

Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth

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Please Forward or Print Monday Bulletin

E-mail your contributions, ideas and subscription requests for “**Monday Bulletin on Services to Youth**” to Cynthia Wright: wrightc1@michigan.gov or call 517/241-3957.

Views expressed in Monday Bulletin articles are not necessarily the views of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth nor Michigan Rehabilitation Services.



A Different Perspective

By Jill Gerrie

When I first heard about Project SEARCH I was prepared to find something wrong with it. I've been around a while, and have seen my fair share of new initiatives that just missed the mark. However, after spending a few minutes with one of the co-founders of Project SEARCH, I quickly realized she approached employment from an entirely different perspective. Let me explain...

Project SEARCH was developed in 1996 by Nurse J. Erin Riehle, Director of the Emergency room at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. She was in need of a reliable worker to stock supplies. Stocking in an emergency room is an important position. It was usually filled by people hoping to move to other positions in the hospital, and as a result turned-over frequently.

As Erin analyzed the situation, she realized that most of the hospital's customers, and source of revenue, were people with disabilities, yet very few employees had disabilities. As a business that exists to serve the public, Erin felt the hospital should reflect the public. So, working with the schools and the rehabilitation system, she hired a person with a significant disability to fill the open stocking position. It went so well that the individual became a full-time employee at Children's and today is responsible to sterilize all the equipment in their 15 room dental clinic.

Children's Hospital found that having employees with disabilities enhanced their image and generated positive feedback for their visible commitment to customers. Families with relatives with disabilities have increased their gifts to the hospital and the hospital has experienced increased local, regional, and national recognition. Performance and retention in some high-turnover, entry-level positions has increased dramatically. The hospital also discovered that many of the accommodations, large print, pictures, and adaptive equipment used by students/employees with disabilities benefited other employees as well.

As a result of this experience, over 60 individuals with disabilities are now employed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in a wide variety of non-traditional – complex, yet systematic - jobs, and the program is being replicated across the country.

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Project SEARCH

From my perspective, what differentiates Project SEARCH from other programs is that it is business driven, and about 83% of the time it results in employment in important, complex jobs for people with significant disabilities.

What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a business-led collaboration that enables young adults with disabilities to gain and maintain employment through training and career exploration. More specifically, it's a one year high school transition program which provides training and education leading employment. The program occurs on-site at a high status community business. Project SEARCH serves as a workforce alternative for students in their last years of school. In Ohio, three elective high school credits can be earned for successful completion of the Project SEARCH program. Each student applies to the program and is accepted through a selection committee process. Adults with disabilities may apply and be accepted if space is available. All students must be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total immersion in a large business. Every day, students report to the host business, learn employability skills in the classroom, and job skills while participating in 3-4 internships/experiences during the year. If available, students utilize public transportation. Students participate in monthly progress meetings to define their career goal and plan necessary steps to achieve that goal.

Managers at the internship sites work with the Project SEARCH instructor and job coaches to support the students. Students get continual feedback from the internship manager, coworkers, and Project SEARCH staff. Students end their day by reflection, problem solving, and planning. The ultimate goal upon program completion is competitive employment utilizing the skills learned on the internships and throughout the program.

Project SEARCH in Michigan

As a result of multiple presentations by Erin Riehle in Michigan, and subsequent visits by many to Cincinnati to learn more about the program, there are some Project SEARCH sites developing in Michigan.

This fall Hope Network, Kent Intermediate School District, and Fifth/Third Bank along with their local Michigan Rehabilitation

Office, are beginning the first site in Grand Rapids. Efforts are also underway in Oakland County, Detroit, Monroe, Lansing, Berrien, Bay, and Washtenaw Counties.

The Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, via Joe Longcor, has been funding meetings of those interested in Project SEARCH from around the state focused on sharing experiences and developing a framework for implementing the program in Michigan. Also in development is a committee to look at collaborative efforts at the state level to ease implementation of Project SEARCH sites in Michigan. Included in the committee are representatives from the Michigan Department of Education – Special Education, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Michigan Commission for the Blind, the Michigan Business Leadership Network, the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Department of Community Health, and the Disability Network/Michigan. It's been some

time since I've seen a program generate so much excitement and such possibilities for people with disabilities.

For more information

Should you wish more information about Project SEARCH or to join the project listserv, feel free to contact me, Jill Gerrie, at the Disability Network/Michigan: (517) 339-0539 or jill@dnmichigan.org. Also see the Cincinnati Project SEARCH web site at: <http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/p/search/>

Guidance and Career Counselors' Toolkit: Advising High School Students with Disabilities on Postsecondary Options

This 192 page resource from the HEATH Resource Center, contains answers to counselors' most frequently asked questions about postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities. Students and their families are encouraged to use the toolkit to help guide their transition planning for college and career. The online toolkit can be found at <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/files/active/1/Toolkit.pdf>

From Reference Points

REFERENCE POINTS on YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE GET A HEAD START ON CAREERS

Three hundred middle school students from around the country worked on a new web site created to link their interests and hobbies to future careers. The new site is offering online resources that cater to youth ages 11-15, seeking information about careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. Funworks stands out with its vibrant colors, graphics and photos, interactive games, quizzes, and more. Funworks was created by the Gender, Diversity, and Technology Institute at Education Development Center. <http://www.thefunworks.org/>

