

BERGER HEALTH SYSTEM PROJECT SEARCH

Our Story



In 1996, while working as the Director of the Emergency Department at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Erin Riehle was frustrated with trying to find employees for entry-level jobs that involved restocking supplies. While working to identify a solution to eliminating the high turnover rates, Cincinnati Children’s had adopted a major diversity initiative, taking a policy statement from the American College of Healthcare executives, which reads, “Healthcare organizations must lead their communities in increasing employment opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities and advocate on behalf of their employment to other organizations.” Erin wondered if people with disabilities could fill the entry-level jobs she had. Not knowing anyone with a disability she turned to Great Oaks Career Campuses and the Hamilton County Board of Developmental Disability Services and asked if her idea was possible. Together with these organizations the idea of filling a handful of jobs in Cincinnati Children’s Emergency Department evolved into a comprehensive program model—Project SEARCH.



Project SEARCH has grown from one original program site at Cincinnati Children’s to more than 430 programs across 45 states and eight countries. Some of our business partners include: Fifth Third Bank, Dow Chemical, The Smithsonian Institute, Medtronic, University of Arkansas Medical Sciences, Embassy Suites – LaVista, NE, Zoo Miami, Indiana State Government, Emory Midtown Hospital, Drexel University, Xavier University, Kaiser Permanente, McConnell Air Force Base, National Institutes of Health and the University of Rochester Medical Center. Project SEARCH’s primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities.



Project SEARCH is driven by collaboration with the following community partners: Berger Hospital, Pickaway Ross, Circleville, Teays Valley, West Fall and Logan Elm School Districts, Capabilities, Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.



“Through Project Search, we want to positively impact our work environment and better our community by providing educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. We look forward to collaborating with the Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities, the local school districts, and our residents to make this project a success,” said Tim Colburn, President and CEO of Berger Health System.

Project SEARCH at Berger Health System is a nine-month internship program for young adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. It is targeted for individuals whose goal is competitive employment in the Pickaway County community. The program will follow the Pickaway Ross School calendar. The student interns will be immersed in Berger Health each day learning competitive and transferable work skills as well as important employability skills. Each intern will participate in three internships to explore a variety of career paths. They will work with a team that includes their family, an instructor, skills trainers, a counselor from Opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities as well as the Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

BENEFITS of the Project SEARCH Model:

Benefits to the Students:

- ❖ Participate in a variety of internships within the host hospital / business
- ❖ Acquire competitive, transferable and marketable job skills
- ❖ Gain increased independence, confidence, and self esteem
- ❖ Obtain work-based individualized coaching, instruction and feedback
- ❖ Develop links to Vocational Rehabilitation and other adult service agencies

Benefits to Berger Health:

- ❖ Access to a new, diverse, talent stream with skills that match labor needs
- ❖ Gain intern/ employee with disabilities who serve as a role model for customers
- ❖ Access to a demographic of the economy with intense buying power: people with disabilities represent one of the fastest growing market segments in the United States
- ❖ Experience increased regional and national recognition through marketing of this unique program
- ❖ Increased performance and retention in high-turnover, entry-level positions

For more information about Project SEARCH, please visit our website: www.projectsearch.us.

To learn more check out the new "Project SEARCH 101," a 20-minute introductory course to the model. This video version of Project SEARCH 101 is available to the general public. It can be accessed via this page of the Project SEARCH website:

<http://projectsearch.us/EDUCATION/ProjectSEARCHAcademy.aspx>

Important Dates:

Information Nights for families and interested student applicants:

November 15th starting at 6pm at Berger Hospital.

February 8th starting at 6pm at Berger Hospital.

Applications Due:

**Wednesday, February 28, 2018 to Sanny Rumampuk at Berger Health:
sanny.rumampuk@bergerhealth.com**

Skills Assessment Day:

Wednesday, April 4, 2018 at Berger Health – *All student applicants must attend*