

NFJP HELPS FARMWORKER WRANGLE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE

Lane was a low-income, seasonal farmworker from the New Underwood/Sturgis, SD area. He had recently graduated from high school and was unemployed when he connected with the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills (CLCBH). Lane had spent the summer months of 2015 as a seasonal farmworker and ranch hand. His goal was to attend the Mitchell Technical Institute and earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Agricultural Technology. However, he was struggling financially and unable to afford costs of living expenses and at the same time pay for college. He did not want to have a high student loan debt upon completing his training but had no other means to pay for school.

Lane called the South Dakota Department of Labor office inquiring about the National Farmworker Jobs Program after hearing about the program through word of mouth as well as seeing the CLCBH's promotional materials. After meeting with Lane in person and hearing his story, it was determined that he was eligible for the NFJP and enrolled in the program.



Photo of Lane, used with permission

The support that Lane received from CLCBH included gas, food and rental assistance, a student stipends to assist with his post-secondary education expenses, as well as referrals to outside agencies and additional resources, allowing him to focus on his education without worrying about incurring debt or getting behind on his bills.

On May 4, 2018, Lane achieved his post-secondary education goal by earning his Associate of Applied Science degree in Animal Science. With his degree in hand, Lane began his job search with the guidance of CLCBH's support team. By the following July, he was working part-time for several businesses, while still seeking permanent, full-time employment. He worked for a local livestock sale barn, earning \$10.50 per hour, with no benefits. He also worked for a local rancher, as a hired ranch hand. It wasn't long before that local rancher offered Lane a full-time position, and he now earns approximately \$3,000.00 per month, including room and board.

Lane continues to enjoy his employment and is very thankful for all the NFJP has assisted him with. When asked if he would like to share story with others, he said:

Thank you to Erin Zimmerman, Case Manager from Black Hills Special Services Cooperative for sharing this success story!

NFJP has helped immensely throughout my education process while attending Mitchell Technical Institute for Animal science. They provided financial assistance, which helped pay for groceries, gas, and even rent money. Even during my two internships, they stayed in touch and wanted to know how I was doing along with how my internships were going! It was a great opportunity and I cannot thank the NFJP enough for all they have done for me!