

# PROJECT SEARCH AT JOHNS HOPKINS ALL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



## What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a one-year, business-led, school-to-work internship program that takes place entirely at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. The program's primary objective is to secure competitive employment for students with disabilities by giving them marketable work skills.

## Who collaborates to make Project SEARCH possible?

- › Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
- › Progressive Abilities Support Services (PASS)
- › Pinellas County Schools
- › Florida Vocational Rehabilitation
- › The State of Florida (funder)

## Who participates in Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is designed for students ages 18–22 whose goal is competitive employment. The students work with a team that includes their family, a special education teacher, a job coach and a vocational rehabilitation counselor to create an employment goal and support the student during this important transition from school to the workplace. Young adults who have finished their graduation requirements will be able to apply to participate.

## When does Project SEARCH take place?

The program typically takes place Monday through Friday during the Pinellas County Schools academic year. Project SEARCH will follow the Pinellas County Schools student calendar.

## How does Project SEARCH work at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital?

Students participate in a three-week orientation followed by three 10-week internship rotations within these departments: Environmental Services, Food Services, Rehabilitation Services, Peri-Operative Services, Gift Shop, Supply Chain and Child Life. Students begin their day with an hour-long class, spend up to five hours learning job skills at their internship, then return to the classroom to reflect on their day, discuss challenges and evaluate progress. Each student will have two employment planning meetings during each internship period. After graduating from the program, the goal is for each student to find a job locally utilizing the work skills learned.

## What makes Project SEARCH unique to Tampa Bay?

Johns Hopkins All Children's is the only Project SEARCH site in Tampa Bay.

## CONTACTS

### Vocational Rehabilitation

Kristie Berger, M.A.,  
CRC, LMHC  
727-217-7946  
kristian.berger@vr.fldoe.org

### Internship

Kim Cherry  
Project SEARCH Coordinator  
904-626-5700  
kcherry@progressiveabilities.org

### Site

Londa Thomas  
Program Manager, HR  
Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital  
727-767-4138 | lfootma2@jhmi.edu

### School District

E. Kent Vermeer  
Pinellas County Schools Coordinator  
Extended Transition  
vermeere@pcsb.org  
727-547-7850 x2003 | 727-415-5052



**JOHNS HOPKINS**  
All Children's Hospital



## THE PROJECT SEARCH STORY

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. Simultaneously, Cincinnati Children's had adopted a major diversity initiative, taking a policy statement from the American College of Healthcare Executives, which read, "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.

## PROGRAM GROWTH

Project SEARCH has grown from its original program site to a large and continuously expanding international network of sites. National and international business partners include: Cleveland Clinic, Health First in Melbourne, Rosen Shingle Creek (Orlando), Zoo Miami, Fifth Third Bank, Wal-Mart Distribution Centers, National Institutes of Health—Clinical Center, Smithsonian, Xavier University, Medtronic, The Federal Department of the Interior, McConnell Air Force Base, Indiana State Government, Emory Midtown Hospital, Kaiser Permanente, Embassy Suites, BWI Hilton, The University of Rochester Medical Center and more than 30 sites in the UK.



“ Our mission is to provide customized employment services to persons with disabilities and to promote equality in the workforce and in the community. ”

—Jim Atkinson, Chief Executive Officer, PASS

## PROJECT SEARCH COLLABORATORS

### Progressive Abilities Support Services (PASS)

works with individuals with disabilities who have registered with their state's Vocational Rehabilitation program and are looking for a little bit of extra help obtaining employment. We provide a one-on-one individualized supported employment program that includes pre-employment training, career consultation, placement assistance, on-the-job training and follow-along support, among other services. PASS is a not-for-profit agency that was founded in 2011. We currently have multiple offices located in Florida and Georgia.

**Florida Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** is a federal-state program that helps people who have physical or

mental disabilities get or keep a job. VR is committed to helping people with disabilities find meaningful careers.

**Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital** is the most advanced children's hospital on Florida's west coast and is ranked in multiple specialties by *U.S. News & World Report*. With over 50 pediatric specialties and subspecialties and 259 beds, Johns Hopkins All Children's is dedicated to advancing children's health through treatment, research, education and advocacy. A network of 11 outpatient care centers in six counties along with affiliate programs at regional hospitals makes Johns Hopkins All Children's a leading provider of care for Florida's children.

**Pinellas County Schools** serves approximately 13,600 students with disabilities and 6,200 students who are gifted. The mission of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) is to provide quality services that support effective learning opportunities for all exceptional children. Pinellas County Schools provides a full continuum of services, which include but are not limited to educational, vocational and behavioral support, to meet the needs of eligible students while allowing access to general education instruction with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate for each student.

