

Celebrating Progressive Employers and Capable Employees: McRae Food Processing Equipment

By Sylvia Jansen

A small team of people makes McRae Food Processing Equipment in Winnipeg succeed. Companies in the food industry rely on McRae for everything from large smoke houses to small meat grinders and even the paper that slips between burgers. Equipment needs to be working well, and it needs to get to the right people. One member of McRae's team is Pat, who does a



Pat with Doug McRae

Photo: Lisa Waldner

variety of duties. Pat deals with the shipping and receiving; he is a qualified forklift operator; he does the technical work of sharpening and maintaining specialized equipment; and he deals with customers. Pat is an integral and a successful part of the McRae team. One would be hard pressed to realize that he has been labeled with an intellectual disability.

“There’s a multitude of jobs that Pat can do,” says owner Doug McRae. Doug points out that Pat’s “awesome” memory, his technical and mechanical aptitude, and his personable manner make him invaluable in the business. Customers ask to speak with Pat, he says, because Pat remembers what they need better than they do themselves. “Well, it is a team effort,” Pat says, downplaying his own contribution.

Pat came to McRae in 2000, when Doug called a supported employment agency. “I went to them in the first place because I knew of another employer who had found a successful employee through an agency,” Doug explains. He worked with the agency until they found the right person in Pat.

From a start in sharpening blades, re-facing grinding machines and cleaning the shop, Pat moved to helping in shipping and receiving. When the position of shipper/receiver opened, the quality of Pat’s work made him an obvious choice for the position. Sincere friendships have grown among the staff around Pat, and no one is happier than the successful employer. “In fact,” Doug says, “This has been a real eye-opener for all of us!”

Connecting Employers and People

It’s about good business. Many employers find that they reduce staff turnover and discover unexpected benefits by working with people with disabilities. Supported employment agencies help connect the right people with the right employer. They help with training, and they provide ongoing support to employee and employer—all without cost to the employer. Pat’s support agency is Premier Personnel, **Premier Personnel, (204) 949-1474, www.premierpersonnel.ca**.

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