Lifeworks @WKU open

VFTH

12/24/20

Kentucky’s only living and learning transition program for adults with autism opened at WKU this fall.

It’s a continuation of services offered by the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

“This is a two year transition academy for those folks who are ready to enter the work world.”

LifeWorks at WKU is about bridging gaps and building relationships.

“You know life doesn’t stop at college, life continues after college. There really is no support for individuals past the age of 22. We call it the great service cliff.”

Joy McAlpine from Columbia is part of the first cohort to live and learn in this newly renovated facility on Adams Street.

“Everyone is nice and they’re definitely willing to help. Like you can tell they are very passionate about what they’re doing. I’m confident in them.”

The postsecondary program includes on site apartment housing and utilizes the Learn4Independence curriculum.

“We will provide supported living if that’s part of the plan, we provide supported employment, we help develop resume, job interview, search for jobs.”

For now Joy is one of only two autistic adults enrolled in the program. The number would have been larger if not for COVID – 19.

“Our plan was to build six to eight the first year, add twelve the next year and then build to 26 at our capacity.”

Moore says they plan to get back on track next fall with six to eight additional participants.

Meanwhile Joy is reaping the benefits of the social and educational components of the program.

“I’m having actual social interactions with people aside from my family which is nice. Everyone is nice.”

“She is absolutely delightful. Such a talented artist and she is working really hard to develop those skills that she wants to develop that will prepare her for the work world and for living independently.”

“She is true to her name, a true Joy.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

###

Moore says Lifeworks at WKU offers a rich opportunity for internships. In the future they hope to partner with other WKU programs including Social Work, Counseling, Communication Sciences and Disorders and the Medical School here in Bowling Green.

###