



Impact Story: Interview with Hannah & Kim

Support for Families & Building Confidence

Kim: I've been a parent for a person on the Autism spectrum for 25 years, I served on the Board of Directors for Autism Ontario for about 8 years. I also was president of the local chapter of Autism Ontario. My interest in Grocer 4 Good is based on the vision that Lisa had in terms of developing it, which is also based on the fact that people on the autism spectrum disorder have difficulty accessing the labour market. **I think that it was a really beautiful idea that she came up with and it's providing employment to people who would otherwise have no access to it.**

The volunteer work that I do for G4G is for the benefit of the organization and it's something that I believe in because again, people who have challenges accessing the labour market - it's what they need.

What do you like most about working at G4G?

Hannah: **That it's perfect there, you can make everything perfect and stuff.**

Can you tell me about the first time you worked at G4G, what did you feel? What did you learn?

Hannah: I felt a little bit nervous. **But then I got better at it. And because really, the people that worked there really liked me.** So I stayed there and worked.

When did you start working at G4G?

Kim: Just before COVID you guys cut the ribbon and then it was COVID. I think they had a soft opening in late 2019 and then they had the grand opening in early 2020. And then it was COVID and then nobody worked. She's been there since inception.

How has your life been impacted by G4G?

Kim: From a parents perspective, **the opportunity for someone who has difficulty accessing the labour market to be able to obtain employment - long term employment with real wages - is very reassuring.** When the kids are growing up - and I don't know if this is true of all parents, but certainly it was for me - **that my fear was that my child would never be able to participate in the labour market and jobs.** Let's just say jobs dictate how our life is, right. So if you don't have a job, you have a very sad life. But when you have a job, you have a paycheck and you have all of the social interactions that are incumbent with being employed. **The impact on our life is that this is a real job with real wages that will perhaps lead to something bigger.**

Interpersonal relationships

Hannah: [talking about Jay] To really have a boss. She's like, really nice to me. And like Jay's just very open to anything that you know.

She helped me a lot, yeah. I was trying to figure out how to do the cash and it took me a little bit to do it. Like I couldn't do it so I had to get Jay to help me. And she did, then I was happy with that. Yeah, So she's teaching new skills. And she's someone you can talk to as well, yes. She's a great one.



What's your favourite thing about working at G4G?

Hannah: **My favourite thing would be supporting the customers and trying to help them out. I love helping them all the time.**

Do you know some regulars?

Hannah: I do have this one relationship with a customer, that has been nice.

Where do you think you'd be today without G4G?

Hannah: If I'm not at G4G then I'd be at Habitat for Humanity Restore and working there and stuff and getting everything going.

Do you work there too?

Hannah: I do. I volunteer there on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and stuff.

Do you think that Grocer 4 Good and your work with them helped you move into that position?

Hannah: It really did. It helps me a lot.

Changes, growth & the teaching kitchen space

Kim: Well, you've got a new location. You've had a bunch of different managers. You got a kitchen now. Product lines have evolved. Having evolved means things change. So. What do you think is good?

Hannah: **The best part is having a kitchen. Finally! I'm also working with some other staff, mainly just for training.**

Impact on the wider community

Kim: Outside that **they're operating, you know a grocery store in a food desert.** And Lisa is very actively involved with the community members in supporting the people in that section of the community, so. **I don't know how the impact is measurable, but there is food there and they're really proactive in ensuring that, you know, the products that can be distributed for less are there. And there's certainly community interaction.**

Kim: **They're providing employment for people who don't have access to the labour market, and they're supporting people who are marginalized within the community within that particular neighborhood.**

Hannah: Brings down barriers for people...

Kim: Who have challenges, regardless of whether they are intellectual or otherwise. They're open and welcoming to all.