IT'S MY LIFE: EMPLOYMENT

This guide from the Casey Family Programs is the first in a planned series of seven guides for youth transitioning from the foster care system. The guides include Cultural and Personal Identity Formation, Supportive Relationships and Community Connections, Physical and Mental Health, Life Skills, Education, Employment, and Housing and will provide specific recommendations, strategies and resources for working with young people transitioning from foster care. This guide is available in PDF format at <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ItsMyLifeEmployment.htm> if you need hard copies; please e-mail your requests to EmploymentGuide@casey.org

PEPNET RESOURCE CENTER VIDEOS

The Deaf Mentor Video Series presents information about the process of choosing a career and succeeding in it. Four videos each focus on careers in specific fields and have interview clips of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people working in the fields of Science and Technology, Social and Behavioral Science, Business, and Arts and Entertainment. More information is online at <http://icc.csun.edu/deafMentorVideos.html>

RESUMES, INTERVIEWING AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

The resources on this web site are produced by WorkAbility IV (WAIV); a joint venture between the Department of Rehabilitation and the Center on Disabilities at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). This link will take the user to both tips for and examples of resumes, cover letters, interviewing and post interviewing etiquette. The web site can be found at <http://www.csun.edu/cod/workability/resumeservices.html>

NEW FACT SHEETS FROM THE EEOC HEALTH CARE WORKERS

“Questions and Answers about Health Care Workers and the Americans with Disabilities Act” is available on-line at: http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/health_care_workers.html

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH LIMITED TO NO READING SKILLS

This 7 CD ROM resource is designed for youth in transition from school to work, adults with disabilities and individuals with limited reading skills. Your Employment Selections (YES) is a reading-free, job preference and career exploration program that shows tasks related to 120 different jobs using motion video on CD-ROM. For more information go to <http://www.trisped.org> and select the “Transition/Job Selection” Tab

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

This question-and-answer document addresses the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to people in the workplace who are blind or who have vision impairments and is available at <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/blindness.html>.

PAVING THE WAY TO WORK: A GUIDE TO CAREER-FOCUSED MENTORING

The creation of the Mentoring Guide is rooted in the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy's (ODEP) charge to find and promote the most effective research-based policies and practices to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. Mentoring is recognized as one of the most important strategies for assisting youth in making a positive transition into adulthood. The Guide can be found at http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/mentoring.html

THE ARC OF ILLINOIS: FAMILY MANUAL FOR TRANSITION TO WORK AND ADULT SERVICES

The ARC of Illinois has published an informative guide that provides a detailed look at what steps can be taken to help an individual with developmental disabilities make the transition from the school system and various services to the workforce and/or adult services. Many useful resources are provided, as well as checklists of steps to take. The Manual can be found at <http://www.thearcofil.org/secure/reveal/admin/uploads/documents/Familymanualoctober2006zz.pdf>

REFERENCE POINTS on YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

This question-and-answer document addresses the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to persons with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. This new publication is available at http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual_disabilities.html

FINDING A JOB THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU: A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO LOOKING FOR A JOB AS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

The Job Accommodation Network consultants have developed this employment guide for job seekers as well as job candidates entering the workforce. This guide provides a four-step process with easy-to-use information, tools, and resources on subjects encountered when job seeking. These include disclosing a disability, requesting an accommodation, and career exploration designed to help people with disabilities find the job which is a good fit for them. The tool can be found at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/job/>.

PACKET ON TAX INCENTIVES AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Under President Bush's New Freedom Initiative, this Administration is committed to full and fair enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which provides people with disabilities an equal opportunity to work and to participate in the mainstream of American life. As part of the President's initiative, the Department of Justice is providing information to small businesses about the ADA and tax benefits to help them comply with the law. This packet contains information about the disabled access credit that is available for small businesses and the tax deduction that is available for businesses of any size to help offset some of the costs of improving accessibility for customers or employees with disabilities. It also includes the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form and instructions for claiming the disabled access credit, a list of ADA publications available free from the Department of Justice, and a list of telephone numbers and Internet sites to which you can turn for answers to your ADA questions. The packet can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/taxpack.htm> [Excerpted from Attorney General John Ashcroft's accompanying letter.]

REFERENCE POINTS, transition updates from the TATRA Project, is managed by PACER Center www.pacer.org as a joint technical assistance activity of the TATRA Project and the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition www.ncset.org

Save the Dates Events & Training

August

Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH)
Parent Leadership Camp

August 7-8, 2008

Lansing

<http://www.acmh-mi.org/plc3-08.pdf>

October

Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH)
Annual Conference- *The Family Express: Turn Your
Passion Into Action*

Scholarships available

October 13-14, 2008

Holiday Inn West, Lansing

<http://www.acmh-mi.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Conference

October 26-28, 2008

East Lansing, MI

<http://www.ldaofmichigan.org/calendar.htm>

November

Michigan Association of Learning Disabilities
Educators- *Alphabet Soup: The Answers lie within
Research Based Interventions*

November 3-4, 2008

Comfort Inn

Mt. Pleasant, MI

Monica Harris: monica.harris@wmich.edu

T.L. Lowe: tlowe@cooperville.k12.mi.us

Michigan Rehabilitation Conference

November 5-7, 2008

Grand Traverse Resort

Acme, MI

<http://michiganrehabilitationconference.org/>

<http://www.maro.org/>