

“Where are they Now”

Patricia Ward-Laflesh

Right from the beginning my connection with Lewis County Opportunities was a positive one.

I first had a connection with Opportunities as a person in need of services. One of the employees of Opportunities that I received assistance from informed me of a part time position opening at the agency which I applied for and was hired. This opportunity changed my life.

I see people out in the community that have made a difference in my life and I try to thank them and let them know when possible. For an example; I recently saw the person mentioned above and thanked her for her role in my acquiring the part time position so many years ago.

I started work for Opportunities in 1994. I was hired part time for the Seniors Meals Program. I worked in that capacity for several years and then was asked to work full time in the office at Opportunities for the same program.

Throughout my seventeen years employed at Opportunities I worked under numerous grants with all ages depending on the services needed. I worked with and made connections with co-workers, individuals, and other agency employees. I have lots of memories and stories to share. There were a few sad days while working at Opportunities -- I was let go from employment several times due to funding cuts; but, fortunately for me new positions came available and I found myself back working at LCOI whether it be part time or full time, an important agency in my life. I was fortunate to receive knowledge and training as needed to perform in all of the positions I held.

I resigned from Lewis County Opportunities, Inc. after working 17 years from 1994-2011 to pursue a position at Northern Regional Center for Independent Living. I had mixed feelings about leaving LCOI because LCOI was like family. At the time grants were getting harder to secure so I decided to move on and embrace a different but also similar type of work. LCOI and NRCIL are agencies that take pride in helping others and helping others has always been my passion. LCOI has a befitting name because as you have read I was given opportunity to grow at Lewis County Opportunities.

Currently I work for Northern Regional Center for Independent Living as a peer-run disability rights and resource center. I have been employed with NRCIL for 5 years. I continue to learn and grow professionally and personally at NRCIL and my years working at Opportunities helped prepare me for the work I currently do. I will never forget my years of service at LCOI and I wish the best for LCOI and the current workers; and I look forward to my continuing work at NRCIL.