in Indiana to work from home. They are finding people who do not want to live in big cities and are returning to rural communities with help from incentive programs and training. Mike encouraged everyone to look at the MakeMyMove.com website to read the success stories.

Participants of the summit also heard from employees who have gone through the Rural and Remote training and found high paying remote jobs. They talked about companies who need employees and need remote workers. The benefits of working from home were shared along with the pay levels which are around \$41,000 per year for a full-time position.

The three SER Client Service Agents left the summit informed about what locals are doing to build up rural populations by presenting opportunities for rural residents seeking good paying jobs which offer a flexible schedule working from home.



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