



PROJECT SEARCH: HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PROGRAM

The High School Transition Program is a one-year program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school at The Warren County Career Center. It is targeted for students whose main goal is competitive employment. The program takes place at Otterbein Retirement Community in Lebanon, Ohio where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process through continuous feedback and application of new skills.

A typical school day includes classroom instruction in employability skills, work on a jobsite, lunch with co-workers, and feedback from the instructor and job coaches. The rotations are designed to compliment each student's interests, skills, and strengths. Students intern in 3 jobs during the school year.

Worksite rotations may include:

- Transporting residents to a variety of appointments
- Central Supply and stocking in a variety of nursing and housekeeping areas
- Laundry
- Administration: mailing monthly bills and statements, organizing resident files
- Mail room clerk including delivering mail to residents and reading mail to residents
- Housekeeping, Environmental and Infection Control
- Dietary-Assisting residents with meals, preparing and delivering meals
- Grounds and Greenhouse
- Creative Arts Center
- Resident Interaction
- General Maintenance
- Human Resources
- Recycling

A Special Education instructor and job coaches provide initial training, perform job analyses, and act as mentors to the interns. The instructor acts as a liaison with the host business and works with supervisors to develop job rotations. The goal of the program is career exploration and eventual competitive employment in the workforce where they can use their skills and earn a competitive wage with benefits.

Linkages are made to appropriate community services, such as Ohio Rehabilitation Service Commission and Warren County MR/DD, in order to insure a successful transition to work as well as retention and career advancement.

Project SEARCH is a nationally recognized model of transition from school to work for youth with disabilities. They were awarded the New Freedom Initiative Award from the US Department of Labor. The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council awarded a grant to Project SEARCH. The goal of this grant is to replicate Project SEARCH around the state. Otterbein was one of the first sites to participate in this grant.

Eligibility Criteria:

- 18 – 22 years old
- In last year of high school (may have participated in deferred graduation)
- Desires to work in the community
- Willing to access independent transportation options
- Has met all academic requirements for graduation
- Has basic communication skills
- Has appropriate social, grooming, and hygiene skills
- Has independent toileting and feeding skills
- Can pass drug screen and felony check
- Has updated immunizations
- Has achieved 2nd or 3rd grade reading and math levels

Referral, Selection and Enrollment Process:

- Student and family attend Open House
- Student, family and school district representative tour Otterbein and meet with the Program Coordinator
- Student completes application
- Application is reviewed by the selection committee
- If necessary, student participates in a vocational assessment
- Student applies for Rehabilitation Services Commission and MR/DD
- Student accepted into the program
- IEP meeting held
- Student completes criminal records check and 2 step TB test
- Student begins the program at the next change in job rotations

For more information please contact

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