

Step by Step, I am Maturing Rieko Hayashi

● Introduction

My name is Rieko Hayashi. I am officially acknowledged as having intellectual disability and Down's Syndrome. I am 37years old but will be 38years old in December. I work at a company called "Starbucks".

My good points are: I finish what I have started, possess organizational skills, good at writing Kanji, like to write and enjoy small adventures by using public transportations.

My weak points are: I work at my own pace, am stubborn, do not like to lose and sometimes talk back.

● The City I Live In

From the city of Tokyo where I live, one can see Mt. Fuji and Tokyo Tower. The public transportation is very convenient. I used to walk when I was in elementary school and in junior high school I took the train to school.. In High School, I rode the bike to the station and then took the train to school. I enjoy the adventures on the train because my father used to take me out when I was small. Now he takes his grandchild to different places. The public transportations have improved much, there are many new buildings and the city has changed much since my school days.

● School Days

I have been taking swimming lessons since I was in kindergarten. I am good at sports and won a prize at the Special Olympics. (*Photo)

I have several medals of gold, silver and bronze which I received during my elementary to high school days.

● My Family

There are four people in my family, my father, mother, younger brother and myself. I have been living with my parents for 37 years and there were times when my parents had a difficult time. My parents told me that they were able to meet many people and to learn much because of my existence. There were difficult times, but I am grateful to my parents. Nearing 40 years of age, I hope to continue living with my parents without being a burden. I used to bake cakes with my mother, and my cousins. I feel that this memory which I treasure has led to me to my work at "Okashiya Palette" and at "Starbucks".

● My Personal History

After my graduation from high school, I attended a training seminar offered by the Department of Human Resource Office for a year and a half, but could not find a job. I worked at a bakery where my father's friend's son with intellectual disability worked.

Later on, my mother's friend introduced me to "Okashiya Palette".

● Days at "Okashiya Palette"

"Okashiya Palette" is a community workshop for baking cookies and cakes. I worked there for 11 years, from the age of 22 to 33. I helped in the various process of baking cookies. Mixing the ingredients has helped me with my present job at "Starbucks" because I get complimented on being good at mixing drinks. I have traveled to Mongolia and Korea and feel that I have had many good experiences both at work and in my life. In 2004, I attended a "Briefing Session for General Jobs" with a staff of "Okashiya Palette" and this was the first step toward getting a job. This led to my present job at Starbucks.

At "Okashiya Palette", I helped with the baking and sales of the products and now at Starbucks, I offer delicious coffee. For me, both places are "A Place to Work".

● My Work at Starbucks and my Thoughts About My Work

At present, I work at Starbucks Coffee Japan, Ltd. (Starbucks). There are 870 branches of Starbucks within Japan. I work in at the store located in Seijo area of Tokyo. Previously I used to work at the branch in Akasaka. When I was in Akasaka, the working hours were from 10:00am to 5:00 pm but now my shift is from 9:00am to 4:00 pm. My job is to make drinks, clean up, take out the garbage and tasting (to have customers sample the coffee.)

I can now manage my job more easily and I enjoy my work.

At Starbucks, the staff get rewarded for their work. We receive a pin badge for our efforts. (show the badge) I made my own personal manual in order to learn my job. (photo of the manual)

There are foreign customers so I also study English. (Photo)

What I enjoy in my work is to take orders from customers with a big smile.

Some customers say to me "Thank you for the drink" when I hand them the napkin and their drinks. Also when I was cleaning the front of the store, a customer called to me and said, "Your cleaning is appreciated", and I felt that people noticed me. I cannot work at the cashier nor take orders, but eventually I hope to do the same job as the other employees.

A hard task is to clean out the huge amount of garbage everyday. I feel disappointed when there are lots of left over food and drinks.

I give warm service to the customers everyday by taking pride in serving them with delicious coffee and happiness.

● My Hobby and What I Enjoy

On days I am off from work, I participate in events offered by “Tamariba Palette”(Palette's leisure club), and Ebisu Youth Club and also take lessons. These activities include harp lessons, computer lessons, English conversation lessons, Tamariba leisure programs, baseball club practice. What I enjoy most are the leisure programs offered by “Tamariba Palette”. We do a Japanese style cherry blossom viewing called “Ohanami”, attend flower festivals, fireworks, enjoy music in a café and also participate in the festivals offered by the Shibuya-ku. It is fun to attend these seasonal programs. The members of this club are fun and I enjoy talking and listening to them about their work, past school life, family and at times we boast about ourselves.

We have foreign customers at Starbucks, so I hope to be able to use English in my work.

● My Dream

When I have time there is something I think about a lot. That is to become better at smiling and holding a conversation. This is related to my dream. When I was in elementary school, I once went to a coffee shop with my teacher where we listened to relaxed music. This remains as a wonderful memory. I want to work in such a coffee shop. I hope to make cakes and drinks and to serve the customers with a big smile offering them the specialty of the day.