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CAREERS PARTNERS WITH CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY INTERNSHIPS FOR STUDENTS

CAREERS and Carmel High School in Putnam County are involved in an exciting new initiative designed to place and train high school students with disabilities in unpaid internships so they can develop job skills. At the same time, CAREERS provides hand-on training to the school's Teachers Assistants to enable them to assume the on-going role of School-Based Job Coaches.

"This is the first time a program of this kind has been implemented and an agency like ours has collaborated so directly with a school district in this area," Executive Director Tina Cornish-Lauria says. "We are very pleased that the Carmel School District has taken such an interest in providing long-term resources for its students with disabilities and hope that other schools will take their lead and use CAREERS' expertise to help their students and train their teachers as well."

The program officially began in June 2010 when we provided a comprehensive, school-based Teacher's Aide/Job Coach training workshop to Carmel School District. The workshop taught school personnel how to assume the role of job coach once a student has been successfully integrated and trained in an internship by a CAREERS' Employment Specialist.

In July, we collaborated with the school to provide an internship for three students at Camp Herrlich in Patterson. The 6-week internships were very successful, according to Senior Employment Specialist Marie O'Connor. "All the students did very well in their jobs, even though they were the first they ever had. One particular student really shined. He felt such ownership and pride in his job that he wouldn't go on a scheduled family vacation," Marie said.

Five students are placed in internships for the 2010-11 school year at local businesses and organizations, which include Gamestop, Kohl's, Athlete's Foot, Radio Shack, and the Reed Memorial Library. Prior to the placements, CAREERS provided the students with job development skills and contacted all the local businesses to provide jobs. This innovative program runs five days a week, two hours a day through the school year. A CAREERS' Employment Specialist accompanies the student and a Teacher's Aide on the job until the student masters the job and the Aide can assume the duties of Job Coach.

“Our hope is that if a student learns job skills and how to work cooperatively with others in a work setting, his or her internship may turn into a paid position during the summer,” Marie said. “We already have one student who has an offer – this program is really great for everyone involved!”

Carmel High School Testimonial

October 2010

I have had the pleasure of being able to access the services of CAREERS for People with Disabilities, Inc. during my past four years at Carmel High School. I serve as a Special Education Teacher in the PACE (Life Skills) program and have invited CAREERS' Transition Coordinator, Marie O'Connor, into my classroom on many occasions to discuss employability and to practice job interviews. The staff at CAREERS has always been willing to work with us and to lend a hand whenever we needed their assistance.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to work more closely with them on an initiative where Carmel students were working at a summer camp. CAREERS stepped in to train our job coaches and made regular site visits to the camp to ensure that the coaches were comfortable with their roles and to help them trouble shoot. Ms. O'Connor interacted with the students in a professional manner and really emphasized the importance of vocational skills with them.

Carmel High School has begun a partnership with CAREERS for the 2010-2011 school year as well. Our students will be working out in the community in placements that will be set up by CAREERS and we will continue to work with their staff in coaching and pre-vocational skills training. CAREERS is an agency that truly cares about student success and they have shown that in all they have done to help the students and staff of Carmel High School!

Allison Woolston
PACE Program
Carmel High School



Carmel Central
School District



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