

JASON SMITH



Jason Smith, recipient of the 2009 GRA Personal Achievement Award with (L to R) Ms. Stephanie Pettijohn, Special Education teacher; Gale Speich, VR Counselor; Nora Nettles, Principal - Folkston Elementary and Kelly Linton, RES at the SERNRA/GRA 2009 awards breakfast in Savannah.

Jason Smith, the recipient of the 2009 GRA Personal Achievement Award, is an extraordinary young man who has overcome many personal and social barriers to become successfully employed.

He is from a very rural, poverty-stricken community in South Georgia. He and his siblings, who are also intellectually disabled, were raised by a single mother who is severely intellectually disabled herself.

Jason was referred to Gale Speich, CRC, during his junior year in high school. He participated in job readiness classes and in the Community Work Adjustment Training program.

Jason worked with the school janitor, Mr. Harley Hickox. Though intellectually disabled, Jason was able to learn his job duties and did such a fine job, that he was lauded by many of the school employees. He was given a very positive job reference by Mr. Hickox who only recommended the very best workers.

Debra Lee, RJRS, worked with Jason on job readiness skills such as job interview techniques, completing applications and developing a resume. After his CWAT placement, Kelly Linton, RES, began job placement activities.

RJRS Lee assisted Jason with the application for a temporary janitor position at the local elementary school and RES Linton advocated for Jason with the school Superintendent and Principal. Jason was interviewed and hired.

Jason is now permanently employed as a janitor at Folkston Elementary School. The administration and teachers at his school are thrilled with Jason as their janitor because of his dedication to the job and his infectious smile and attitude.

Despite having limitations himself, in his free time Jason reaches out to young children in the community by helping with children's programs through his church. He still has that infectious smile for all he greets during the day and Jason is an inspiration to us all.