

Man blinded by gunshot earns state achievement award

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – David Cameron of Little Rock, who was suddenly blinded from an accidental gunshot wound, has been named the state's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

Due to his injury, Cameron, formerly from Beebe, lost his job as a plumber. After facing many challenges, he moved to Little

Rock to accept a job as an Assembler/Fabricator with Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind. The DSB Board selected him for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work.

Cameron said he was close to becoming a journeyman plumber when a relative, who thought his gun was unloaded, accidentally shot him. The gunshot rendered him totally blind in both eyes. He has experienced some hearing difficulties related to his gunshot wound. Nevertheless, Cameron has a remarkably positive attitude about the accident.

Prior to his selection for the state award, Cameron was one of only 14 people in Arkansas who received area awards. Other area award winners were Angela Felton of West Memphis, staff member, L.R. Jackson Girls Club; Anthony Velte of Conway, staff member, Martinez Chiropractic; Deborah Clark of Helena, teacher, KIPP Delta Public Schools; Edward Howell, Jr., of Fayetteville, sales clerk, Walgreens of Springdale; Elizabeth Davis of Fordyce, cook, Dallas County Medical Center; Dr. Geraldine Buckingham of Pine Bluff, assistant professor, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; Laddie Middleton of Locust Grove, shift lead man, Ozark Mountain Poultry in Batesville; Patricia Buggs of El Dorado, nurse, Medical Center of South Arkansas; Robert D. Brown, formerly of Malvern and Texarkana, team leader, Alphapointe of Kansas City; Ronald D. Smith of Fort Smith, customer service representative, Alphapointe of Kansas City; Thomas Tatum of Little Rock, professional painter, SIDECO Inc. of North Little Rock; Sandra Hicks of Texarkana, administrative assistant, DHS Division of County Operations; and two individuals who wish to remain anonymous.

The state award presentation was made December 9, after the DSB Board meeting at a reception honoring the nominees and their employers. Cameron's employer, Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, was recognized as the state's outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

Cameron and his wife Beverly have a son, age 6, and a daughter, age 5. Cameron volunteers at local charity events. His hobbies are karaoke and sports. He is a Razorbacks fan and his favorite NFL team is the Green Bay Packers. A kind doctor provided him with a spare set of prosthetic glass eyes with the team logos; he said when he wears them, people think they're contact lenses.

This is the ninth year that DSB has given Consumer of the Year awards to recognize individuals who have managed their rehabilitation plans, gained marketable skills, secured good jobs, and become role models for others.

DSB provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults who are blind or severely visually impaired and whose goal is successful employment. The division also serves youth and older blind individuals. For information about DSB's programs and services, visit the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1-800-960-9270, 501-682-5463, or TDD 501-682-0093.

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Shown in the photo, from the left are: DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Darlene Tucker of Batesville, DSB Board member James Caton of Little Rock, David Cameron of Little Rock, and DSB Board Chairman Terry Sheeler of Fayetteville. Cameron was recognized as the State Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind Board on December 9, at a reception in Little Rock. Cameron's employer, Arkansas Lighthouse for the Blind, was recognized as the state's outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.