

Media Release

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Little Rock woman who's visually impaired earns achievement award

Melissa Moffitt of Little Rock, who is visually impaired, has been named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

Moffitt faced numerous struggles in her attempts to enter the workforce. "Melissa finally was hired at Waffle House as a server. She has completed her on-the-job training and has been working for them for several months.

The manager told me that she was doing great," said DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Dwight Turner, who nominated her for the achievement award because of her determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work.

"She made some very positive decisions in her life which resulted in following through with some eye treatments and finding a job. I'm proud of her accomplishments," he said.

"I was in an abusive relationship and living in a camper. It was so embarrassing when Dwight came to visit me. He never even flinched. There was no judgement. That's what encouraged me. It was a real blessing. He was the first light I had," said Moffitt. "He gave me the confidence I didn't have."

In the midst of this situation, her mother died, but she said she's become closer to her father and her brother now.

Moffitt said she had difficulty finding work after an injury to her right eye several years ago. She gradually lost more and more vision in her left eye. She didn't have insurance and went to the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences, who referred her to DSB. She said, "DSB gave me the chance to have medical treatment for my eyes."



Her visual field is still severely constricted, and Moffitt said she has glaucoma. Her right eye has a dense corneal scar from the injury. Even so, she has been able to work and earn enough money to recently move into her own apartment.

The award presentation was made June 24, at the noon meeting of the Little Rock Founders Lions Club. Moffitt is one of only 13 people in Arkansas who will receive an area award and was selected from an area that includes Faulkner, Conway, Pope, Van Buren, and part of Pulaski Counties.

“I felt surprised and good (to receive the award),” Moffitt said. “I appreciate all (DSB) does.”

Her employer, Waffle House of Little Rock, was recognized as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

In addition to medical services, Moffitt said DSB provided job readiness and placement services. She attended DSB’s Job Club, which taught her job seeking skills and helped her develop a resume. Turner followed up on Moffitt’s job interviews. “He talked to me, and he talked to employers about the ability of people who are blind to work.”

This is the eighth 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. An overall state winner will be selected at the end of the year.

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.

Photo caption:

From the left are DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Dwight Turner, Pat Bobichaux, of Waffle House who is Melissa Moffitt’s employer, area Consumer of the Year Melissa Moffitt and President of the Little Rock Founders Lions Club Kandy Cayce. Awards were presented to Moffitt and Waffle House today at the Lions Club.