

Community Options lets Succasunna man pursue film at Morristown theater



Michael Izzo, @MizzoDR

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(Photo: Special to NJ Press Media/Karen Mancinelli/Daily Record)

MORRISTOWN – For a movie buff like Michael Wohn, his job at AMC Theaters at Headquarters Plaza can be very rewarding due to the access to movies and the coworkers and fellow movie fans he gets to share them with.

Wohn, 29, of Roxbury, has been working at the AMC in Morristown for about a year and a half, with no plans of leaving.

“I like working here because I have the freedom to wander (around the theater to see what needs cleaning or restocking),” he said. “I’m in my comfort zone here, I get along with everyone, and it’s good exercise. People can be messy here but whatever might happen I can handle it.”

The job suits Wohn, who said he has difficulty processing information quickly, particularly with things like math. He also has Asperger’s Syndrome.

Wohn’s worked relatively consistently through the years, but rarely at the same place for long. Before starting at AMC, Wohn was unemployed for five months.

To remedy the situation Wohn got in touch with Community Options, a nonprofit organization that develops housing and employment for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities, who previously helped him land a seasonal job with Toys “R” Us.

Wohn had worked at a movie theater in high school and enjoyed the experience, so he applied to a couple of local theaters, eventually securing a job in Morristown in June 2014 thanks to the help of Community Options Employment Specialist Donna Orr.

“Michael is such a pleasure to work with, his enthusiasm and approach to life is very unique and refreshing, and flows into everything he approaches,” said Donna Orr, now director of employment services for Community Options. “I have provided employment supports for Mikey for over just over two years, and I have never seen him give anything but 100 percent throughout the process of job searching, training and perfecting his duties at work. Mikey is very well liked among his co-workers and managers at the AMC Theatre and truly loves his job. It is a privilege to know him.”

Wohn’s General Manager in Morristown, Stephen Tallaksen, agrees that he’s a hard worker.

“He’s the everywhere guy,” Tallaksen said. “From what I see, he’s motivated, passionate, extremely friendly and a lot of fun. When Mike is here, I know he’s giving 100 percent. I’m at ease knowing things are taken care of because he’s dependable.”

Wohn works primarily as an usher, cleaning all areas of the building and restocking the concessions. He said he’s very proactive at work and sticks to his own routine when he begins a work day.

“I start with the restrooms, then move on to concessions, and then go into the theaters by the schedule the movies end,” Wohn said. “I do what I’m asked to and I have the whole system down. And I’m very open with the people who work here. We get along outside of work.”

Wohn works about five days each week, typically afternoons and evenings.

“They’re pretty good with my hours,” Wohn said. “Flexible and good with my vacations.”

Wohn said he’s trained new employees recently and hopes to become a supervisor one day.

“I can be a good leader here,” he said. “I like being a good role model. It makes me feel good to influence others.”

Wohn is working his way toward ticket taking, and then will make his way into the box office. Tallaksen said he’s on track for those promotions.

Tallaksen said Wohn sees most of the movies that screen at the theater, and he’s very reliable for a recommendation. Of the movies currently in theaters, Wohn recommends “Joy” and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.”

Wohn’s seen “The Force Awakens” four times already, which makes sense since his favorite movie is “The Empire Strikes Back.”

"All of my friends keep wanting to see it," he said. His other favorite movies of the year include "We Are Your Friends" starring Zac Efron and two boxing movies, "Creed" and "Southpaw."

Wohn is looking forward to several superhero movies in 2016.

"I think this year is going to be pretty good," Wohn said. "There's 'Captain America: Civil War,' 'Deadpool,' 'X-Men,' 'Batman v Superman,' and 'Suicide Squad' with the Joker."

Wohn said he's also a big fan of science fiction films, which, along with the superhero movies he mentioned, he's looking forward to watching once he clocks out of work in the coming year. A great way to unwind after a shift.

"I think I have a pretty decent life, I can't complain," Wohn said. "When I work here, it's fun. I like coming here. It's a good fit and I feel safe."

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