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Queensland NDIS participant Elise has achieved her biggest goal, earning her Certificate III in hospitality.

Now the 35-year-old, who has an intellectual disability and autism, is keen to find meaningful work in a field she's passionate about.

Looking to build her job-ready skills, Elise enrolled in a Certificate III in Hospitality at a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college.

She hoped the certificate would help her get a job in a daycare centre kitchen, but the course work got harder as she went on.

'I started to think about giving it up,' Elise said. But knowing how important this certificate was to her, her family, especially mum Gill encouraged her to keep going.

'Elise had worked hard. We didn't want her to give it all up, so I picked up the phone to see if I could find some support,' Gill said.

'I called Carers Queensland. Elise and I went in. We met Pam, a local area coordinator and she told us all about the NDIS and how it could help to support Elise.

Gill said Elise's NDIS funding has been "amazing" and "life changing."

'I was able to engage a support worker with a hospitality background to support Elise in the kitchen and scribe notes for her, so she could use them to do her assignments,' Gill said.

Another support worker, trained in numeracy and literacy, supported Elise to study at home and in the library.
Elise's support team advocate tirelessly on her behalf.

They met with TAFE staff to discuss Elise's challenges. It resulted adjustments to support Elise.

As part of her certificate, Elise had to do a work placement at a catering company.

Gill said staff were so welcoming. 'They embraced Elise with so much enthusiasm, kindness, patience and humour – they were amazing, and we thank them for that.

'While Elise was there, the company won a Small Business of the Year award. Elise was thrilled when she got an Employee of the Year honorary mention,' Gill added.

Elise has now finished the course and is proud of her Certificate III in Hospitality.

‘I’m very grateful for all the support I had, and I’m proud of what I achieved,’ she said.

‘It was only possible through Elise’s NDIS funding and the awesome team of support,’ Gill added.

A real people person, Elise loves to socialise, so she’s continuing to further her skills.

‘I’m volunteering at Lifeline, sorting donations and helping out at a retirement village, supporting staff and residents with activities,’ she said.

‘I also like talking to residents in their room. It’s one of my favourite things to do.’

Keen to share what she has learned, Elise has some true and tested advice.

‘Don’t let your disability stop you from doing what you want,’ she said.

‘Never give up! Tomorrow is a new day, and someone out there can help!’

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