

Hello, I'm Laura Jean Kuster. Thank you for inviting me here today.

When I was young, I worked in the CHI Centers sheltered workshop. My pay check was 1 dollar for every two week, I made 8 cents an hour doing contract work. I worked on fishing weights and I did pre service work putting papers in envelopes and taking them back out again. I also worked on a project where we put cotton in tubes. It was loud and there was a lot of chaos.

I knew that I could work a real job and make more money so I called Karen at SEEC and asked her if she could get me a job. Karen said she would work on getting my funding moved from CHI to SEEC. I waited and I waited a whole month. One day I called Karen and told her "GET ME OUT OF HERE". I felt desperate. Karen worked to get me out and soon I was trying jobs out at a day care center working with kids, then I worked putting prices on supplies at Amazing Saving. Finally I worked delivering mail at the National Institute of Mental Health. Everyone knew I could do that job so Karen helped me to find a job where I could do that. I have been working at the Consumer Products Safety Commission in Bethesda MD for 23 years. I now make 15\$ an hour and I'm 64, but I don't want to retire. I want to keep working, keep busy. I open the mail, stamp it, deliver it and have lunch with my friends. I am good at my job, and the people at my work like me.

I'm glad I don't have to go into the Sheltered Workshop and that there was a job that matched me in the community. I am happy now, I am happy in my job and happy working for the Federal Government. Everyone should be happy working at the Federal Government.

Thank you