

AUTISM RESOURCES

Bridging the Gap: Transition to Adulthood

Job & Career Readiness

Searching for a first job revealed surprises for Brian's family — from navigating applications and disclosure decisions to building communication and self-advocacy skills. These challenges became opportunities to grow confidence and market his strengths. Missouri libraries support this stage with LearningExpress career prep, practice exams, and resources that build employability and workplace skills.



Presented by:



Brian Harper

Brian Harper is an Ohio professor, attorney, and proud dad. His son, Brian II, is a rising senior at Baldwin Wallace University. He was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Epilepsy at the age of 3. Brian II's unique journey has taken him to multiple school placements, through intervention successes and failures, and, as a young adult, an active career as a performing pianist. Across these experiences, Brian has come to understand the best practice for supporting Brian II as a student and career-minded young adult.

Mandi Rickelman is an educator, consultant, and the founder of Welcoming Spaces LLC. She partners with schools, libraries, and community organizations to create inclusive, sensory-aware environments. With more than 20 years of experience, she supports autistic individuals and their families and is dedicated to providing continuity of care from preschool through adulthood.



Mandi Rickelman

College & Post-Secondary Life

College brought new pressures: time management, social stress, sensory overload, and the need to navigate disability services. For Brian, success came from developing coping strategies and finding supportive people and spaces. Missouri libraries offer guidance beyond academics, with databases that connect students to study tools, life skills, and resources for stress management and self-advocacy in higher education.



In Partnership:

