

People Inc. Travelers Make Dreams Come True

People Inc. supports the goals and dreams of many people – using creative outlets to encourage skill-building and the pursuit of new experiences. Through partnerships with likeminded organizations, the possibilities are even greater – paving the way for fun, rewarding opportunities. Since 1975, our agency has enjoyed a close link with People and Places, a local nonprofit organization that provides vacations for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Beth Duncan, senior day supervisor at our People Inc. Young Adult Life Transitions (YALT) Program in Lockport and Kristine Baskerville of our Self-Directed Services, have been involved in People and Places for many years, accompanying travelers as vacation escorts. They knew several people enrolled in People Inc. programs who were interested in traveling to a place where dreams are everything: Walt Disney World!

Although there were some bumps along the way (the original trip, scheduled for 2020, was cancelled due to COVID-19), the group was able to make it happen in December 2021. And it did not disappoint! The travelers, which included five of our program participants – Cassandra, Mark, Terrance, Brittany and Naomi – alongside Beth and Kristine as vacation escorts, visited all four parks at Walt Disney World, as well as Disney Springs.

Here are combined reactions from the group about their adventure in the Most Magical Place on Earth:

1. Why did you go on this trip?

- **Mark:** I needed a vacation from the cold weather and from my mom and dad.
- **Cassandra:** I wanted to try going on vacation for the first time without my family.
- **Terrance:** I wanted to enjoy Disney for the first time.

2. How did you prepare for the trip?

- **Terrance:** I saved my money.
- **Mark:** I worked for the money to pay for my trip to Disney World.
- **Cassandra:** I exercised to get ready for all the walking.

3. With all of the COVID-19 restrictions and safety measures, did you feel safe? What extra precautions did you and the group take? (The group followed various COVID-19 protocols and safety measures in place by Disney World, airports and airlines).

- **Mark:** I felt safe with my group.
- **Terrance:** I felt safe. We wore our masks inside and when it got crowded outside. We made sure to wash our hands.
- **Cassandra:** I felt safe. We wore our masks.
- **Beth:** We felt very safe. Disney was requiring masks at indoor locations and on any rides that went inside.



4. Was this your first trip to Disney World?

- **Mark:** Yes, it was my first trip to Disney World!
- **Terrance:** YES! I have been saving for a long time for this trip.

5. What makes Disney World magical?

- **Mark:** The fireworks were magical.
- **Terrance:** Just being around characters. Disney is so unique and there is nothing else like it! It makes you feel like a kid again.
- **Cassandra:** Getting to see fireworks and princesses. It is like being in a different world. Spending time there with friends also made it magical.

6. What were some of the attractions and rides you experienced? Were you able to meet any characters with social distancing?

- **Cassandra/Beth:** We went on so many rides! Some favorites from the group: Haunted Mansion, Buzz Lightyear, Expedition Everest, Slinky Dog, Ratatouille, Rise of the Resistance and the Frozen Ride.
- **Terrance:** We were able to meet characters from a distance. It was not the way I would have liked to meet characters for the first time, but it was the best way to be safe.
- **Brittany:** We met Elsa and Anna, Mickey, Minnie, Daisy Duck, Pluto and Mary Poppins.

7. At which hotel did you stay? Did you enjoy it?

- **Brittany:** We stayed at Pop Century. I enjoyed the hotel and it was decorated for Christmas.
- **Terrance:** I really enjoyed the theme of the hotel and all of the statues and decorations. I also liked riding the Skyliner from the hotel to the parks.
- **Cassandra:** I liked the hotel and getting to fill up my Disney mug!

8. Were you able to partake in any of the Disney World 50th Anniversary celebrations/themed activities?

- **Brittany:** We enjoyed finding the 50th Anniversary statues and special fireworks! We also attended the special Christmas party event!
- **Cassandra:** We took a lot of fun photos with the 50th Anniversary theme!



12. Do you have any tips to share for anyone who is planning a trip to Disney World?

- **Terrance:** Save a lot of money because it is expensive.
- **Cassandra:** Try new things! Make sure you walk a lot to get ready for your trip and have a good pair of sneakers!

Overall, the group had a great time and recommends traveling to new places and having fun experiences like their trip to Walt Disney World. Their advice is to meet new people, try new things and enjoy the moment, because it goes quickly!

In the words of Walt Disney, himself, "If you can dream it, you can do it."

9. Were you able to enjoy any sit-down meals at any themed restaurants; what was your experience?

- **Beth/Group:** We ate at a sit-down restaurant every day. We enjoyed meals at Liberty Tree Tavern, Be Our Guest (one traveler said she felt like Belle!) Prime Time Café (which is a fun place to eat), Tusker House and at San Angel Inn (Mexico) in Epcot.

10. What were your favorite parts of the trip?

- **Cassandra:** I enjoyed going to the Grand Floridian to see the Gingerbread House, going on the Skyliner, shopping and spending time with friends.
- **Mark:** My favorite part was experiencing the parks and going on rides.
- **Terrance:** I really enjoyed the flight! I hadn't been on a plane since I was little.

11. Did you buy any souvenirs for yourself, any favorites?

- **Mark:** My favorite souvenir is an LA Lakers jersey.
- **Terrance:** I bought things for myself, friends and family!
- **Cassandra:** Yes, I bought a lot of souvenirs. A castle nightlight, a castle shirt, lunchbox and a Minnie Mouse sweatshirt.

