

# Alumni Spotlight featuring Jack Butler



Jack Butler, 53, of Ligonier is a featured alumnus of Westmoreland County Community College whose educational journey and professional impact reflect perseverance, purpose, and lifelong learning. Butler attended the college from 2004 to 2006, drawn by its convenient location, flexible scheduling, supportive professors and strong career guidance.

While at Westmoreland, Butler studied philosophy, psychology and sociology, while completing core subjects including math. One of his fondest memories is also one of his proudest accomplishments—passing algebra. That success was made possible, he says, by his favorite professor, Lou Congelio.

“He helped me pass math, gave me confidence, and tailored the class to the students,” Butler shared. “A true student-centered teacher.” Outside the classroom, Butler was actively involved in the powerlifting club, finding both community and balance during his time at the college.

After completing his studies at Westmoreland, Butler continued his education at the University of Arizona, building on the academic foundation he established early on. He credits the college with preparing him for his career by strengthening his ability to work with statistical data, develop effective study habits, navigate ADHD and—most importantly—learn how to ask for help.

Butler currently serves as the Director of Person-Centered Support at Achieva and is a nationally recognized leader in person-centered practices, organizational transformation and disability rights. With more than 30 years of experience in human services, he has led the integration of Charting the LifeCourse across all areas of the organization, from direct support to finance, HR and communications. A Charting the LifeCourse Ambassador and dynamic presenter, Butler is known for elevating the voices of people with disabilities through meaningful, values-driven conversations.

His leadership has taken him to national stages, including the National Charting the LifeCourse Showcase, the ODP Employment Summit, the National Leadership Consortium, and numerous policy and workforce initiatives focused on employment equity and systems change. He also serves as the Provider Team Facilitator for the SWTCIE Project in Western Pennsylvania, a five-year federal initiative supporting the transition from subminimum wage to competitive integrated employment. In recognition of his work, Butler received the 2024 Innovations in Person-Centered Practices Award at the Charting the LifeCourse Showcase.

Despite his leadership role, Butler remains grounded in direct practice, continuing to work as a Direct Support Professional. He also serves on the Board of the Ligonier Chamber of Commerce and is a member of Temple University's Disability Health Care Disparities Committee. A published contributor to multiple national and professional journals, Butler frequently writes and speaks on topics including ableism, authentic inclusion and Social Role Valorization.

Reflecting on his experiences, Butler shares, "Twelve years ago, the National Leadership Consortium changed my life—and I will always speak about their influence. The faculty are change agents and, by association, so are the graduates."

Beyond his career, he is also an interior firefighter, ultra-marathon runner, OCR athlete, ADHD advocate and lifelong learner. He credits major life milestones with shaping his path, including the birth of his daughter Bella after he completed his degree, which he says changed his life trajectory. He also acknowledges the unwavering support of his wife, Monica, throughout his long educational journey.

His advice to current Westmoreland students is simple yet powerful: "It's never too late. Never give up. Always give your best."

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