Erin Riehle, RN, MSN  
Senior Director  
Disability Services and Project SEARCH  
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center  
Cincinnati, OH  

Project SEARCH:  
An Innovative Program  
for the Transition from School to Adult Life  

October 26, 2012  
Doubletree Suites, Mt. Laurel
Philosophy

- People with disabilities have the right to choose a path toward education and employment. However, while freedom of choice is given, the right to work is earned. Earning the right to work is dependent upon the student’s preparation.

Simon, Stephen, ADA Quarterly, Fall 1998.

Why is hiring people with disabilities important to our hospital?

- As a business that exists to serve the public, we should reflect the public.
- People with chronic illnesses and disabilities are a major source of hospital revenue – we want to be their provider of choice.
- People with disabilities working in our environment enhances our image and we receive positive feedback for our visible commitment (Gallup Poll).
- Our employees with disabilities serve as role models for our patients and families and give them a sense of hope, which is reflected in our satisfaction surveys.
- Our recruitment of talent is positively impacted.

- Universal design helps all employees.
- Employment is the #1 priority of young adults – not healthcare – and belief in a productive future increases compliance.
- People with chronic illnesses and disabilities represent the fastest growing market segment in the US.
- Families with relatives with disabilities have increased their involvement in hospital programs.
- The hospital has experienced increased local, regional and national recognition.
- Performance and retention in some high-turnover, entry-level positions has increased dramatically.
13 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
13 Job Developers
13 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
13 Job Coaches
13 Follow Along Staff

Funding for Employment
• Serial Funding

| Education | VR | DD | VR | DD |

• Project SEARCH Funding

| Education | VR | DD |

Key Funding Assumptions
• Jobs need to be better than those available through the standard VR process.
• The CRP that provides job coaching needs to be the same CRP that provides job development – to ensure better outcomes.
Nontraditional Jobs

Not the “Easiest Jobs”
But
“Complex and Systematic”

Program Description

• One year program
• 10 - 12 students with a variety of disabilities
• Certified instructors and job coaches
• Last year of HS eligibility
• Rotations through internships with continual feedback
• Outcome of employment

Eligibility Guidelines

• 18 – 21 years old
• Appropriate hygiene, social and communication skills
• Ability to take direction and change behavior
• Access public transportation
• Pass drug screen, background check, immunizations
• Desire to Work!

Annual School Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUG</th>
<th>JUNE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin Program</td>
<td>Graduate &amp; Begin Work at Site or in Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Internship</td>
<td>Monthly Employment Planning Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Internship</td>
<td>Workshop Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Internship</td>
<td>Workshop Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Day

• 8:00 Employability Skills
• 9:00 Worksites
• 11:30 Lunch
• 12:15 Worksites
• 2:00 Review, Plan Journaling
• 2:30 Depart

Internships

• Marketable Skills
• 4 – 5 hours of day, 910 per year
• Work/ Social Skills
• Integrated
• Cascading skills
• For the benefit of the student, not the benefit of the host employer
2. Collaboration: Project SEARCH is a partnership with support and resources from the host employer, education, VR and the supported employment provider.
   - Roles and responsibilities of the different partners are clearly defined and agreed upon.
   - The following should be included from the start of any program:
     - Host employer
     - School
     - Supported Employment Provider
     - DO
   - Partners meet on a regular basis, at least monthly during the set up and development phase to drive and monitor progress.

3. Project SEARCH is employer led.
   - The host employer is not paid to participate in PS.
   - The host employer is fully involved in crucial decisions such as student selection, internship site development, active internal and external marketing, and internal recruitment of qualified candidates via a business liaison responsible for supporting Project SEARCH as part of their assigned job.
   - Project SEARCH should be based in a large, quality organization with a minimum of 200 employees, offering a variety of complex internships, with a reasonable level of staff turnover.
   - The host employer provides an on-site classroom dedicated to PS that provides a base for the teacher, job coaches and interns.

4. The partners provide consistent on-site staff in order to support the interns and the host employer at all running times during the academic year and as needed by the host employer during the holidays.
   - Staff should conduct monthly reviews with interns and their family members, VR counselors and others as necessary, to discuss internship progress and career planning.

5. Project SEARCH focuses on serving young adults with learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum conditions, who can benefit from intensive, personalized support in preparing for and finding work.
6. Pooled funding and resources are in place between the non-employer partners.
   • Funding is a reallocation of existing resources.
   • Funding is sustainable.

7. There is total immersion of the interns and employees in the host business. Interns abide by host employer’s policies and practices.
   • Interns are on site at the host employer for a minimum of six hours each academic day, for an entire academic year.
   • Interns train in real work setting.
   • The internships provide the participants with structured, personalized work-based training. As such, interns are separate from people who volunteer with the host employer.
   • Students participate in skill development 20-25 hours per week.
   • The students learn competitive, marketable, transferrable skills. Emphasis is on layering on additional skills.
   • Project SEARCH includes an employability skills curriculum taught each morning and customized to the host employer and local labor market.

8. Teachers and job coaches will be trained in systematic instruction.
   • Department mentors will be invited to systematic instruction training.

9. Each site will provide follow along support for graduates of Project SEARCH who go on to be employed. Ideally interns are made eligible before they begin PS.
   • Each site will make provisions to support graduates who secure employment within the host employer, to be provided by the same CRP who provides job coaching and job development.
   • Each site will support graduates who do not gain employment with the host employer, to find employment elsewhere in the community.

10. Each PS site will collect data on participants and employment outcomes.
    • Sites will provide this and other requested information to the PS database.

11. Each site has a licensing agreement signed with Project SEARCH Cincinnati.
12. Getting a job is more important than completing the PS year.
   • The model is sufficiently flexible to allow interns to leave the program at any time during the academic year, when a suitable job opportunity arises with the host business or elsewhere.
Work Aid Book

Emergency Department Technician

Diaper Drawer Dividers

Pictures Instead of Words

Kristy: Independence
Enlarging Print

Specialty Equipment (Isolettes)

A Work Aid Book On The Wall

Oxymetry Probes

- Given to each patient
- Cost $18 new, $6 recycles
Pathology Tech

Fifth Third Bank – 300 files a day, 98% accuracy.

Health and Beauty Aids

Wegman’s Seafood Department
Progress to Date

- International web-based data base
- Condition of license
- Independent model fidelity audits
- 209 sites in existence
- 30 in process
- 39 states
- England, Scotland, Australia and Canada
- Wide mix of rural and urban
- Huge districts and very small (collaboration)

Types of Businesses Partnering with Project SEARCH

- Local, State and Federal Government
- Water and Power
- Lottery
- Banking and Insurance
- Universities
- Park Districts and Zoos
- Manufacturing: Shaw Flooring, Medtronic, Cargill
- Retirement Communities
- Retail: Glaxo Smith Kline, Wegman’s, etc.
- Distribution Centers
- Law Enforcement and Courthouses
- Chesapeake Oil
- Casinos