

NEWS

FAVARH workers at Rowley Spring making a positive difference

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BRISTOL — Dustin Pedroia may not know it, but he's got a die-hard fan named Wendy at Rowley Spring and Stamping Corp. Whenever possible, the parts assembler comes to work wearing Pedroia's number 15 Red Sox jersey and her Sox cap. Wendy is one of four workers with intellectual disabilities on loan from FAVARH, also known as the ARC of the Farmington Valley.

Bill Joyce, Rowley's controller, says Wendy and her co-workers are making a positive difference. "Not just in their work," he says. "That's near perfect. It's their attitude. Their Smiles brighten the assembly floor."



FAVRH's employment and resident programs are funded through state contracts, grants, and donations. The organization finds jobs for about 120 people a year, age 18 and older. ARC has 200 full – and part time employees, plus more than 300 volunteers.

Chris Edge, ARC's business and job developer, says similar organizations simply assign workers to certain jobs. However, at ARC, potential workers get a skills assessment "so we can figure out what they're good at. We want them to be successful, doing what they like doing, without losing their stamina."

"What Chris does is challenging," says Morris. "He has to find companies willing to do things differently. They must be willing to bring people in who can't keep up with typical production speeds, but who nevertheless do good work."

At Rowley, this situation frees company operators to take on more skilled, less repetitive work.

A family-owned company with 100 employees, Rowley ,ales springs and stampings for commercial and military clients. In the current three-month project FAVRH's assemblers work four hours a day, assembling wall plugs; workers are paid based on the prevailing wage and their productivity.

Rowley President John Dellalana calls the arrangement a "win-win" for both Rowley and FAVRH.

"Their people get to get out and work," he says. "On our end, we're getting perfect production nearly every time. Besides, we think it's the right thing to do."

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