



*Preparing young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for success in integrated, competitive employment.*

# About Project SEARCH:

- ▶ Project SEARCH helps students with intellectual and developmental disabilities transition from school to work.
- ▶ The one-year program's primary objective is for students to develop life and work skills appropriate for competitive employment.
- ▶ Project SEARCH was first developed Cincinnati Children's Hospital, and is now at more than 700 sites across 48 states & 10 countries. The Project SEARCH program at AdventHealth started in 2018.
- ▶ The Project SEARCH Transition-to-Work Program is a unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through worksite rotations.
- ▶ The program demonstrates a novel collaborative approach that brings the education system, employers, and rehabilitation services together in unique ways to create a productive and comprehensive transition experience for students.

# Who is Involved?



- SMSD provides the Project SEARCH Instructor and Skills Trainers



- Provides Internships, Mentors and Managers for Project SEARCH interns



- Voc Rehab works with the interns throughout Project SEARCH to make the transition to employment successful

# Who is eligible?

- ▶ Must be a student currently enrolled or eligible to enroll in the Shawnee Mission School District
- ▶ Must be a minimum of 18 years of age and a maximum of 21 years of age.
- ▶ Must have completed all academic requirements for high school graduation
- ▶ Must plan to be employed in the community and exit school services at the conclusion of the Project SEARCH program.
- ▶ Must apply for services through Pre-Employment Services/Kansas Rehabilitation Services and, if appropriate, their County Board of Developmental Disabilities.
- ▶ Must exhibit social skills, interpersonal skills, and personal hygiene/grooming appropriate for a community workplace environment.
- ▶ Must be willing to follow all the rules established by the program and host business.
- ▶ Must be able to self-administer any medications taken during program hours.
- ▶ Must complete all forms, releases and requirements included in application packet.
- ▶ Must meet training location “employment” requirements, including passing a drug screen, a physical exam, participation in required vaccinations including the flu and COVID vaccine, submitting to a TB test and passing a background check.
- ▶ Must be willing to attend and be an active participant at regularly scheduled meetings with their community agency counselor, parents, teacher, and business staff.

# What makes a good Project SEARCH candidate?

- ▶ Meets eligibility criteria
- ▶ No history of major behavior issues
- ▶ Trustworthy, honest
- ▶ Willing to work and has a desire to be part of the program and actively seek inclusive employment after the program
- ▶ Successful at working independently on assigned work tasks
- ▶ Willing to accept feedback and correction

# Program Overview

## PROGRAM DETAILS

Program participants (interns) attend the program for a full school year in the host business. The site is staffed by a special education teacher and skills trainers to meet the educational and training needs of the interns.



## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Once the program year begins, the first few weeks are focused on intern orientation, hands-on skill assessment, and familiarization with the business environment. Interns develop a plan, which guides the internship selection process and individualized job search. The Internships will occur in three site rotations through the course of the year.



## PROGRAM GOALS

The end game is for employment within an inclusive environment. We are preparing the interns with transferable skills for the local job markets to represent the standards of quality upheld at AdventHealth.

# Program Overview

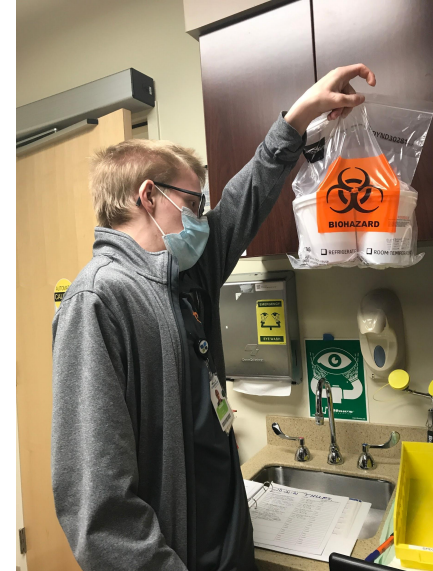
- ▶ **Employment Skills Curriculum:** Throughout the program year, the interns work on employability and functional skills for approximately 90 minutes of their day. Training room activities are designed around these focus areas: Team Building, Workplace Safety, Technology, Maintaining Employment, Self-Advocacy, Financial Literacy, Health and Wellness, and Preparing for Employment.
- ▶ We utilize the Project SEARCH Curriculum, Skills to Pay the Bills, Health Matters, and Executive Function Curricula throughout the year
- ▶ Interns are also exposed to fitness and leisure activities through a grant funded by SMEF





# Current Internship Sites

- Sterile Processing
- Harvest Kitchen
- Surgery Center
- Laundry
- Lab Courier
- Birth Center
- AdventHealth Medical Group
- Environmental Services
- Surgery Waiting
- Britain Development
- Early Learning
- Central Distribution
- ICU
- ACC / Surgery Waiting



