

KALAMAZOO'S



SEARCHLIGHT

Project/SEARCH's number one goal: EMPLOYMENT

We hope all of you had wonderful times during the holidays. The Project/SEARCH interns are back at Bronson in their second rotations. They are still demonstrating their professionalism by working hard, following the rules and exhibiting enthusiasm and great attitudes. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Searchlight as well as share with others what is happening within our program.

By the way, here is a link to our new web page: <http://kresa.org/domain/146>. You can also find it by going to www.kresa.org, click on the Special Education tab on the top of the page, and then click on Project SEARCH.

Employment Status

At this time, we have two interns gainfully employed. Kylee Sherman is still employed by ABM and cleans Borgess Medical Center each night after attending Project/SEARCH. He could work up to 35 hours each week. Jeremiah Smith is now employed at Hardings, working 20-39 hours per week. He was also coming to Project/SEARCH and working for about a month, but decided to focus on work exclusively. There are many irons in the fire regarding applications and interviews. In the next edition of the Searchlight, we hope to report more interns employed. Do you have any contacts of people who may own businesses or are in positions of hiring? Please let us know. Every lead helps...it takes a village.

Project Search Orientation Night

On January 17, Bronson Hospital was kind enough to allow us to use the auditorium in the Gilmore Educational Center for a special meeting for potential interns. This orientation was designed to educate interested young adults and their parents/guardians about Project/SEARCH. They were informed about what is to be expected if accepted and the application and interviewing procedures. Anthony Mastin, one of our current interns, was there to answer some questions as well. About 18 young adults attended along with many supporting adults and representatives from the Project/SEARCH core team. We are looking forward to interviewing interested applicants on March 4 & 6.



Mark's Remarks

For this issue, I am reporting on several events and updates:

Job Fairs

Our interns have been learning what job fairs are about, first hand. We all attended a job and education fair at the Department of Human Services on January 15. About 30 companies were represented there, including Bronson. Our interns met the representatives from different companies; asking questions, gathering information and leaving resumes. On Saturday, February 16, Michigan Works sponsored a job fair. One of the interns was able to attend on his own. In March, KVCC will also be having a job fair. Job fairs can be intimidating but our interns are learning how to utilize this valuable tool and independently!



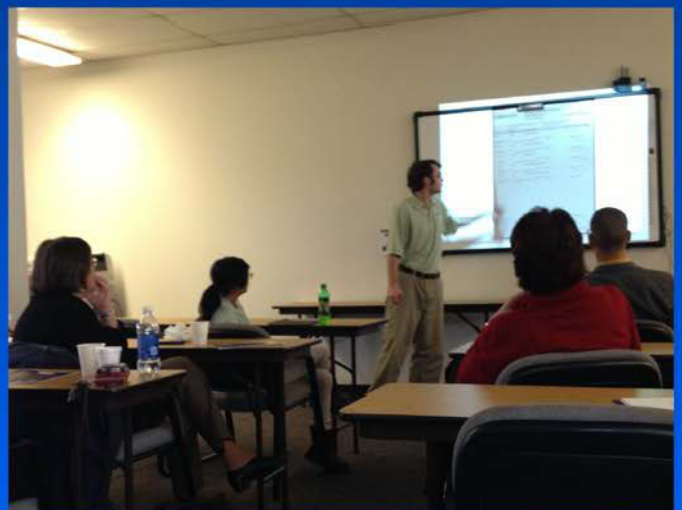
Holiday Breakfast

On December 20, 2012, Project SEARCH sponsored a Holiday Breakfast for all of the managers and mentors from each department involved in our program. We offered bagels and beverages, some decorations, Christmas music and a slideshow of interns at work. We were able to mingle and socialize in a relaxed atmosphere as the Bronson folks came and went as their time allowed. The interns also passed out holiday cards to their managers and departments. We were glad for the opportunity to say "thank you and happy holidays" to our friends here at Bronson.



