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## ALABAMA DISABILITIES ADVOCACY PROGRAM

January 9, 2014

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) is part of the nationwide federally mandated protection and advocacy (P&A) system. ADAP's mission is to provide quality, legally based advocacy services to Alabamians with disabilities in order to protect, promote and expand their rights.

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[www.adap.net](http://www.adap.net)

## ADAP Demands End to Segregated Subminimum - Wage Workshops

Calling them exploitive, isolating, and cost-inefficient, ADAP has called for Alabama to phase-out public support for segregated sheltered workshops for persons with disabilities and to enact "Employment First" policies that support employment in the general workforce as the first and preferred employment outcome for people with any type of disability.

This is the chief recommendation in a report released on Dec. 9 by ADAP titled *It's My Job: It's My Life: Employment First for Alabamians with Disabilities*.

Through personal stories, this report demonstrates that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, can - with appropriate support - achieve gainful employment in the regular labor market.

The report offers cost-efficient, proven policy steps that can be taken to improve employment opportunities for Alabamians with disabilities so they can better achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency.

To read a PDF of the report, click [here](#).

For the press release, click [here](#).

## Matthew Foster

Matthew Foster is an entertainer. Employed at Chuck E. Cheese's in Vestavia, one of his





main duties is to play Chuck E. Cheese. He's been performing as Chuck E. Cheese for 14 years, working about 15 hours a week, primarily on the weekends. In addition to entertaining at the restaurant, Matthew performs at children's birthday parties and other special events. Matthew enjoys singing "Happy Birthday" to the kids and dancing around. He proudly notes he can do a split even in full costume, adding, "I love making people happy and making kids happy."

Being Chuck E. Cheese is not Matthew's only job duty. He helps keep the backstage clean and organized and does setup and costume preparation for the shows.

Matthew is saving some of his earnings to buy an iPad. He also uses money earned from his job to go out with friends, take his girlfriend on dates, and buy his girlfriend presents on special occasions.

When Matthew is not working, he stays busy. He attends a weekly art class, goes out with friends, does chores around the house, and sketches pictures to give to his girlfriend. Matthew has a life coach who spends several hours a week assisting him with budgeting, grocery shopping, and other various tasks. The life coach is funded through Matthew's Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver.

"I love being in the spotlight," Matthew says. When the spotlight shines on Matthew, he definitely knows how to make the most of it and he uses that spotlight to make other people happy. A true entertainer.



### HAVE PRESENTATION. WILL TRAVEL

Are you a member of a group that needs a speaker for an upcoming meeting? If so, ADAP can fill this need. ADAP staff provides education/training sessions on a wide variety of disability-related topics including, but not limited to: the Americans with Disabilities Act, Medicaid waivers, guardianships, special education, general disability rights, and transition services for youth who will soon become adults. We will also speak on specifically requested, disability-related topics. If you are interested in making arrangements for ADAP to come speak at one of your meetings, please contact Anita Davidson, one of ADAP's Legal Assistants, by calling 205-348-5107, or emailing her, [akdavidson@adap.ua.edu](mailto:akdavidson@adap.ua.edu)



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