

# Is Employment an Option?

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# WIHD Prevocational Programming at NYP Westchester & White Plains Hospitals: Project SEARCH

- The program is a collaborative partnership with school districts, WIHD, Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Ability Beyond and the host sites, NYP Westchester & White Plains Hospitals. (We are a blended funding model)
- It is a one school-year, full-time (5 days per week, 6 hours per day) community-based employment training program, leading to the acquisition of foundational, employability, and pragmatic skills with a goal of integrated competitive entry level employment.
- The focus of the program is on serving young adults (19-26) with disabilities who can benefit from personalized support in an intensive year of community-based career development and internship experience.



# Project SEARCH Goals

- **Prepare** interns for predictable and complex entry level employment
- **Teach** essential, marketable skills
- **Build stamina** and generalized application of skills
- **Demonstrating that our interns add value to a workforce**
- **Focus** on job development and employability
- Use a **strategic, collaborative** approach to training and employment



# Part of the Community, Within the Hospital & Outside of it!



**NewYork-Presbyterian**  
Westchester

**WP** White Plains Hospital  
A MEMBER OF THE MONTEFIORE HEALTH SYSTEM

**ability**  
*beyond*

 **Project | SEARCH**<sup>®</sup>

 **Westchester Institute**  
for Human Development

**NYP- Westchester Hospital  
WIHD Gala Honorees May 2023**  
<https://youtu.be/DoxO7gj1SKA>



# Departments Hosting Our Interns

## NYP Westchester & White Plains Hospitals

Environmental Services & Housekeeping  
Food & Nutrition Services  
Stockroom/ Supply Chain & Material Management  
Maintenance & Paint Shop  
Transport