Project/SEARCH Core Team Visits Interns

The Project SEARCH Core Team met with the interns while they had class at YOU during their Workshop Week in December. The interns each presented information about their previous work placements. They talked about what duties they had, what difficulties they had, what they liked about the job, etc. They shared what new assignments they were going to start the next week at Bronson and they fielded questions from the Core Team. Slideshows were used to help the guests visualize the interns on the job. During and after lunch, the Core Team took a look at the interns' portfolios and gave suggestions. The experience was a great one for everyone. The Core Team felt like they got to know the interns much better and what they actually did at Bronson. The interns got some practice in presenting in front of an audience and answering questions on the fly. They will need this experience as some will be participating in a presentation in March at the CEC Conference in Grand Rapids. Also, Anthony was able to attend the orientation for next year's potential interns. He stood in front of about 50 people and answered their questions about his experiences in Project/SEARCH. He did an excellent job!



Kelly, the interns and I want to thank the Core Team for making time during their busy day to come and meet with us on December 7. It shows how much you care about their success and has made a difference.



BRONSON

MANAGER/MENTOR of the MONTH



Athalia Simpson has been selected as the Manager of the Month for this edition of Searchlight. Her title at Bronson is Environmental Service Trainer and has worked with several of our interns. She was born and raised in Chicago and moved to Kalamazoo at age 16. After graduating from Loy Norrix High School, Athalia attended Davenport College studying accounting in their Upjohn Institute Program. Athalia raised her family (five girls!) while working a variety of jobs including those at K-mart and the Radisson Plaza Hotel. She was hired at Bronson Hospital on July 17, 1995 via a temp service and then hired full time on October 16, the same year. At that time, she worked 12 hour shifts in Housekeeping and stayed there for three years. Then, Athalia worked as a Lead Tech for a year and then an Intern Manager Trainer in EVS ever since. She has been at Bronson for the past 17 years and says she loves it. Athalia states that "Bronson gives employees the opportunity to move forward. They have offered helpful classes. I love the people, training and diversity." When asked about her thoughts about ProjectSEARCH, Athalia said, "It's great! The interns are hard workers and they want to work. I'm glad Bronson is giving them the opportunity. It's a great program!"

Coach Kelly's Corner



Spring training is upon us at Project SEARCH and the team needs some additional "working out" time.

It takes extra practice, support and guidance from parents, family and friends to achieve the win! Please assist your intern or all the interns with information that maybe helpful.

All of the interns have been putting in time on the computers scouting out potential jobs, filling out online applications and even stepping outside the box and making cold calls to possible employers.

This has been a busy but enthusiastic 2nd rotation with all of this action. As we approach the final rotation I look forward to more home runs.



INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Kylee Sherman has been selected as this issue's intern to be in the spotlight. Kylee attended Portage Central High School until 2010. After that, he attended KRESA's Young Adult Program for two years, developing his daily living, social and employment skills. His hobbies include playing video games and watching movies. When asked why he chose to participate in Project SEARCH, he said, "I wanted to improve my employment skills and get a paying job." During his first 10 week rotation at Bronson Hospital, Kylee worked in the Environmental Services Department (EVS) doing housekeeping. He cleaned furniture, windows, railings, etc. all around the hospital. Now, in the second rotation, he continues in EVS but takes care of the recycling for the hospital. He picks up all the plastic, paper and cardboard from around the hospital and transfers it to very large bins located outside the building. Kylee states that he would work almost any job, but if given a choice he would like to work at a video game store or in Bronson's EVS Department. Kylee is also one of the interns that has obtained gainful employment but chooses to continue with Project SEARCH during the day. He leaves Bronson at 2:00 PM every week day only to have to be at Borgess Medical Center by 5:00 PM to work five to seven more hours. Talk about dedicated and hard working! He actually is an employee of ABM, who is contracted by Borgess to perform the janitorial duties. He has been doing a great job with them. Athalia Simpson, Bronson's Environmental Services Trainer, had this to say about Kylee, who worked for her during the first rotation: "I think Kylee is wonderful and always happy and willing to work. I really miss him working for ME". James, Kylee's mentor says, "I really like Kylee. He's a real cool cat!" We all agree with both of them.



Contact Us

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