

SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE

Manatee ESE Transition Programs

Winter 2004

SPOTLIGHTING EXPANSION AND ENHANCEMENT IN ON THE JOB TRAINING

On August 2nd of this new school year, the ESE on the job training teachers received a warm welcome to the Adult, Career, & Technical Education Department. Many new and improved advances have already been made as a result of the new restructuring going on within the school district. These progressive changes will only enhance our already excellent ESE OJT program. Some of these enhancements include: Being part of a larger network that shares the same common goals regarding career education and being able to access and share more career/vocational resources.

In this edition of Spotlight on the Future, read about our seven new Vocational Rehabilitation Job Development Instructors and how they are facilitating, teaching, supporting, and developing our students' job skills so they can successfully become employed in an integrated competitive employment workplace. Thanks to this new Vocational Rehabilitation initiative funded partly by grant funds, we can proudly say we are enhancing and expanding our On the Job Training programs, therefore, meeting the needs of all of our students who want to learn valuable on the job training skills and eventually become employed.

Diane Roberts
FDLRS/ESE Transition Specialist



NEW VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION JOB DEVELOPMENT COACHES ARE HELPING TO "CLOSE THE GAPS"

Southeast High School has one of the very best ESE On the Job Training Programs in the State. They were one of the first high schools in Manatee County to develop an OJT program dating back to 1986. Laura Lynch and Steve Jensen, seasoned OJT teachers, have received many accolades over the years such as the State "ALL Means ALL" award and various Manatee Chamber of Commerce Business Awards for their work with students at the Holiday Inn Riverfront and Manatee Memorial Hospital. They have expanded their business sites to 11 with an additional 4 sites at various locales throughout the school system like the School Support Center's Grapevine Cafeteria. With the expansion of Steve and Laura's program, it became evident that we needed another job coach to fill the gap to facilitate those students who need more intensive job development skills.

ENTER BETTY PLAYDON.....Betty works with students using the P.A.E.S. Lab (Practical, Assessment, Exploration, System). This system enables the students to try many hands on assessment modules to evaluate their interests and preferences which are extremely beneficial in planning the students' courses of study and desired post school outcome as outlined in the Transition IEP. Students are learning food service (wrapping burgers, sorting and wrapping silverware and folding napkins), food measurement, and how to use a scale to weigh food. They are also assembling pipes and following threading designs. They have done some manipulatory processing jobs such as following a peg board design and working with nuts, bolts, and washers. Betty works closely with Annette Maddox, VE teacher, who reinforces these job skills in the classroom through Community Based Instruction. Betty is in the process of training Annette on how to use the P.A.E.S Lab.

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Betty Playdon, OJT students, and Manatee Apparel staff.

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Betty's students also have a wonderful business partnership with Manatee Apparel Graphic. Students perform the following jobs at Manatee Apparel and Graphics: sorting and filling graphics, sorting invoices and counting shipments of T-shirts. One student is working on the computer, learning graphic design, and has already designed a logo for a T-shirt. He has also helped design some graphics!! Another student has burnt his first screen. Every student will learn all aspects of the business. Recently, a clothing vendor updated the students on various aspects of the clothing industry, such as different types of materials. Betty makes sure that academics are incorporated into the job such as learning new vocabulary words every day, and reinforces a myriad of "soft" skills such as getting along with peers and supervisors and work ethics.

MANATEE HIGH SCHOOL'S GEORGE COROMBOS & PAUL O'NEIL HELPING TO "CLOSE THE GAPS"

Manatee High School is a pioneer in the ESE OJT field. Al Melnick, ESE Department Chairperson, began taking ESE students to Blake Hospital during the middle 1980's. The ESE program is still at Blake, but has expanded this year to an additional site at Westminster's Manors Retirement Community.

ENTER GEORGE COROMBOS.....George is zeroing in on the students who are VR eligible and need a more structured work environment. George is very popular with the students and he understands the needs



George Corumbos OJT student at Westminster Manors

of the students and their interests and preferences. He is always there for them in a very supportive capacity. By having Westminster as a new business partner and George as the job coach it is a win-win situation. George monitors the OJT competitive students at Manatee High and coordinates the very successful elementary school mentoring programs at Miller and Ballard Elementary.

Manatee High School is also very fortunate to be one of three county high schools to be offering a unique hands on vocational technical training program under the direction of **Paul O'Neil**. Paul states that it is the goal of this program to recognize and develop each individual's employability skills around the central theme of building construction and technology. See Paul for acronyms and photos.



