

Media Release

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Locust Grove man regains his vision, earns achievement award



From the left, DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Connie Crawford presents awards to Laddie Middleton, who was named area Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB), and to his employer Ozark Mountain Poultry, represented by Jennifer Taylor of Human Resources and Leah Acoach, Human Resources Vice President. The event was hosted by the Batesville Lions Club.

Middleton was selected from Independence, Izard, Stone, Cleburne, Fulton, White, and Sharp Counties.

His employer, Ozark Mountain Poultry, of Batesville was recognized by DSB as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment.

Laddie Middleton of Locust Grove, near Batesville, has been named the area's outstanding Consumer of the Year by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB).

DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Connie Crawford nominated him for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work.

Middleton is a shift lead man at Ozark Mountain Poultry in Batesville.

The award presentation was made June 9, at the noon meeting of the Batesville Lions Club at Kelley-Wyatts Restaurant in the Ramada Inn.

Middleton said he had cataracts in both eyes and was nearsighted. “It had gotten to where I couldn’t drive at night. I couldn’t go deer hunting. I couldn’t see people at a distance and focus on things (objects).” The eye doctor said he needed surgery, and the head nurse told him about DSB.

“At his initial contact with DSB, he was very firm that he wanted services to continue to be employed and retain his job to support himself and his family,” said Crawford. Middleton has worked eight years in a supervisory capacity in the poultry industry. Prior to that he worked seven years in the general automotive industry. “He has demonstrated a good work ethic.”

Middleton expressed his appreciation for the services he received from DSB. “I’m overwhelmed with what DSB has done for me.” The agency paid for his eye surgeries and related medical treatment. Now he is able to drive and only uses the reading part of the bifocals DSB bought him.

Middleton and his wife Mary Ann have three grown children. In his spare time he enjoys hunting and fishing.

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. 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.