

[Auburn Business Developer Featured in Rumford Times](#)

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HELPING AREA PEOPLE FIND WORK- For the past year, Rumford resident Jessica Packard has been employed with Work Opportunities Unlimited of Auburn, helping area residents find employment through her work as a vocational resource specialist/business developer. Here, Packard (left) takes time out of her busy schedule to pose with client Teresa Murphy of Rumford, whom she helped find work at Home Care for Maine in Augusta.

Rumford Resident Helps Those In Need of Employment

By Barry Matulaitis – RUMFORD

Working for Work Opportunities Unlimited has allowed Jessica Packard to combine two of her loves, namely the western Maine region and helping those in need of employment. "I went to school for computers and it really wasn't for me," said Packard, a 2000 graduate of Mountain Valley High School. After mulling over and researching other career options, she opted to settle into her present position as a vocational resource specialist/business developer for the Auburn-based company. Work Opportunities helps youth, people with disabilities, welfare to work, and other individuals with barriers to employment find community based jobs. The company currently has offices in Auburn, Augusta, Bangor, Brunswick, Portland, Saco, Sanford, Wells and Kennebunk. Work Opportunities works with individuals who are referred by the state, Vocational rehabilitation, Department of Health and Human Services, and other agencies to develop solid, long-term employment positions for the employee and skilled workers for the employer. Often, finding training or retraining programs for workers is part of the process. "Probably 98 percent of people that we work with are very eager and want our assistance," Packard said. She assists her clients with resume development and looks for the right job match for both the potential employee and the employer. The people that she works with vary widely in skills and work experience, and one of Packard's challenges is to successfully match the skills and experience of the worker with the needs of the employer. Teresa Murphy of Rumford is one of many individuals that Packard has successfully found employment for. She had worked for Community Concepts and Trails End Motel, but was looking for a job that would allow her to work more hours, expand her career horizons and better provide for herself and her two children as a single mom. Murphy was referred to Packard through the ASPIRE program, and together they discussed her career goals "and what I would like for a job." Packard's connections helped her find work with Home Care for Maine in Augusta. "If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have this job," said a grateful Murphy. "She did an awesome job with my resume. She gave me a good reference for this job too." She went on to say that having family in the area and two children in the local school system provided compelling reasons to live and work in the area. "I've been in this area all my life," she said, noting that she had grown up in Rumford. When asked why people in search of work should consult Work Opportunities, Murphy responded, "Because they have the connections we

need. Jessica talked to people one on one to help me get this great job." "Having been on the other end, it's nice having someone make your resume stand out," added Packard. Packard, who has been employed with Work Opportunities since last December, serves people in Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin counties. Packard recently purchased a home in Rumford, but the community based nature of her job means she is most often on the road. Packard finds her work both invigorating and satisfying. "It's nice to serve the community I live in," she said. Everybody knows how frustrating it is to look for a job. It's nice to see someone so upbeat and happy after you've helped them."