

## Householders

At High Spirit, we work to ensure that our full-time staff, which we call Householders, have both the supports and financial security they need to remain in their positions long term.

Our goal has been to allow Householder to build a career as professionals by offering training and by paying them with a taxable salary, thereby:

- eliminating the need for outside employment
- allowing them to pay into / receive benefits from Social Security
- allowing them to qualify for credit cards / loans and to build a credit history
- allowing them to build a retirement account.

We believe our model has the potential to draw many people who are looking to integrate their work and family lives. Our model also offers a career that can be both rewarding and fulfilling, while also providing a level of financial security.

### How does one become a professional Householder?

Becoming a professional Householder requires extensive training, offered predominantly in an internship style model. At High Spirit interns start with basic trainings which must be completed before any direct work with individuals with special needs can happen:

First Aid & CPR  
Basic Human Rights (DDS)  
Human Rights Advocate (DDS)  
Positive Behavior Supports (DDS)  
Basic Fire Safety (DDS)  
DPPC Training  
Signs and Symptoms of Illness Training  
50+ Hours of individualized training (resident's individual medical, physical and emotional needs, methods of communication, behaviors, etc.)

Once trainings are completed, the intern will begin to shadow and then support Householders, learning the specific needs of an individual, as well as how best to support the individual during the broad range of locations and activities that happen over the course of the day and the week. The intern is then equipped to address not only an immediate situation, but also to understand the larger picture of an individual's needs and concerns, and to help an individual manage anxiety.

**Derek Eshelman, a long-term Householder at High Spirit, describes his work:**

***“I learned early on that a daily rhythm and a predictable schedule are important for people with intellectual disabilities, but I found that same structure and stability help me enormously too.***

***Sometimes people say that I’m a saint because I do this work, and I am not. I get so much from this job. No one can do a job where they only give and give. I can give of myself here, but I get just as much back from other community members. The residents of this community have taught me so much about how to form close communal bonds, and that happiness comes from deep relationships with other people, and with commitment.”***

Derek Eshelman  
Householder and Head of Livestock Crew