Scotty's Brewhouse focuses on hiring all
OPEN TABLE: Aaron Yates checks the iPad to check for the next available table.

Scotty's Brewhouse focuses on hiring all

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Aaron Yates greets the next customers with a warm welcome and a smile at Scotty's Brewhouse in Brownsburg.

He asks for their table preference before grabbing menus and silverware and leading them to a booth at lunchtime.

Yates is one of a handful of employees with disabilities who work at the Brownsburg restaurant. Recently, Scott Wise, founder of Scotty's Brewhouse and Thr3e Wise Men, was recognized by the Indianapolis Office of Disability Affairs for his commitment to hiring Hoosiers with disabilities.

He was nominated by Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana for the 2017 Access and Inclusion Award in the employer category.

"I don't like to use the word 'award' when receiving this kind of recognition," Wise said at the ceremony. "We do this because it is the right thing to do. I believe we are setting an example to other employers around the world that individuals with disabilities or as we like to say, 'special abilities,' deserve the same opportunities of inclusiveness."
READY TO SEAT: Yates talks with Mandy VanNess before seating the next lunch guest.

I hope our work will shed light on all the possibilities. The award recognizes an individual, business or organization in the Indianapolis community that has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to providing career training, employment and/or advancement opportunities to persons with disabilities.

"We appreciate all the support Scotty's has given to us," Dustin Jablonski, team leader of disability services with Goodwill, said. "We look forward to being a continued partner."

Yates heads back to the front to greet the next customer. He's been with the restaurant since June 2016.

"Talking to people, I'm a people person," he said about what he likes about his job. "Taking people to tables doesn't feel like work."

The Brownsburg resident used to work in sales at Best Buy before finding this job.

Mandy VanNess, general manager for the Brownsburg restaurant, talks to Yates about his next duty for the day.

"Aaron is funny and energetic and definitely a people person," she said. "He always does what's asked of him."

With the Goodwill disability service program, the organization helps people with disabilities find jobs through various outlets such as job shadowing, interview practice, on-site job coaching, help with technology and developing resumes.

Job coaches are a key component of the program. They work directly with a person with disabilities.

"After a referral for someone, we do the initial assessment, take them through the needs they may have and customize that for the individual," Jablonski said.

For Yates and others, the restaurant job worked well with their needs.

"I'm fortunate here that I have a lot of positions here that are very flexible, which makes it good for their needs," VanNess said. "I'm getting a solid employee and they are getting solid employment."

VanNess has a son with disabilities and he also works at the restaurant. She said she was on board from the beginning with Wise's commitment to hiring persons with disabilities.

"I think every business should participate in special needs hiring," she said. "We are doing it because it's the right thing to do."

Scotty's restaurant shoots for having about 10 percent of the staff be employed through one of the employment services, like Goodwill. Many of the employees at the Brownsburg location act as a host to greet and seat guests. They also do a little light duty in the kitchen as well as light cleaning to keep the restaurant tidy.

Most, like Yates, enjoy working at the front of the restaurant the most.

"I don't like the kitchen work," he said. "It feels like work-work."

For VanNess, she said it means a lot to have an employer who is committed to hiring those with disabilities. Additionally, the restaurant has received positive feedback from guests as well.

Yates completes his regular tasks on a lunchtime shift, but he's also starting to branch out and learn the table numbers of the restaurant.

Before being hired on, Yates spent some time at the 96th Street Scotty's Brewhouse to see if this would be a good fit. For Scotty's and Goodwill, making sure the person will be successful in the job is a top priority.

"Just because they come through with a job coach or an employment service, I don't think it gives them any special treatment, they are still earning the job," VanNess said. "We didn't create a job for Aaron or anyone else. We had a position they fit well in. It's a good fit for them and a good fit for us."

Last year, Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana's disability services program partnered with Wise to place 12 people into jobs.

For many like Yates, this opportunity was their way to get into the employment
world.

For VanNess, she appreciates working for a company that values all employees.

"It's inspiring to see that people care about doing something like that," she said.

"Part of the reason I am with this company is because of people like Scott Wise and the corporate team who have really gotten behind us with their whole hearts and make that [hiring people with disabilities] happen. I'm definitely inspired by that whole initiative."

For businesses that have not been active in hiring people with disabilities, VanNess encourages them to give it a try.

"I think it's really important for people to know they can have a gainful, solid employee just by opening their mind and opening their hearts to everybody in the community with a need," she said.

To learn more about Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana's disability services program, visit the website at www.goodwillindy.org/employment-services.

**SEATING TIME:** Yates grabs silverware before seating a customer at Scotty's Brewhouse in Brownsburg. The restaurant has a focus of hiring people with disabilities.

**WORKING TOGETHER:** Yates works with VanNess, general manager, on his first task of the day.

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