## NYP Westchester Hospital (5<sup>th</sup> year of Programming)

Radiology  
Cancer Center  
Greeting/Admissions  
Lobby Ambassador

## WPH (2nd year of Programming)

Nursing Administration

All placements fall under Volunteer

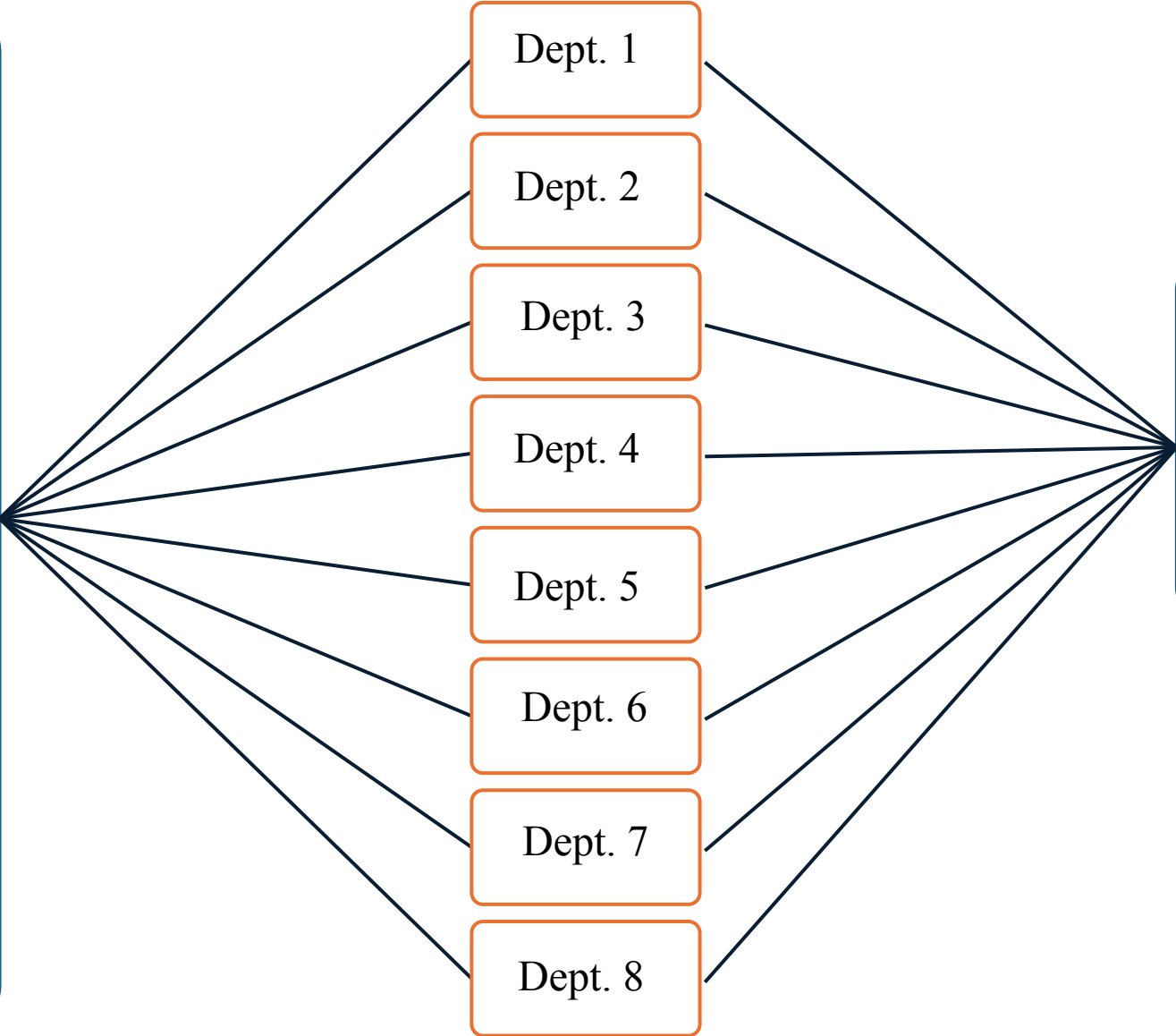
Services~



10am-2pm (incl. lunch: Personal Independence & Social skills )  
**Internship Sites** Learn, Practice, Generalize  
Instructors and our Staff rotate to departments throughout the day

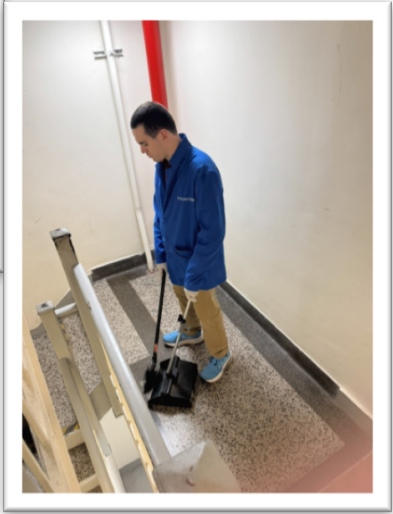
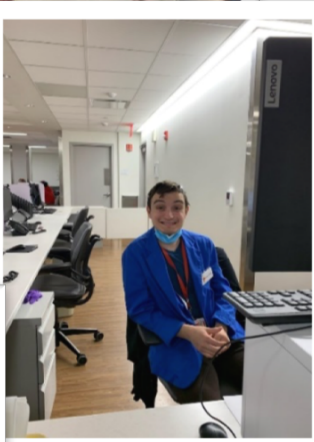
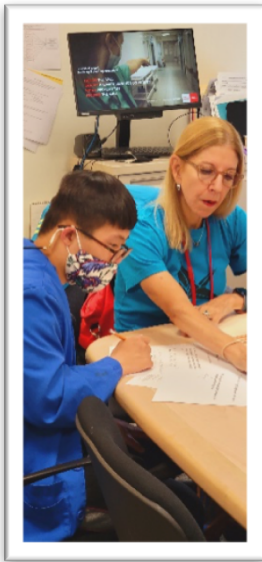
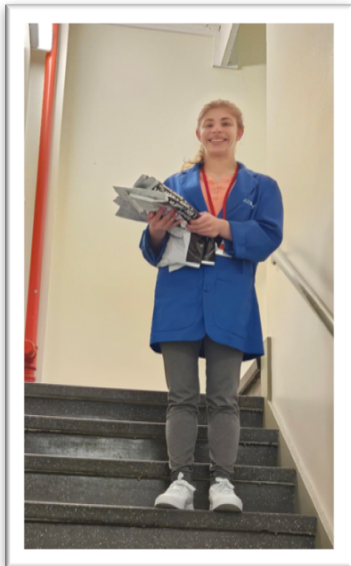
9am -10am  
**Training Room**  
Employability Skills Curriculum  
(8 Interns- NYP / 5 Interns WPH)

