

**Part I:**

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**Background Information  
Chef Case Study**

**BACKGROUND**

In 1996, Richard Saab lived in Maryland and was employed by Campbell Soup Company. He was a cook for the Swanson Foods Division and assisted in the preparation of frozen meals as well as in the shipping department, as needed. In September of that year, a spinal aneurysm resulted in paralysis from his waist down. The cold weather was difficult for Richard, as he had trouble keeping the lower part of his body warm. At the end of 1996, he moved to Florida to live with his sister and brother-in-law during his recovery. His wife and two older children, who were getting ready to graduate from high school, remained in Maryland.

In October of 1997 his wife was diagnosed with lung cancer, so Richard returned to Maryland to help with her care. After she died in November, he moved permanently to Florida where he helped cook meals for the family and worked on his GED preparation. Richard says he was bored and discouraged. Another year passed and he decided to call the van transit to take him to Wal-Mart to explore job openings. The personnel manager told him about the Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) where her daughter was receiving services.

Richard contacted DVR and eventually met with a counselor, Linda Brown. He told her that his goal was to cook again, although he had no idea how this would be possible. Linda was aware of a program called Hands On Educational Services, a short term, intensive program that trains individuals in culinary services. A meeting with the director of Hands On Educational Services, John Ficca, was arranged to review options and explore possible accommodations for participating in this program.

Hands On Educational Services offers training and on the job evaluation for food preparation and cooking occupations. Richard's experience with Campbell Food Company had involved preparation of large quantities of canned and frozen food products. Heavy lifting, as well as extensive standing and walking, were required. While this level of physical exertion would no longer be possible, Richard expressed a desire to work in a different food industry setting, such as a restaurant or cafeteria, where he could possibly work in food preparation or cooking.

**FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES/LIMITATIONS**

Richard is in generally good physical condition and has full use of his upper extremities. At the time of referral to DVR he had been in a standard wheelchair for over three years and used both a standard manual chair around his home and an electric chair primarily for outings. He has no use of his lower extremities.

His endurance and strength were enhanced by physical therapy, which was initiated after a visit with his psychiatrist to evaluate his current condition as he explored job possibilities and

accommodation options. Richard stresses the importance of his continued home exercise program to maintain this new level of physical conditioning.

### **JOB GOALS**

His desire to return to the food service industry was discussed in the initial meeting with his counselor, Linda Brown. Linda quickly arranged for Richard to visit John Ficca with Hands On Educational Services. This meeting provided a guideline for the duties and essential functions of many positions in the food service industry. The program prepares graduates to be competitive for employment in a variety of positions in this field. Therefore, in order to maximize employment opportunities, it would be necessary for Richard to be able to carry out many of the following essential functions:

1. Clean, cut and slice food.
2. Carry food supplies, equipment, and utensils to and from storage and work areas.
3. Clean and maintain work areas, equipment and utensils.
4. Receive food orders, in written or verbal form.
5. Weigh, measure and mix required ingredients.
6. Cook meat, fish, vegetables, etc.
7. Season food.
8. Bake bread and other pastries.



*Tech Connections is a collaborative project of the United Cerebral Palsy Association, the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access at the Georgia Institute of Technology (CATEA), and the Southeast Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (Southeast DBTAC). Funded by a grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the Department of Education, Award #H133A980052. Content and opinions expressed in these materials do not necessarily reflect those of the NIDRR, UCP, CATEA, Southeast DBTAC, or other entities.*