

Rebecca is tops

The dedication and enthusiasm of EDGE Employment Solutions Job Co-ordinator, Rebecca Turpin, was recognised when she was chosen as the WA Disability Employment Network (DEN) Employee of the Year.

The award was presented at the 'Working in the West' conference held in October and recognises the achievement and value of people who work with people with disabilities in Western Australia.

Rebecca couldn't be more thrilled. "I was ecstatic," said Rebecca.

"The fact that two other EDGE employees were selected as finalists made the award even more special."

Trained as a psychologist, Rebecca hadn't envisaged a career working with people with disabilities, but wouldn't have it any other way.

"Now that I do this type of work, I don't want to change. I feel as though I am on my life's journey."

"There's not a day that I don't look forward to going to work. I love my clients and feel very privileged to help them achieve their goals, and witness the many flow-on effects that result when a person settles into a workplace."

Rebecca attributes part of her enthusiasm for her work to the people at EDGE.

"You couldn't hope for more dedicated workmates. I am impressed by the lengths that everyone at EDGE goes to help people with disabilities get a job."

"We are all different, yet we each bring something to the table, and it is great to be able to collaborate and share ideas with other members of the team."

Rebecca had to stand out in a large field of nominees, which was short-listed to five by an independent judging panel. The judges were unaware of the identity of the nominees. The other two finalists from EDGE were Bernie Poupard and Will Beresford.

Rebecca wins an award and \$500. Congratulations Rebecca, Bernie and Will.



Winning smiles: (L-R) Will Beresford, Rebecca Turpin and Bernie Poupard.

Award is 'icing on the cake' for Brendan



(L-R) Award-winning Brendan Arcudi with EDGE's Daniel Caughey.

EDGE client, Brendan Arcudi, was shocked - and thrilled - when his name was called out as the winner of the Australian-Italian Apprentice of the Year category for timber trades.

Brendan, who works as a furniture polisher at Higgins Manufacturing in Malaga, recently completed his apprenticeship in furniture finishing and has notched up more than four and a half years with the company.

In accepting his award, Brendan praised the role of his Swan TAFE lecturer and mentor, Chris Brown.

"This award isn't just for me, but also for Chris who went out of his way to understand my needs and put in extra time to develop my skills and knowledge," said Brendan.

"I don't really know where I'd be without Chris. I have never had a teacher who put in the time and effort he did, and I'm very grateful."

Chris Brown is happy to have played a part in Brendan's success.

"When he first came to Swan TAFE, Brendan struggled and he lacked self-confidence," said Chris.

"But I saw the potential in Brendan, and with a bit of support he was able to apply himself. In the end it was his perseverance that enabled him to reach the top. I couldn't be happier for him," said Chris.

Brendan says his life has been "a long and bumpy road" before he secured the job at Higgins and then completed his apprenticeship.

"Winning the award was the icing on the cake," said Brendan.

It isn't only Brendan who is pleased with his win. Higgins Manager, Andrew Hunt, is also full of praise for the award winner.

"Brendan is a conscientious and diligent worker who does a good job for us. He is a great team member who gets on well with his fellow workers," said Andrew.

Brendan has never worked anywhere as long as he has at Higgins and is quick to acknowledge their support. "It's hard to find a place like Higgins. You can have a joke and a laugh with the bosses, but at the same time you respect them. They have also been supportive and understanding of my needs. It's a really great place to work," said Brendan.

EDGE Job Co-ordinator Daniel Caughey has watched how Brendan has grown into his role at Higgins.

"Brendan is a real success story. He continually seeks to develop his skills and gain new experiences, and has really developed since he started working at Higgins."

"It is very rewarding to see him take on more responsibility and contribute to his workplace," said Daniel.

The Italian-Apprentice of the Year awards, which were announced in October, recognise and reward excellence achieved by apprentices of Italian origin and employers involved in apprenticeships throughout Western Australia. They are supported by local businesses and the WA and Italian governments.

This year's award acknowledged 23 finalists, with eight category winners representing various industry sectors, ranging from cooking and hairdressing to engineering, cabinet-making and tile-laying.

Brendan wins \$500, a plaque and a certificate. Congratulations Brendan.

Long-time supporter Acknowledged

Perth's largest truck smash repairer, Parins, was awarded a Leading EDGE Employer Award recently for its outstanding support for employing people with disabilities.

Parins has been working with EDGE Employment Solutions since 1985, and has placed 20 clients during that time.

According to Parin's Commercial Manager, Dave Parin, the relationship has been a rewarding one.

"We are operating at a time when finding people is difficult, so it is a benefit to our business to be able to recruit staff," said Dave.

"The relationships we develop with the people we recruit through EDGE tend to be close because of the extra support that is usually required."

"As a company, we definitely get something out of providing employment opportunities that goes way beyond filling vacancies. We get attached to our employees with disabilities, but it is a two-way street as they give us a lot back in return," said Dave.

Manager of Job Search at EDGE, Mal Risdon, has worked with Parins for six years and says they are a very supportive employer.

"Parins truly deserve this award as they have provided many opportunities for more than 20 years and take a personal approach to supporting our workers," said Mal.



Sue Robertson presents Parins' Leading EDGE award to Dave Parin.

More than the 'fresh food people'



Woolworths' Brad Bolin with Sue Robertson at the award presentation.

The long-time support of EDGE by giant supermarket retailer, Woolworths, and its variety store arm BigW, was acknowledged when the Woolworths group was presented with a Leading EDGE Employer Award recently.

The relationship between Woolworths and EDGE has been ongoing since 1986. Since that time, Woolworths have employed 45 EDGE workers and currently have nine clients in their employ.

An additional 37 EDGE workers have been placed at BigW stores, of which five are currently employed. EDGE Managing Director, Sue Robertson, praised Woolworths for its commitment to employing people with disabilities.

"We value our relationship with Woolworths as they set a great example to other businesses of the two-way benefits that can be gained by believing in people with disabilities and giving them the opportunity to be part of the workforce," said Sue.

New face on the board

EDGE Employment Solutions is pleased to welcome Keith Gordon to its board. Mr Gordon holds the position of Director, Industrial Divisions at Wesfarmers Limited, where he has worked since 1999. In his current role, he is responsible for several large divisions of Wesfarmers including CSBP and Wesfarmers Energy.

Mr Gordon has served as a director of several organisations including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA, Plastics and Chemicals Industry Association of Australia, Avicare, and the Advisory Board to the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Western Australia. He is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

EDGE Employment Solutions Managing Director, Sue Robertson, said Mr Gordon brings a wealth of business experience to the board.

"We are delighted to welcome a person of Keith Gordon's business calibre and credentials to our board. I'm sure we will greatly benefit from his experience working with one of Western Australia's most respected businesses and the largest employer of people with disabilities supported by EDGE" said Sue.

Mr Gordon holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Science with Honours and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Western Australia.



Keith Gordon.

Management and staff of EDGE Employment Solutions would like to wish everyone a safe & happy festive season.

