

The Trainee Becomes the Trainer: Ashley's Journey at TJ Maxx



For over 10 years, Ashley Atchue has been a dedicated and valued employee at TJ Maxx. Her journey is a true testament to what can happen when hard work, determination, and a commitment to personal growth come together.

When Ashley first began her employment, she worked primarily in the back room. Her responsibilities included hanging clothes on racks, folding garments, breaking down boxes, removing plastic from merchandise, and preparing items to be rolled out onto the sales floor. Ashley enjoyed her work, took pride in doing it well, and built strong relationships with her coworkers.

But Ashley had a goal! With the support of her job coach, Helena, Ashley approached management about expanding her duties and working on the sales floor. The store manager welcomed the idea, and within weeks, Ashley began splitting her time working in the back room while gradually transitioning to the sales floor for a few hours each shift.

On the floor, Ashley's responsibilities grew. She began straightening clothing racks, organizing the shoe department, stocking shelves, and working in the dressing room area - one of her favorite spots. There, she greets customers, rehanges unwanted items, and returns merchandise to the floor. Over time, Ashley mastered her new responsibilities, which also include identifying merchandise requiring security tags and placing security devices on shoes and luggage.

Ashley shares that her favorite areas are the shoe department and the fitting room area, and she especially enjoys seeing the variety of specialty foods the store carries. Most importantly, she loves interacting with customers, coworkers, and managers while building connections and friendships along the way.

And in a full circle moment, Ashley has become the trainer. Because of her commitment to taking on new challenges, she now teaches new employees, with confidence and pride, the same tasks she once learned with support.

Ashley also values what employment has given her beyond the workplace. She appreciates earning her own paycheck, enjoying her employee discount, and spending her money on things she loves, especially yarn for crocheting, clothing, and items that bring her joy. She proudly shares that having a job allows her to purchase what makes her happy.

Ashley's independence extends beyond her work duties. She independently takes the bus to and from work, demonstrating responsibility and confidence in navigating her community.

Looking ahead, Ashley has set her next goal: learning to work at the register. To prepare, she has downloaded an app on her phone to practice making change with money and understanding how registers operate. She is actively building her skills to take on this next challenge.

In addition to her job at TJ Maxx, Ashley also enjoys working during the summer at Eden's Gardening Shop.

Ashley's journey reminds us that employment is more than a job - it's a pathway that can lead to career growth, increased confidence, independence, and pride. From hanging clothes in the backroom to training new employees on the sales floor, Ashley's story beautifully reflects what meaningful employment can look like: learning new skills, taking on new challenges, and discovering what can happen when given the right opportunities and with the right support.

We are incredibly proud of Ashley and all that she continues to accomplish.



Gratitude Corner

What does it take to be a leader? What does it take to lead a restaurant? These are questions I've asked myself from time to time—and who better to ask than a phenomenal restaurant manager named George. George is the manager of Nemasket's very own David Bourgeois, who works at the McDonald's on Huttleston Ave. in Fairhaven. George has been a lead manager at this location for the past 14 years. It goes without saying that he is a great manager of his team and truly knows the ropes of running a restaurant. David has worked under George for almost three years, and much of David's success there comes from the strong relationship he has with him. I had the honor of interviewing George, and here's what he had to say: "I have worked for the company for a total of 17 years and have been a manager here for 14 of those years. Caring about the people who work for you is very important. You can't run a business without great employees. David is awesome, and the thing I like about David and me is that there is always open communication between us. He isn't afraid to ask questions and also knows what I expect from my employees, including him. If I could describe David's and my relationship in one word, it would be genuine." George's response during the interview was genuine as well. He is a great guy—both to David and to his entire team.

Author: Aaron Latham-Coppage, Employment Specialist



A Year of Growth, Gratitude, and Purpose

As I reflect on my first year with The Nemasket Group, I am filled with gratitude for the warm welcome I've received and the incredible experiences I've had so far. It has been a privilege to learn the heart of this organization, meeting the people we support, connecting with families, and working alongside our dedicated staff, leadership team, and board. This first year has shown me just how special this community truly is.

Together, we accomplished a great deal. We completed a comprehensive strategic planning process and created a three-year plan that will guide us into the future with clarity and purpose. From that plan, we launched a one-year action plan with 77 specific action items. I'm proud to share that 28 of those action items are already complete, with another 22 well underway. These efforts focus on strengthening our organizational infrastructure, expanding voice and choice for the people we support, enhancing the quality of our services, increasing staff knowledge, and exploring opportunities to grow and diversify our offerings.

This year also brought meaningful improvements to our environment. Our renovated day services space now offers a warm, homelike setting for the people who participate in our CBDS program and doubles as a welcoming space for community use. We applied for several grants as we continue working to expand programming and build the infrastructure that supports long-term success.

And, of course, we celebrated a major milestone, 40 years of service to our community. That celebration was not just about our past, but a recognition of the strong foundation that will carry us forward.

There were countless other moments, big and small that made this year exceptional, all pointing to the dedication and compassion that define this organization.

As we look ahead, we have much to be excited about. Our annual 5K will be held on Saturday, May 2nd a fun and important fundraiser that brings our community together. We also look forward to our Golf Invitational in August and our End of Summer Sizzler in September. I hope to see many of you there.

Thank you for your support, your trust, and your partnership. I always welcome feedback and ideas about how we can continue improving our services for the people and families we proudly serve. I am truly honored to be part of this journey with you.

With appreciation,
Jenny Duval
Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE!

**THE
NEMASKET GROUP
ANNUAL 5K
WALK/RUN 2026**



SATURDAY, MAY 2ND

**FORT PHOENIX STATE
RESERVATION
FAIRHAVEN, MA**

