Santa’s elves can be found in the PEER classroom | CPD

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Curious to know what Santa’s workshop looks like around this time of year? Just check out the Project PEER (Postsecondary Education, Employment and Research) classroom at Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities.

Every holiday season, PEER students volunteer to wrap gifts for the CPD’s Giving Tree, and employees can even bring their personal gifts in to be wrapped. This year, however, the students added a special task: packaging treat boxes for participants in another CPD program, the Developmental Skills Lab. The DSL is a day program for adults with moderate to severe disabilities.

Volunteer cookie bakers and treat makers produced 24 dozen goodies and delivered them to the PEER classroom Thursday morning to be packaged. But the planning had started long before.

PEER student Amanda Ralphs has been learning how to organize—herself, her schedule, and now, a larger scale project.

Amanda Ralphs

“There was lots of prep to do,” she said, “planning out stuff ahead so we will be ready.”

As the treats were being delivered to the classroom Thursday morning, Ralphs was there with a notebook and pen and a carefully crafted diagram of what was supposed to go where. Then she and another student assembled the boxes and numbered them to match the diagram. The boxes were lined with red and green tissue paper.

“Then we grabbed the treats and started putting them into boxes,” she said. “It was actually pretty easy, and it didn’t take a long time.”

In fact, the students were long finished by the time a photographer stopped by to get some pictures.

The treat boxes will be delivered to the DSL participants this afternoon.