**Topics Include:**  
Team Building  
Workplace Safety  
Technology  
Self-Advocacy  
Maintaining Employment  
Financial Literacy  
Health and Wellness  
Preparing for Employment



2pm-3pm  
**Training Room**  
Journaling, Review, Plan  
Debrief, Assess, Problem  
Solve  
(Additional Travel  
Training)

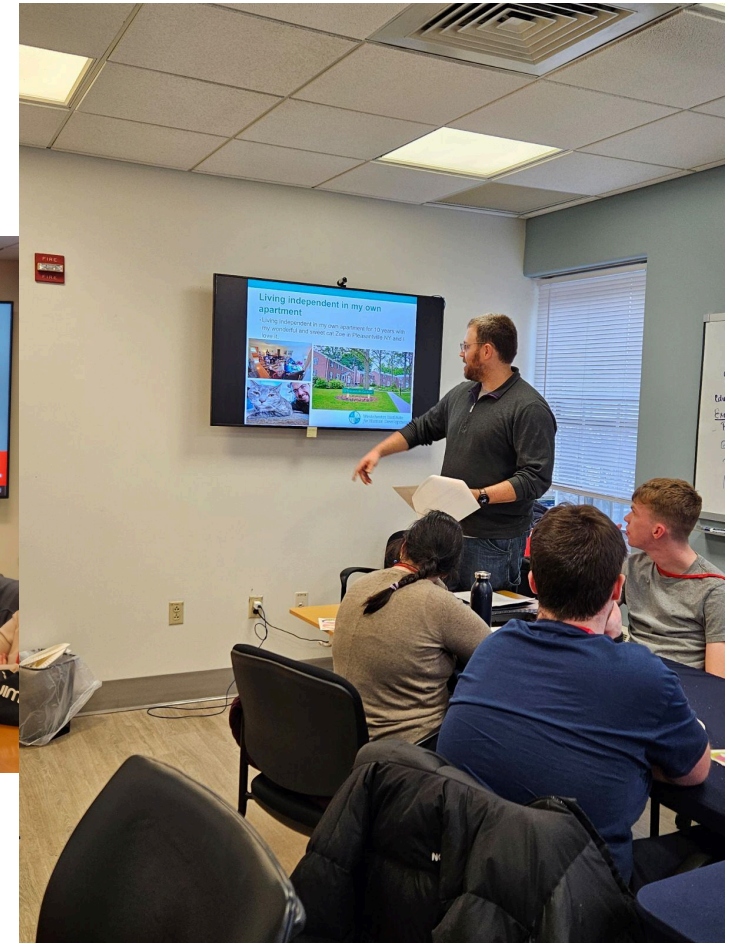
# A Typical Day at NYP SEARCH



# A Typical Day at White Plains Hospital



# Special Guests: Self Advocates: Sharing their Personal Journeys



# Hands on fiscal lessons, community experiences



# Travel Training: Westchester Office of Disability Services~



# PROJECT SEARCH: Sept- June Overview

- September: 3-week Orientation, On-boarding, Health & Safety protocols
- Project SEARCH Curriculum, three internship rotations
- 2 Employment Planning Meetings per internship
- Ongoing assessment and progress monitoring throughout the year
- Begin Active Job Development in the Spring
- June: Graduation then Job Development Continues
- Focus on Continuous Growth – consider eligibility or need for Supported Employment services– Services with Ability Beyond continue~



# Introducing Alexis Parker/Ability Beyond



# Ability Beyond

Founded more than 70 years ago, Ability Beyond provides services to more than 3,000 people with disabilities across Connecticut and New York

Our Mission is to **discover, build and celebrate** the ability in all people. We provide a variety of services that impact every facet of someone's life, from Day Programs, Group Homes and Supported Independent Living, Employment Training, Transition Services for young adults, Special Olympics, and so much more!

