

JODY DENNISON

Central Nine Adult Education Success Story



Meet Jody–

When Jody connected with Central Nine Adult Education, she wanted something that many people take for granted—the opportunity to work, contribute, and support herself.

Jody had experienced significant hearing loss since childhood after contracting rheumatic fever. As she grew older, her hearing continued to decline. Even with hearing aids, communication became increasingly difficult. She struggled to hear patients, use the telephone, and manage the everyday communication required in her work as a CNA and in office positions.

Eventually, Jody lost jobs because of these challenges. Her doctor encouraged her to apply for disability benefits as her hearing continued to worsen. Although disability provided the needed financial and healthcare security, Jody missed working.

She had always been a hard worker with tremendous energy and a natural desire to help others. She wanted to be productive, stay busy, and contribute—but returning to work seemed increasingly out of reach.



"I don't consider myself a success story, just someone who refused to take no for an answer."

Recognizing the Barrier

When Jody connected with Central Nine Career Coach Nicole Corn, it was clear that her hearing loss had become a significant barrier to both communication and returning to the workforce. Even with hearing aids, Jody often struggled to hear conversations.

When they discussed replacing her outdated hearing aids, another barrier became clear: Jody simply could not afford them while living on a limited income.

At the same time, Jody shared something equally important—she missed working and wanted the opportunity to return to the workforce. However, she worried that attempting to work again could jeopardize the healthcare coverage and financial security she received through disability.

Through career coaching, Jody began exploring her interests, strengths, previous experience, transferable skills, and potential career pathways. The process helped shift the focus from what her disability made difficult to what she could do with the right career fit, accommodations, and support.

Connecting to the right resources

A previous partnership with WorkOne had introduced C9 Career Coach to the services available through Vocational Rehabilitation. Knowing that other adult learners had successfully received assistance through the program, Nicole helped Jody connect with Vocational Rehabilitation and began the process of seeking support.

Eventually, Jody was matched with a counselor who understood the challenges of hearing loss. Vocational Rehabilitation helped Jody obtain the updated hearing aids she desperately needed. The process took time, but the result was life changing.

Building Skills and Confidence

With one of her biggest barriers addressed, Jody began preparing to return to the workforce. Through Central Nine Adult Education, she received career coaching, resume assistance, and enrolled in C9's QuickBooks training. The class strengthened her computer and office skills while also helping rebuild something equally important—her confidence.

Jody's first step back into employment was a warehouse position. It wasn't where she wanted to remain long-term, but it provided an opportunity to successfully return to the workforce, rebuild her employment history, and prove to herself that she could succeed. And she did.

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One Step Led to Another

Jody eventually moved into an accounting-related position where she could use more of her computer and office skills. After a few years, she found herself drawn back toward healthcare and her passion for helping others.

She accepted an office position with Franciscan Health, combining her administrative abilities with her desire to serve people. Her work ethic, experience, and professional relationships continued to open doors. Through networking and connections with people who recognized her abilities, Jody eventually received an opportunity to work for Anthem.

Today, five years later, Jody helps others with barriers connect to resources. In many ways, her career has come full circle. She now uses her computer, communication, and problem-solving skills to help others navigate healthcare and overcome their own barriers. Jody now earns a competitive wage of \$30 per hour, with retirement benefits and healthcare coverage for herself and her husband.

More than a Class

Jody's career pathway was not one big leap. It was a series of small steps—identifying a barrier, finding the right resource, obtaining better hearing aids, building skills, returning to work, gaining confidence, networking, and continuing to move forward.

Her story demonstrates why adult education is about much more than completing a class or earning a credential. Central Nine Adult Education did not accomplish this alone. Career coaching, C9 training, Vocational Rehabilitation, WorkOne connections, employers, and most importantly, Jody's determination all became pieces of the pathway forward.

Sometimes a person already has the motivation, experience, and ability to succeed. What they need is someone to recognize their strengths, help identify the barriers standing in their way, and connect them with resources and opportunities.