Jera’s Heavenly Sweets

Special Recognition Award
November 2026

Jera's Heavenly Sweets has been a shining example of what true community inclusion looks like through the support and opportunities provided to Nakayla, a valued employee who has worked alongside Ms. Jera for nearly 3 years.

After spending more than a year searching for employment and facing repeated barriers from employers unwilling to give her a chance, Nakayla found an advocate in Ms. Jera. During their very first interview, Ms. Jera recognized Nakayla's potential and offered her an opportunity that would change her life.

Since joining Jera's Heavenly Sweets, Nakayla has flourished in an environment built on encouragement, understanding, and respect. Ms. Jera consistently goes above and beyond to ensure Nakayla's success by implementing simple but meaningful supports tailored to her needs. Allowing Nakayla to listen to music through her earbuds while washing dishes, helping her develop time management skills through alarms and reminders, and providing frequent praise and encouragement have all contributed to increased productivity and confidence. These thoughtful accommodations demonstrate how small acts of support can lead to significant personal and professional growth.

What makes Ms. Jera's impact truly special is the genuine relationship she has built with Nakayla. More than an employer, Ms. Jera treats Nakayla like family. She has even stepped in to assist with transportation when needed, showing a level of care that extends far beyond the workplace. Nakayla affectionately refers to Ms. Jera as her "Auntie," a reflection of the trust, respect, and bond they share. Knowing that someone believes in her and wants to see her succeed has motivated Nakayla to work hard and take pride in her role.

Ms. Jera's commitment to inclusion has created a workplace where Nakayla feels valued, accepted, and empowered. She provides a safe space where Nakayla can openly discuss challenges and experiences without fear of judgment. Through her compassion, patience, and dedication, Ms. Jera has demonstrated the profound difference one person can make by believing in another.

Jera's Heavenly Sweets is more than a business; it is a place where opportunities are created, confidence is built, and lives are changed. For her unwavering support and commitment to inclusion, the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities is proud to present Jera Stewart with the November 2026 Special Recognition Award.