

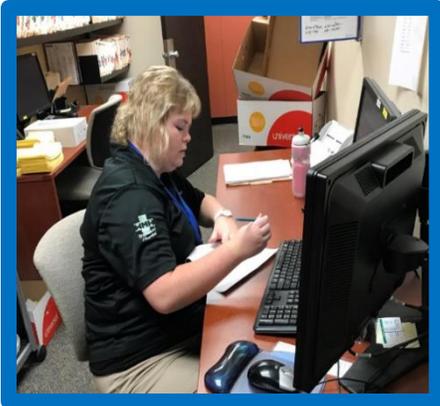


Project | SEARCH

MRS PROMOTING ABILITIES
Michigan Rehabilitation Services



EASTERN UPPER PENINSULA
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Twenty years ago, in 1996, while working as the Director of the Emergency Department at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Erin Riehle was frustrated with the high turnover rate in entry-level jobs that involved restocking supplies.

While working to identify a solution to eliminating the high turnover rate, Cincinnati Children’s had adopted a major diversity initiative. Per the American College of Healthcare executives, *“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. Partnering with Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, the idea of filling a handful of jobs in Cincinnati Children’s Emergency Department quickly evolved into a comprehensive program model—Project SEARCH.

Adding new sites every year, Project SEARCH has grown from 1 original program site at Cincinnati Children’s to almost 600 in 48 states and 9 additional countries!

 **The 1st Project SEARCH program in Northern Michigan was launched in Sault Ste. Marie at War Memorial Hospital in the Fall of 2018!**  

Currently there are 11 Different Internships at War Memorial Hospital:

-  **Central Sterile Processing**
-  **Food and Nutrition Services**
-  **Patient Financial Services**
-  **Oncology**
-  **Plant/Environmental Services**
-  **Rehabilitation Center**
-  **Materials Management**
-  **Obstetrics**
-  **Physician Practices**
-  **Medical/Surgery Unit**
-  **Housekeeping**

Some other Michigan business partners include:

- o Fifth Third Bank & Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids
- o Blue Cross/Blue Shield in Detroit
- o Troy Beaumont Hospital
- o Henry Ford Hospital in Oakland County
- o Michigan State University in Lansing
- o Duncan Aviation in Battle Creek
- o Dow Chemical in Midland
- o Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo

Project SEARCH’s primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities.

Lieutenant Governor Brian Calley supports Project SEARCH and has allocated funds to expand this program through Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS).

“It became clear as the task force met that the state’s responsibility for educating children needs to be refocused. “Everyone in Michigan deserves a chance to live a self-determined independent life and an effective education is essential to achieving that outcome. We look forward to working together with all partners to implement these recommendations.”

Brian Calley, Michigan Lieutenant Governor



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The Project SEARCH Transition Program is a one-year internship program for students with disabilities, in their last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, government or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in three 10 week internships to explore a variety of career paths. The students work with a team that includes their family, a special education teacher and Michigan Rehabilitation Services Counselor to create an employment goal and support the student during this important transition from school to work.

BENEFITS of the Project SEARCH Model:

Benefits to the Student Interns:

- ⦿ Participate in a variety of internships within the local hospital
- ⦿ Acquire competitive, transferable and marketable job skills
- ⦿ Gain increased independence, confidence, and self esteem
- ⦿ Obtain work based individualized coaching, instruction and evaluation
- ⦿ Develop linkages to Michigan Rehabilitation Services and other adult service agencies

Benefits to the Business:

- ★ Access to a new, diverse, talent stream with skills that match labor needs
- ★ Gain intern/ employees with disabilities who serve as a role model for customers
- ★ Access to a demographic of the economy with intense buying power: people with disabilities represents one of the fastest growing market segments in the US
- ★ Experience increased regional and national recognition through marketing of this unique program
- ★ Performance and retention in some high-turnover, entry-level positions increase dramatically
- ★ Assistance in reaching the Executive Order of hiring 7% of the workforce as people with disabilities

Skills Trainers:

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Visit the Project SEARCH  site for additional program details: www.projectsearch.us
 To view a great informational video about Project SEARCH click here: [Natalie Project SEARCH](#)