Ability Beyond has been a partner of Westchester Institute for Human Development (WIHD) Transition and Project SEARCH programs for 4 wonderful years.



# Our Partnership

- Job Developer on site at least 1x weekly
- Collaboration with Instructors and Skills Trainers
- Collaboration with host liaison for developing and enhancing internships
- Training provided to the team to educate on best coaching practices & “life after Project Search”
- Beneficial for interns to establish relationship throughout the year for smooth transition post program



## Ability Beyond: Our Role



- Career Exploration** outside the host site, exploring interests
- Resume Building:** remaining up to date with current trends, professional collaboration HR
- Job Search and Placement Assistance:** Smooth continuum of services, Acces-VR assistance, referral of services
- Community Engagement & Exposure:** Job Fairs, Volunteer opportunities
- Job Coaching and Training Supports**



## Our Role

- ❑ **Online Applications & Interview Preparation-** *Continues beyond the classroom.*
  - *Ease new anxieties*
  - *What do I do when an employer calls me?*
  - *Knowledge of personal information*
  - *Reality of competing with general workforce*
  
- ❑ **Assistance with Disclosure-** *“Do I have a disability? Do I disclose?”*
  
- ❑ **Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations-** *What is right for the client, what is reasonable? Do the demands meet the employer needs?*
  
- ❑ **Job Coaching and Training Supports-** *Navigating the frequency and realities of job coaching and extended supports.*

# Success Is Not Linear

## Learning & sharing

Leonardo  
Traditional Job Seeking & Placement



# Success Is Not Linear

**PAUL: Advance Certification & Placement**



**ZOE: Program Volunteer to Paid Employee**



AI-generated content

# Who do we serve?



## Intern Eligibility

- a. Preference given to High school students referred by school districts in last year of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) eligibility
- b. As space permits, post-IDEA young adults ages 19–26, with Office for People with Developmental Disabilities eligibility and approval.
- c. **Candidate and family agreed** that Project SEARCH will be their last year of school, and has the goal of employment (15+ hours per week) at the end of the program
- d. Candidate **MUST** have a sense of personal safety and no behavioral challenges.

## **BASIC ENTRANCE CRITERIA:**

### **Personal Skills such as:**

- **Accepts feedback and can meet workplace behavior requirements** with teaching and accommodations and can benefit from program curriculum. **Behavioral challenges cannot be allowed.**
- **Able to follow the policies, SAFETY procedures, and guidelines of the host business**
- **Willing** to participate in **travel training** to ensure they can navigate the host business and will use public transportation when available
- **Is committed to finding integrated employment** in the community (at least 15 hours per wk) post program
- **Referral** by District (last year of IDEA) or Care Manager (OPWDD Eligibility)
- **Application and Documentation** gathered and submitted (IEP/psychol/medical, Life Plan for example)



# Skills Assessment Day (February)

- Candidates scheduled for participation in skill assessment day
- Observe candidate in skill stations with informal interview
- Instructions and Feedback provided
- **Applications and documents reviewed by team**
- Mid March: Advise school districts, candidates of application status
- APRIL through JUNE: participation in district meetings to assist in development of appropriate Individualized Education Plan (IEP) programs and post-secondary goals
- **Applicants can tour the host business during the recruitment process.**





## Some Frequently Asked Questions:

- ~What district do you partner with?
- ~Can students expect 1:1 supervision?
- ~What can we expect after the program ends?
- ~Does SEARCH assist with ParaTransit?
- ~Does SEARCH assist with Acces-VR cases?
- ~What about if an individual receives Related Services on an IEP?
- ~What contact does staff have with families/circle of support?



To sign up for our Open House on 2/22/26 or to schedule a private tour, please contact:

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(914)548-4881



# Thank you for Joining us!

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