Paul O'Neil with Building Construction student

BAYSHORE HIGH SCHOOL'S PAUL WELCH

Helping to “CLOSE THE GAPS” Bayshore High School’s OJT Program has evolved into one of the districts finest programs. Cliff Essig, Bayshore Job Coach, divides his time between ESE non-competitive and the ESE/Regular Education competitive employment program. Students in Cliff’s non-competitive OJT travel to Westminster Communities (The Towers and the Shores) every morning and perform a multitude of jobs at this very large retirement community. Kathleen Hamilton and Denise McLellan work with the low incidence program at Bayshore High. Kathleen and Denise make sure the students get a variety of on the job experiences by alternating training between Target, Trailmate, and Dominos Pizza. Denise and Kathleen realized that some of their older students were in need of more supported competitive employment.

ENTER PAUL WELCH.....Paul brings sixteen years of supported job coaching experience to our district. Paul is now working with our low incidence population at Bayshore High. Paul attends Transition IEP meetings and makes sure that students are involved with various agencies such as vocational rehabilitation and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (formally Developmental Disabilities) that can assist them through out life. Paul evaluates the students by watching them perform various jobs at the non-competitive sites. He works closely with all of the OJT staff at Bayshore to ensure that a student does not fall through the cracks. Paul is a master at implementing accommodations and modifications to the more severely challenged student so they can succeed in an integrated competitive worksite. Welcome Paul!!



HIGH SCHOOL / HIGH TECH EXPANDING AT LAKEWOOD RANCH & MANATEE HIGH

The High School / High Tech Program is an innovative, national program of the US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. It is initiated in Florida through The Able Trust / Florida Governor’s Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities. It is an enrichment and exploration program for youth with physical, sensory, mental health or learning disabilities. ESE students must be pursuing a regular education diploma and have the ability and desire to pursue post-secondary education/training in the areas of science, math, engineering, arts, or technology-driven fields.

Carolyn Marchbank, High School / High Tech Coordinator reports that four Lakewood Ranch High School students who were in the High School / High Tech program last year were all accepted at colleges, universities, or technical schools. This year Lakewood Ranch has eight students in the High School / High Tech Program.

Carolyn will also be working at Manatee High School this year with a whopping 19 students! Thanks, Peter Egyed, Guidance Counselor, for helping identify students who meet the criteria. Carolyn is very excited about the number of new students enrolled in the program at Manatee High and has made plans to work with the learning strategies teachers as well as devoting one day after school each week to meet with the students regarding various enrichment activities.



*High School/High Tech celebrates at annual kick-off
November 9th at Manatee Community College*

MANATEE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE'S JOHN SIMPSON HELPING TO "CLOSE THE GAPS"

Manatee Technical Institute (MTI) provides many job training opportunities to a very diverse population. In order for ESE students to be more successful at MTI there was a need to provide services in the way of modifications and accommodations to the ESE population. Bettie Stephenson, the ESE Liaison, has done such a terrific job of providing technical assistance to instructors and students that more and more ESE students are now becoming highly successful partly due to Bettie's efforts. Many of these students have participated in various vocational contests and have received many accolades for their accomplishments. In order to provide more students with what they need to succeed, it became apparent that another person was needed to assist Betty.



Bettie Stephenson, ESE MTI Liaison, John Simpson, VR Job Coach, and Jan Gutterson, VR Counselor

ENTER JOHN SIMPSON.....John is the new Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Job Coach at MTI and he and Bettie collaborate daily on various high school students who need that little extra motivation and assistance while at MTI. John has organized his day between the morning and afternoon groups of high school students. Each group is on the MTI campus approximately 3 hours a day. John has been extremely busy evaluating students to find out who is in the most need of extra attention. John reports that he has finally reached his goal of setting up an organizational schedule thereby, ensuring that those students who need extra accommodations and modifications will get what they need to succeed at MTI. Thanks, John!

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: OUR PARTNERS IN SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

Vocational Rehabilitation is a state-federal program within the Florida Department of Education (DOE). VR School-to-Work Transition involves a number of activities that help students enter training and/or work after leaving high school. The goal is to help students, who want to work, become better prepared for life beyond high school. Thanks to the VR Third Party Cooperative Agreements, the Manatee School District was able to provide for seven new job coaches (see articles on pages) to deliver services that will lead to more employment opportunities for our students.

Jan Gutterson provides services to Bayshore High School, Manatee Technical Institute, and Manatee Community College. Don Wence provides services to Lakewood Ranch High School, Manatee High School, Palmetto High School, and Southeast High School.



Jan Gutterson and Don Wence

PALMETTO HIGH SCHOOL'S BILL BISHOP & DOUG GARCIA HELPING TO "CLOSE THE GAPS"

Several years ago Palmetto High School did not have an On the Job Training Program. Palmetto was struggling to find a business partner that would provide a site for students to gain on the job experience. Through the combined hard work of Mike Ingram and Julie Tillet, plus the administrative support of Jim Pauley, OJT is now an extremely successful part of the Palmetto High School ESE Department. Mike and Julie have used Palm Pilots to streamline the paperwork that goes into monitoring students in the OJT competitive program. Thanks to Ron Russell, ESE Director, Mike and Julie received the new palms and began entering all the monitoring data for students in their OJT programs, complete with photos of students working at their jobs. Mike and Julie are scheduled to present their Palm Pilot project at the VISIONS Conference in February. They are the first in the state to utilize the Palm for monitoring OJT students. It should also be noted, that last year during the annual OJT mock audit, Julie and Mike were 100% in compliance. So, given the fact that Mike and Julie are doing such a great job, their program began to expand.



