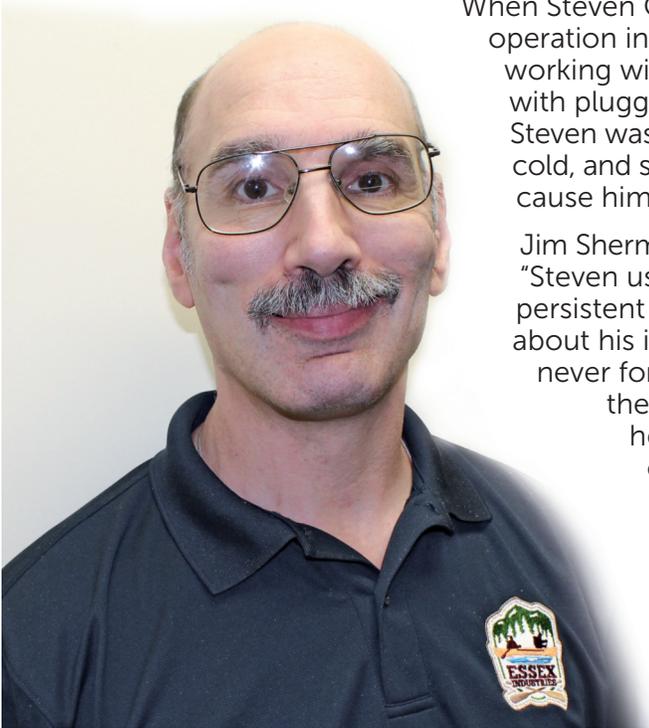


Steven Collins

Mountain Lake Services | Mineville/Essex County



When Steven Collins first came to work at Essex Industries' woodshop operation in January 2006, there was a great deal of hesitancy in his working with machines. He slowly moved from feeling comfortable with plugging in electrical cords to operating a drill press. At first, Steven was nervous interacting with others. His friendships ran hot and cold, and sometimes his strong beliefs or opinions would unnecessarily cause him to stand apart from his work group.

Jim Sherman, manager at Essex Industries, describes a transformation. "Steven used this nervousness as a challenge to himself. He was persistent in overcoming any qualms he had about machines and about his interactions with people. We worked with Steven closely, never forcing him to do anything he wasn't ready for, giving him all the time he needed, and building his confidence. And today he is one of our main people in the moulder room, working on the whirlwind chop saw."

Steven has very definite ideas about his job. "I like it because I can focus on the work. I like the way it cuts the wood. Little bit off the edges first. Then checking the wood for defects." Steven also agreed with his manager about his early days at Essex Industries. "I didn't know about machines. One day I just said, 'What the heck' and I was ready to start the whirlwind saw. Jim helped me learn how to work it and, after a couple

of weeks, I had it down." In fact, Steven's quality control of the final product is well-respected by the team. He also has helped train people on the operation of the saw. His focus on task is also well-known. Steven smiles when he says, "Sometimes I work by myself even when I'm on a team."

Floor supervisors, Jon Thompson and Craig MacDougal, agree on Steven's work ethic. Craig says, "Steven knows what he's doing. He is really good in the moulder room." Jon adds, "Over my five years here, I've seen Steven become more and more adaptable in taking on new jobs."

"I sometimes work on table assembly when not on the whirlwind," says Steven. "We line up the planks and place in the bars that hold the planks together. I work with another person when doing this."

As far as Steven's social interactions at work, they've taken off. He also has an active social life with his family and friends in Schroon Lake.

In the fall of 2017, an order for 400 picnic tables arrived at Essex Industries, an order that involved a short turn-around time. Steven was very much a part of the group that worked tirelessly and with great dedication getting the tables built well. "This quality work shows how productive we are. It gives us recognition for the work we do. People have great respect for Essex Industries."

*"It's okay to joke around with friends at work sometimes.
But when it's time to get serious, we get serious. We're here to do a job!"*

