

AYDEN — WIOA In-School Youth

Ayden arrived at Michigan Works! West Central with a clear goal: to find a meaningful summer job that could grow with him through the school year and potentially evolve into a work-based learning opportunity. Referred by his school, Ayden already had a workplace in mind, the Lakeshore Food Club in Ludington, a nonprofit grocery store dedicated to providing affordable, dignified food access for families in need.

Lakeshore Food Club operates on a unique point-based membership system that allows families to choose their own groceries. Behind the scenes, a committed team of staff and volunteers keeps the shelves stocked and the warehouse running smoothly. Ayden hoped to be part of that mission.

He was enrolled in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program and the WIOA YPP Plus program, where he began developing essential employability skills and learning what makes a strong, dependable employee. As part of his training, Ayden was placed in a paid Work Experience at Lakeshore Food Club, joining the warehouse team.

From day one, Ayden demonstrated a strong work ethic and an eagerness to learn. He quickly mastered food safety procedures, inventory intake and proper stocking methods. His ability to absorb new information and work independently made an immediate impression. Program Manager Alison Glossinger noted, "His ability to pick up new skills quickly and work independently without needing constant direction has been nothing short of impressive."

Ayden says the experience has strengthened his communication and teamwork skills the most. Working



alongside supervisors, volunteers and customers taught him how to collaborate with people from all backgrounds. He also sharpened his organizational abilities, which are an essential part of keeping a warehouse running efficiently.

"Ayden has consistently gone above and beyond, showing initiative, reliability and a strong work ethic that has made a huge impact on our daily operations," Glossinger said.

Ayden is grateful for the support he received from Michigan Works! West Central throughout the process.

"The process of getting signed up was quick and easy, and I was able to get to work in my Work Experience quickly," he said.

He believes the experience has helped him build a stronger resumé and develop skills that will serve him well in future jobs.

The success of Ayden's Work Experience led to an exciting outcome as he was hired to a permanent position at Lakeshore Food Club. He now works there while attending high school, earning work-based learning credit along the way. Although he hasn't finalized his post-graduation plans, Ayden hopes to continue growing with Lakeshore Food Club and building on the foundation he has created.

Ayden's journey is a powerful example of how opportunity, support, and determination can open doors for young people preparing for their futures.