

# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## Conway man regains sight, earns achievement award



**From the left, DSB Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Dwight Turner presents the area Consumer of the Year award to Anthony Velte of Conway. His employer, Martinez Chiropractic, was recognized as an outstanding business partner for its commitment to promoting the employment of persons with vision impairment. The awards were given by the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind during a meeting of the Conway Evening Lions Club May 12.**

Anthony Velte of Conway 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 Dwight Turner nominated Velte for the achievement award because of his determination to overcome adversity and succeed at work. "He was totally committed. He stayed in touch with me and I never had a problem with him fulfilling everything he said he wanted to do to become employed. I was very proud of all that he did."

In 2014, Velte graduated from Remington College in Little Rock with a 3.94 GPA and received his Medical Assistant certification. He had perfect attendance throughout his training. Upon graduation, he was immediately hired at Martinez Chiropractic in Conway, where he had done his 180-hour internship. He has been employed there for two years.

The COY award presentation was made May 12, at a meeting of the Conway Evening Lions Club, held at Smitty's Bar-B-Que restaurant. Velte was selected from an area that includes Faulkner, Conway, Pope, Van Buren, and part of Pulaski Counties.

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

Velte, 52, said his vision problems started when he was 35 years old. During much of this time he had no insurance and struggled to pay for surgeries and medical treatment. He said he was diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy, which caused him to become legally blind. Ironically, he had been working in an eye clinic grinding lenses for eyeglasses. He lost his job.

Later another eye doctor told him he needed immediate surgery. When Velte expressed financial concerns, he was referred to DSB, which paid for the surgery and related medical treatment that eventually restored his eyesight. Velte said he appreciated the services he received from DSB. The agency also provided career counseling and paid his tuition expenses.

Velte's hobbies include cake decorating and drawing with colored pencils. He also makes and sells lye soap, a skill he learned from his grandmother.

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.