



# INTO THE WORLD OF WORK

## News for Families and Supporters

A private, not-for-profit that finds productive employment for individuals with learning, developmental, psychiatric and/or physical disabilities. We provide job placement, extensive on-the-job training and ongoing support services -- free to clients and employers.

Number 41 Matching people who want to work, with jobs they like, since 1987! Program Edition

### What We Do At CAREERS

At CAREERS, we help people learn skills so that they can get a job, then provide the placement, on-the-job training and ongoing support needed to keep it. Since CAREERS began in 1987, we have helped over 2500 individuals find and maintain jobs that match their skills and interests, and over 650 of them are still working in the jobs that we placed them in years ago! We focus on the whole person and advocate for clients by making referrals to agencies that offer the specific help they need.



Kate's Employment Specialist, Serena Shea, presented Kate with a Personal Achievement Award at our Anniversary Celebration last October. Kate has been at the Mt. Kisco Boys and Girls Club for 11 years.

An example of the success of our Supported Work Program is Kate Warren. Kate was referred to CAREERS in 2001 as a student at Horace Greeley High School, and again in 2005, after she attended the New York Institute of Technology, to assess her interests and abilities and help her prepare for a job.

CAREERS arranged an internship with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Northern Westchester to oversee the girls' locker room, with CAREERS staff providing Kate with job coaching and on-the-job training. Kate did so well that she was offered a permanent, part-time position. After a few years, the Boys and Girls Club created a position for her in their recreation room, because they valued her dedication and work ethic and wanted to encourage her growth as part of their team.

### Workforce Readiness & Financial Education Job Club

Our classroom-style program helps clients learn the skills needed to obtain employment and create a successful working partnership with their employers and co-workers, as well as develop financial proficiency. Classes are designed to provide the skills necessary to successfully

interview for, obtain and maintain employment, as well as the financial skills to become self-sufficient. Our Employment Specialists work with each individual to develop job leads, set up and attend interviews. As each client secures a position, they continue to work with their Employment Specialist on the job as needed, receiving one-on-one training and long-term support to ensure success.

Our Workforce Readiness program is designed to fill a void in the system for individuals with disabilities, who often lack education, basic communication and job skills. They are often unaware of the resources and job opportunities available to them, require additional on-the-job training to master skills and/or require support in areas including technology, transportation and communication.



Angela is a Westchester Community College student who took our Workforce Readiness Class and was placed in an internship at S & H Uniforms in White Plains. They were so impressed by her enthusiasm and work ethic that they offered her a job when her internship ends.

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### **Into the World of Work**

Published by  
CAREERS for People  
with Disabilities, Inc.

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**CAREERS is a private non-profit organization that finds productive employment for individuals with disabilities by providing placement, on-the-job training and ongoing support services.**

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Many individuals encounter reluctance by employers to consider people with disabilities when hiring. In many cases, our training, advocacy and ongoing follow-along support make the life-changing difference for an individual who was not sure what the next step should be.

The Financial Education segment of our program includes information on banking procedures, the importance of budgeting, saving and good credit scores. We often incorporate guest speakers from area banks to discuss financial issues, as well as to assist with mock interviews and provide insights on hiring practices.

### **High School Transition Program**

Since 1997, CAREERS' School-to-Work Transition Program has helped students with disabilities make the difficult move from the security of the classroom to the uncertainty of the workplace. We target juniors and seniors who have learning, developmental, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities.

Our goal for this program is to connect high school juniors and seniors with workforce readiness skills, to help them experience successful school-to-work transitions. This at-risk population often lacks support to find jobs after graduation, which leads to a high unemployment rate for young adults.



CAREERS staff conducts complete needs and skills assessments for each student to determine their ideal job. We teach interviewing skills and address any social or learning issues. Our Workforce Readiness classes use techniques such as role-playing and mock interviews, while training students for the specific job in which they are placed.

After successfully completing community internships and graduating from high school, a student may be referred to our adult Supported Employment Program. Our professional staff help them write effective résumés; conduct individualized job searches and accompany students on interviews. After each student is hired, we provide on-the-job training, coaching and follow-along support for as long as necessary.

### **Education and Employment Initiative/Site-Based Internships**

Moving out of the classroom and into the job site to find long-term productive employment is the goal of our newest initiative. We collaborate with school districts and large local employers (i.e. a hospital) so students have the chance to try a variety of positions. Our staff teaches life and interpersonal skills to help each student interact with co-workers and managers. We collaborate with, and provide oversight to, Teaching Assistants as they help job coach students in their varied internships.

Counselors, teachers, family members and advocates are invited to participate in our initial interview to provide a complete picture of each students' strengths, abilities and goals prior to the start of the program. Our Employment Specialists provide ongoing job skills training, advice and support to enable the students to reach their full potential. We also work closely with management to ensure the the employer is satisfied with each intern's productivity.



