



# Transition News

## Special points of interest:

- \* Art Builds Florida!
- \* The ARC Jacksonville Presents: Life Experience
- \* State Gets \$10 million
- \* Project SEARCH, Colorado
- \* Hope Academy—Project SEARCH/Jacksonville

### State Gets \$10 Million for Disability Employment Program

April 8, 2009

A federal stimulus grant of \$10.4 million gave employment programs for people with disabilities in our state a significant boost this month.

This one-time grant falls under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants program to "implement innovative strategies to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities."

The state Department of Social and Health Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will receive \$8.8 million and the state Department of Services for the Blind the remaining \$1.6 million of the money. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation received 50 percent of its portion April 1; the remaining balance is scheduled to be awarded Sept. 30.

Press Release:  
Florida Department of State -Kurt S. Browning Secretary

Secretary of State Kurt S. Browning is pleased to announce four winners in the Art Builds Florida! Statewide student art contest sponsored by Citizens for Florida Arts, Inc. The contest highlighted Culture Builds Florida's Future, the Division of Cultural Affairs' ten-year strategic plan. The contest focuses on the plan's four key components: Leadership, Design and Development, Learning and Wellness, and Strengthening the Economy.

Each of the four winners will receive a \$1,500 cash

Participants who take advantage of this unique program will obtain a "sneak preview" and crash course into living independently.

Mission: To allow parents

## Art Builds Florida!

### Statewide Student Art Contest Winners Announced

prize from Citizens for Florida Arts, Inc. An exhibition in the Division of Cultural Affairs' Gallery for Innovation & the Arts will feature the work of the winners and finalists March 20 through June 5, 2009. The winners are:

Kyle Leahy Walsh (Clay County), a 10th grade student at Ridgeview High School, is the winner of the Leadership category. Kyle says of his work titled, Promoting Cultural Leadership through Education, that "music, art, dance, buildings and other forms of culture release people's emotions. It is important to have art in our lives. School is one of the first places to



"Having Autism Doesn't Mean You Shouldn't Dream"

learn about the arts. A person can become a leader in the arts by being encouraged in school."

### The Arc Jacksonville presents: LIFE Experience Living Independently; Finding Enrichment

and individuals with intellectual disabilities to discover the possibilities of living independently.

- Staff -to-student ratio: 1/5
- Individualized support
- Customized training

- Friendship development
- Enhance decision-making skills

For more information:

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www.arcjacksonville.org

We're on the Web:

<http://www.hscj.ufl.edu/peds/aut/>

Family Care Council/Area 4  
May 1, 2009

**Lou Brown, PhD**  
**The Possibilities of Work**  
Conference Center @ the  
Jacksonville Library  
303 Laura St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
**Register: Lyn Oaks**  
**(904) 992-2440**  
**Seating is Limited!**



"Project SEARCH is doing more than providing valuable work experiences for students. It is massaging and changing corporate culture and the receptivity of workplaces to employ people with disabilities."

## Project Search helps build employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Most of us already know how difficult it is to find a job in today's tight economy. But imagine the challenge if you are unemployed and also have a disability?

Although more than willing and able to work, people with disabilities reported a 13.1 percent unemployment rate last month while people without disabilities were unemployed at an 8.9 percent rate.

But a new approach for the region, called Project Search, is trying to close that gap and provide more opportunities for young people with disabilities or developmental delays as they transition to the workplace after high school. The public/private partnership is spearheaded by Poudre School District along with Columbine Health Services and the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

Project Search, which has been implemented across the country with the help of health-care facilities, places students into internships for about 15 hours a week for up to a year to provide training that could open doors to full-time jobs in the workplace. Coaches work with the interns to support their efforts and offer them diverse workplace experiences.

Students with disabilities build skills, self-esteem and confidence, while participating companies offering the internships receive reliable, dedicated workers. Many of the interns are able to use the experience to define what kind of work they want to do in the future.

Such innovation, combined with compassion and an eye toward fiscal common sense, is applauded.

### Hope Academy-Project Search, Jacksonville, FL

Hope Academy-Project SEARCH is a workforce development program designed to provide career exploration and training opportunities for young adults with disabilities. The program is targeted for young adults, ages 18—29, who will benefit from career exploration and whose main goal is paid employment. Participants learn employability and job skills while completing three, ten-week internships within the host business. Individualized job development and placement occurs based on each person's experiences, strengths, and skills. Participants are provided support with accommodations, adaptations and on-the-job coaching as necessary.

Each student applies to the program and is accepted through a selection committee process. All students must be eligible for services with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to participate.

The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total immersion in a larger business. Each day, interns report to the host business, learn employability skills in the classroom and job skills while participating in 3 internships experiences during the year. Interns participate in monthly progress meetings to define their career goal and plan necessary steps to achieve that goal.

Managers at the internship sites work with the Project SEARCH instructor and job coaches to support the interns. Interns receive continual feedback from the internship manager, co-workers, and Project SEARCH staff. Students end their day by reflection, problem solving, planning and discussing their key learning. The ultimate goal upon program completion is competitive employment utilizing the skills learned on the internships and through out the program.

**Partners:**

**Host Business:** provides a variety of internships that teach core skills of the business & a liaison to coordinate the program.

**Education:** provides an instructor & recruits appropriate participants from the Jax community.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** provides individualized career counseling & guidance, vocational planning & support (e.g. job coaching/placement).

**Agency for Persons with Disabilities:** provides long term retention and follow along for eligible individuals who receive a competitive job at the host business or in the community.

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