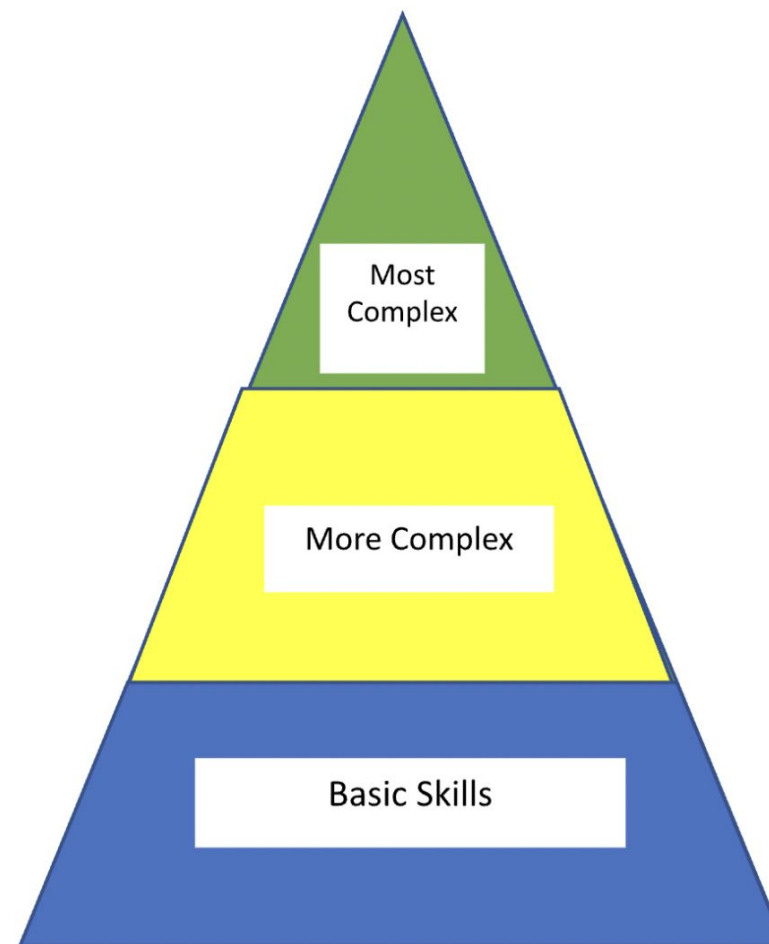


# Internships

- ▶ **Internships:** Through a series of three targeted internships the interns acquire competitive, marketable and transferable skills to enable them to apply for a related position.
- ▶ Interns also build communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills which is important to their overall development as a young worker.
- ▶ Potential internship departments are identified through a continuous collaborative process involving the instructor, skills trainers, and business liaison.
  - ▶ Interns spend approximately five hours each day at the internships, which includes a thirty minute lunch.

# Building Skills

- ▶ Working from a task list, interns acquire the core skills necessary to be hired in an entry-level position at the host business site or in the community. Once the interns master the core skills, additional skills are layered on to improve their marketability.



# Goal of Internships

- ▶ Build core skills that are:
  - ▶ Competitive
  - ▶ Marketable
  - ▶ Transferable
- ▶ Develop culture change within the organization
- ▶ Allow host business staff to recognize talents of young people with disabilities
- ▶ Teach transferable, marketable skills that lead to employment at other community employers
- ▶ Provide constructive, honest evaluation in a consistent manner from managers, peer mentor, instructor and Skills Trainers
- ▶ Expect intern performance aligned with other employees



# Evaluation

- ▶ In addition to maintaining IEP goals, interns are evaluated weekly using a performance rubric. The expectation is that interns will consistently score a 3 or higher by the end of year. Scores of 4 are comparable to a hired/paid position.
- ▶ Interns are also assessed using the Vocational Fit Assessment at least twice a year.
  - ▶ Measures interns skills
  - ▶ Job matches to specific internships at the hospital
  - ▶ “Job matching is the collaborative, data-based decision-making process used by transition teams to determine the best fit between an individual’s abilities and preferences and the job’s environmental and occupational demands.”

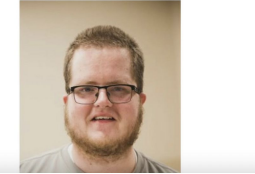
## VocFit.com



# Impact on Interns



Early Learning  
Team Member of the Month  
September 2022  
**Noah Cramer**



Noah was the Early Learning Team  
Member of the Month



Luke was the EVS Employee of the Month



Reece has been working in the  
phlebotomy department since his  
graduation from Project SEARCH



Cielo was featured on Great Day KC  
<https://fox4kc.com/great-day-kc/sponsored-content-adventhealth/advent-health-offers-people-with-disabilities-a-path-to-the-workforce/>

## THE NUMBERS:

73% of SMSD Project SEARCH interns are employed

50% of SMSD Project SEARCH interns are employed  
in integrated, non-seasonal settings for more than  
30 hours per week earning a competitive wage

6 former Project SEARCH Interns are working at  
AdventHealth

# Next Steps

- ▶ Schedule a Zoom meeting with Amy Quinley ([amyquinley@smsd.org](mailto:amyquinley@smsd.org)) for our current interns to talk with your class about Project SEARCH
- ▶ Schedule a time for a Project SEARCH staff member to come out and talk to your class about Project SEARCH



The presence of a Project SEARCH program can bring about long-term changes in business culture that have far-reaching positive effects on attitudes about hiring people with disabilities and the range of jobs in which they can be successful.