

Success Story Linda Rollins

“I thought I couldn’t do a lot of things because of the accident... I’ve built my self-esteem and overcome a lot of my fears.”

—Linda Rollins



Blessed and Independent

These days, Linda Rollins feels blessed. She has a job, her driver’s license, and renewed self confidence. But it wasn’t always this way.

Fourteen years ago, Linda sustained severe burns and a brain injury from a house fire that also claimed the life of her father. During her recovery she endured months of skin grafts, hand surgeries, and therapy to walk and talk again. Consumed by pain, grief, guilt and anger, she turned to drugs and alcohol.

For years she struggled to cope, but eventually sought help from various agencies, support groups, family and friends. Collectively, they helped her to overcome her addictions. But it was still difficult for her to be seen in public, let alone interview for a job. In September 2006 she met Alicia Petsos, Service Contracts Manager for OutSource’s janitorial division. Alicia interviewed Linda for a custodian opening and gave her the chance to work with an evening cleaning crew at Monroe Development Center.

The job was demanding both physically and mentally. Linda needed to learn how to use her constricted hands to open garbage bag liners, clean restrooms, and mop floors. With the help of her supervisor and job coach, and the support of her co-workers, she rose to the challenge and exceeded expectations.

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Encouraged by her job success, Linda wanted to drive again. At Rochester Rehabilitation's DriveOn program she reconnected with her former occupational therapist provider, Midge Kogler.

"One thing Linda said that I'll never forget," said Midge, driver rehabilitation specialist and occupational therapist; "You were never afraid to touch me." Midge saw in Linda the desire and potential to drive. With driver rehabilitation instructor Don Palmere's direction and patience, Linda earned her license.

"I thought I couldn't do a lot of things because of the accident," said Linda. "I've built my self-esteem and overcome a lot of my fears."

Because of her positive attitude and accomplishments, Linda won the 2008 William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award by New York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID). She was chosen from among 50 individuals with disabilities who were honored through NYSID's annual recognition program.

To learn more about OutSource, please call **Mike Szpak** at **585.781.4756** or email him at mszpak@theoutsource.org.

To learn more about DriveOn, please call us at **585.271.1894**, or toll-free at **1.877.823.7483**, or send an email to info@driveonrocks.org.



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