Lisa interned in several different departments at United Hebrew Hospital Center and, after she graduated, CAREERS staff helped her get a job at Monkey Pod Games in Mamaroneck.

After each student has completed two 8 or 10-week internship cycles, their CAREERS Employment Specialist will set up and accompany students on interviews to assist with job placement within the community. When a job is secured, we provide on-the-job training and ongoing support in permanent positions.

CAREERS has successfully instituted Site-Based Internship Programs in collaboration with New Rochelle, Putnam Valley and Carmel High Schools.

### Teaching Assistants Training Workshops

Not all schools have the resources to bring in Job Coaches to assist their students, so CAREERS has developed a comprehensive school-based Teaching Assistants/Job Coach training workshop. We train district employees to act as Job Coaches for students who have been successfully trained in their internships by CAREERS' Employment Specialists.

### Ambition in Motion (AIM) Program

AIM is a day habilitation without walls program that fills a void in the community for individuals not yet ready to participate in a supported work program. Tailored to their needs, interests and potential, the program provides diverse opportunities to interact and contribute to the local community, while learning independent living and job skills.

AIM can bridge the gap from school to life as an adult in the community, while cultivating the social skills necessary to succeed in everyday activities. Our professional staff considers each participant's interests and skills to find activities which will assist in their progress toward independence. We utilize community resources to maximize each person's choices and skill development.

Our Putnam AIM participants volunteer in local organizations to practice workplace skills. They collect recyclables from area businesses and bring them to the Kent Recycling Center, where they help sort items. Every summer, participants tend a garden plot at the Putnam County Community Garden located across from Tilly Foster Farm in Brewster.

Participants are also regular dog-walkers at the Putnam Humane Society and volunteer weekly at the Mahopac Library, where they help with filing, stamping and other projects.

Life skills including shopping, meal planning, laundry and clean-up are tasks that AIM participants are becoming more familiar with as they learn to navigate their community. The social and emotional benefits of having friends to learn within a safe environment are invaluable.



Our Ambition In Motion (AIM) participants, Artie, Michael and Doug provide a wide range of volunteer services in their community, including delivering holiday supplies and picking up and sorting recyclables.

**Support CAREERS in cyberspace:**

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CAREERSforPeople@aol.com

**Be sure to watch our video on the homepage of our website!**

### Pathway to Employment

*Pathway to Employment* is a person-centered employment planning and support service that provides assistance for individuals to participate in career exploration. Services are funded by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and available to individuals expressing an interest in determining if they are work-ready. Typically, they are individuals who receive Day Habilitation, Pre-Vocational and Supported Employment services, as well as students leaving high school. This service offers a personalized planning process that helps individuals identify a career or vocational direction. *Pathway to Employment* also provides instruction and training in job readiness skills.

### Employment Training Program (ETP)

ETP offers individuals an opportunity to work in an internship that may lead to permanent employment in a community business. During each internship, wages will be paid by OPWDD directly to the client while they learn the skills needed for the job. ETP participants may also attend job readiness classes that present topics such as conflict resolution and how to dress for work. ETP services include increased job development and job coaching as well as assistance with other employability skills.

### Supported Employment (SEMP)

SEMP provides the extra supports individuals with disabilities need to obtain and maintain paid competitive jobs in the community. Individuals with developmental disabilities will typically transition to SEMP after they have received supported employment services funded by ACCES-VR and require limited job coaching to successfully maintain their employment.

### The Ticket To Work Program

*The Ticket To Work Program* is a federally funded employment program designed to provide Social Security beneficiaries the choices, opportunities and support they need to enter the workforce, maintain employment and become economically self-supporting. It is a free and voluntary program that can help Social Security beneficiaries get a good job that may lead to a career, and become financially independent. Individuals who receive Social Security benefits because of a disability and are age 18 through 64 may qualify for the program.



Nicky Simon has worked at Target in White Plains for 13 years and was named Employee of the Month! His Job Coach visits regularly to make sure everything continues to go well for Nicky and his managers.



James Marinelli has enjoyed his job at Sears in Jefferson Valley for 20 years!

Through the Ticket To Work program, CAREERS is able to assist clients who receive SSI or SSDI in finding and maintaining a job as long as they will earn at least \$780 per month during the first year of employment. CAREERS can provide services to individuals even if they cannot, or do not want to, go through ACCES-VR.

Once committed to the Ticket to Work Program, our staff will develop an Individualized Work Plan, which will include career counseling and guidance and may include job search and placement, job coaching and training, job accommodation and transportation planning assistance, and resume development, among other support services.

This program is a good fit for people who want to improve their earning potential and are committed to preparing for long-term success in the workplace. Through the Ticket to Work program, we offer beneficiaries with disabilities access to meaningful employment.