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A work trial to test her capabilities ended up landing Ballarat National Disability Insurance Scheme participant Amanda Weston her dream job and she's celebrating one year in the role.

Working at one of Ballarat's historic watering holes, The Bunch of Grapes Hotel, the 24-year-old, who has an intellectual disability and lives with her dad said she's never been happier, and after losing her mum she feels like she's gained a second family.

"I do three shifts a week and I just love working there. I pour wine, soft drinks; direct customers to their tables; take orders; deliver meals; help clean up and I've been taught to use the till and the efpos machine," Amanda said proudly.

Bunch of Grapes Hotel manager, James (Jamie) Morcombe said after working with APM Employment Services to hire other people with disability, when its employment consultant Zoe Thornell called to ask if Amanda could do a day on-the-job trial he didn't think twice.

"We already had another staff member working with us who has a disability and it's worked out well, so I had no hesitation giving Amanda a go," he said.

"Zoe said it was only a trial to test Amanda's capabilities, but she was just amazing. It was her personality that sold me. She's got a heart of God, loves people, loves customers and anything we ask her to do she smiles, says okay, and off she goes."

Jamie said Amanda has picked up so many tasks throughout the hotel, even setting up its large function room, and her friendly disposition means she's become popular with all the regulars.

"While there are a few things Amanda can't quite do due to her height, like pulling beers and using the coffee machine, she's a good listener and learner and she's been a huge help," he said.

APM employment consultant Zoe said when she received a call from Jamie to say he would like to employ Amanda the entire office was ecstatic.

"It was just a feel-good moment for everyone because we all knew her, and we've supported her to redo her Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) course and to complete other work ready course to help build her confidence.

"Plus the fact Amanda was always calling and emailing regularly to ask if we had any jobs for her. She's an eager beaver, willing to try anything. She's such a little trooper," Zoe said.

"Once Amanda started work, I saw her weekly to see how she was going, if she needed any extra help, but I was pleased to hear she didn't need much, just some taxi vouchers to take her

home safely after work.

“I then talked to Jamie to see if one of the staff would walk Amanda out to the taxi after her shift to make sure she got in the cab safely, the driver knew her address and she was being charged correctly. It wasn’t an issue at all, so it’s all worked out really well.”

Amanda said through her NDIS funding she also engages Brook, from local disability provider The Support People once a week who helps her build her life skills and supports her to access her community.

“I love Brook. She taught me maths so I can use the till at work; she’s teaching me road safety because it can get a bit hard for me and she takes me shopping,” Amanda said.
“I love buying clothes but I’m trying really hard to save my money,” she said astutely.

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