



# Supported Employment

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## Self-determination and self-employment

### Artist Brandon Tipler finds success at Medford studio

Self-employment isn't for everybody. And very few can live out the dream of being an artist. Brandon Tipler, with help from his supporters, is doing both.

Tipler, 25, is a young man with a developmental disability who lives in Medford. He receives help from Creative Supports Incorporated (CSI) a DHS funded private non profit agency helping adults with developmental disabilities in Jackson and Josephine Counties achieve control over their lives and to participate in satisfying lifestyles based on the same aspirations as all citizens. Each CSI customer has an individual budget to purchase essential supports required to overcome barriers resulting from their disability.



*Brandon at work on a cityscape in Studio Sfumato*

After Brandon tried a series of typical jobs he didn't like, Michelle Hood his Personal Agent with CSI realized that something different had to happen. "I wasn't sure how to help Brandon reach his goal," Michelle says, "as an artist myself, I know the difficulty, time commitment, and support that it takes to make it in the art world." She also wasn't sure Brandon's skills were at a professional level, but she knew it was his dream.

*"I always wanted to be an artist since I was a little boy."*

*—Brandon Tipler*

Hood connected Brandon with Living Opportunities, a private non profit agency in the area sponsoring Studio Sfumato, where artists with special needs are matched with visiting artists.

Brandon decided with no hesitation that this is where he wanted to work. It then became a team effort for DHS partners to help Brandon achieve the career goal he set as a little boy. *Learn more about Studio Sfumato at the Living Opportunities Web site, <http://www.lopp.org/Page.asp?NavID=166>*

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*Brandon's self-portrait*

The DHS Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVR) agreed to pay for studio supplies and training during a trial work period. During this time Tipler developed his own professional style and the supports he would continue to need as a successful artist were identified.

Today Brandon is a successful artist. He can be found at Studio Sfumato when it is open. He uses his DHS individual support budget to pay for regular weekly meetings with a local artist who provides advanced art training and helps him learn to market his works.

“Brandon is truly a success,” Michelle says. “He’s even beginning to look like an artist. He’s happy and proud of what he does. He has met and touched the lives of many people... his circle of support is widening and his contribution to his community is broadening just like his smile.”