

## Patrick, who has ASD, thrives working at HarrysButtons

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### Patrick, who has an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Thrives Working at HarrysButtons and in the Adult World

Patrick, 25, who has an autism spectrum disorder, has worked at [HarrysButtons.com](https://www.harrysbuttons.com) for six years, learning how to make custom buttons and apparel, fold shirts, and work independently.

“At HarrysButtons, we employ people with disabilities, customize supports for them, and provide a unique work opportunity centered on using their strengths and helping them develop their job training and life skills,” explains Jason Reis, Employment Services Coordinator for [HarrysButtons.com](https://www.harrysbuttons.com) and it’s

three offices in Chicago, Tinley Park, and Rockford.

“I like working at HarrysButtons because the job coaches help me focus when I get stuck,” says Patrick. He also enjoys being around his friends and earning money. A big film fan, particularly of the superhero and fantasy genres, Patrick likes to purchase his favorite DVDs to add to his growing collection.

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Patrick began work at HarrysButtons as one of many student employees “trying out” a new job as part of the Easterseals Academy—an alternative school placement for young people ages 3-21 with an autism spectrum disorder, emotional disability, developmental delay or intellectual disability. He enjoyed it so much that he never stopped.

“Patrick’s flexibility, willingness to try new things, and openness to feedback were key qualities that helped him transition to become an adult employee after he graduated from Easterseals Academy. Patrick is someone that values his jobs and sees them as an important part of his life and we’re so happy to be a part of that,” says Reis.

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HarrysButtons.com at Easterseals serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford is a non-profit that works to improve the lives and futures of individuals living with autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities by providing employment opportunities, as well as job training and life skills development. Since its inception 20 years ago, HarryButtons.com has employed more than 100 individuals and created more than 300,000 products for 500 businesses. The organization was started by a father who wanted to create a microenterprise that would be an employment opportunity for his son with autism, Harry. Learn more about the History of HarrysButtons.com

At HarrysButtons, students and adult team members are integrated into all aspects of business operations and receives individualized training with customized supports. Before the pandemic, you could find Patrick at a HarryButtons office a couple of times a week, creating unique merchandise, oftentimes with positive messages about disabilities, like “Don’t Dis my Ability” or “Be Different” T-Shirts. Patrick’s favorite items to make are buttons with his favorite comic book or Marvel characters on them.



**Don't Dis My Ability T-Shirt**  
**\$18.00**



**Be Different T-Shirt**  
**\$22.00**

During non-COVID times, Patrick balances his work at [HarryButtons.com](http://HarryButtons.com) with another job at the local comic store. Comics are one of his many passions, including movies, graphic novels, superheroes, and spending time with his family and friends, especially his brother Jake who he talks with regularly. Normally, he participates in sports and bowling, and volunteers at the local library. He also enjoys taking part in [Abreu's Amigos](#).



Like so many others, the pandemic has not been easy on Patrick. He misses his regular work and activities, but nevertheless, he's been thriving and moved into an apartment at an assisted independent living facility.

“Moving away from home is a huge challenge for anyone, nevermind doing it in the middle of a pandemic,” says Reis. “Patrick’s success at his new place is a testament to his flexibility and resilience.”

Jason can’t wait for Patrick to be back in HarrysButtons offices when it’s safe to do so. “Patrick is an employer’s dream in that he is not afraid to evaluate his own work and is receptive to suggestions and strategies to improve his skills.”



Do you or your business want to support employment opportunities for

individuals with disabilities? Order custom apparel and merchandise at the HarrysButton's store.