Bill Bishop, VR Job Coach and OJT students

ENTER BILL BISHOP AND DOUG GARCIA.....

Bill Bishop has helped establish a new maintenance program on the Lincoln Middle School campus. The students are a great help in maintaining the Child Evaluation Center where they do everything from making sure the toys are



Doug Garcia's construction students

sanitized to keeping the offices shiny and clean. The students have learned about the importance of a clean work site, proper mixtures of cleaning solutions and are taking pride in their work. The goal is for each student to receive incentive pay after a 45 day probationary period and then gain competitive employment upon completion of this program. The incentive pay is provided from the Hiring Practices Initiative grant, an initiative to identify barriers and promising practices related to school hiring practices. Bill is also working with students in the on the job training competitive program who are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Doug Garcia helps develop future builders in the new Future Builders of America Program at Palmetto High. Doug says, "The need for skilled workers in the construction trades is definitely there. We're trying to respond to this need," Dominique Freeman and Geovanny

Cruz, two 17 year olds enrolled in the program, say they look forward to a successful career in the construction industry. Dominique plans to further his training after high school and then work as a carpenter or plumber. The welding trade appeals most to Geovanny. Recently, the students received their OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) cards. Eventually, Doug hopes to have the students take CPR as well as a course in First Aid. Thanks to the VR grant as well as support from Doug Wagner, Director of Adult, Career, and Tech Ed, Dominique and Geovanny are the fortunate beneficiaries of this new opportunity while completing their education at Palmetto High.



Future Builders of America receive recognition at Manatee County School Board Meeting

TRANSITION TECHIE SCAVENGER HUNT

Win a Prize and Learn about cool websites by playing Techie Scavenger Hunt. The first person to email me with the correct answers will win a prize. Just use the website given for each question and email the answers to Diane Roberts at robertsd@fc.manatee.k12.fl.us.

1. When and where did the last Vocational Interagency Council of Sarasota and Manatee Counties take place? Go to manasotavic.org
2. Go to the NICHCY web site at www.nichcy.org and click on A-Z Topics and tell me what the A-Z Topics page includes.
3. When and where could you attend the Self-Determination; Standing Up For Me: Train the Trainers Workshop? Go to www.thetransitioncenter.org
4. What is the Council for Exceptional Children's Smart Brief? Go to www.cec.sped.org to find the answer.
5. Where and when will the National Division on Career Development and Transition Conference take place? Go to www.dcdt.org
6. Who is the Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System Program



TRANSITION TIDBITS.....

Name/Address Change for Developmental Disabilities:

The Developmental Disabilities Program is now the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The office has also been moved to 303 13th Ave. E. in Bradenton. If you need to speak with an intake counselor call Celia Fradkin at 941-708-8885.

On October 28th, Children's Haven and Adult Community Services, Inc. celebrated the BIG "50". Congratulations go out to all the wonderful staff at Children's Haven as they continue to empower the lives of Children,

Teens, and Adults with Disabilities...one person at a time. Happy Birthday CHAC!!!! Visit CHAC on their Web site at www.chachaven.com.

Betty Playdon, VR Job Coach at Southeast and Stewart Bergmann, Option 2 Job Coach, were invited to speak to the American Business Women's Association on October 20th. Betty and Stu explained the ESE OJT Program and are excited at the prospects of having more businesses coming aboard.

Diane Roberts and Stewart Bergmann were invited to speak at the Executive Network Committee on December 2. Diane and Stewart presented an overview of the ESE OJT Program to 35 Manatee business owners.

PIES O MY!!!



Jim Comkowycz's class made over 70 pies this year. Some of the pies were donated to Meals on Wheels. The class also gave pies to school volunteers, peer tutors, cafeteria and custodial staff. Each student in the class took a pie home to contribute to their families Thanksgiving celebration.



The students sponsored the very popular 3rd annual pie crust making clinic. Five of Jim's top students taught 24 adults from the school, community, and school support center how to make pie crust. Jim's students also taught the Gifted students at King Middle how to make the crust, and in turn the Gifted class will reciprocate by teaching the students how to make Earth Boxes. The pie crust recipe has been in Jim's family for over 100 years, and next year this writer can't wait to sign up for the class. A very special thank you to Jim and his students for their contributions to our community.

Transition Initiatives



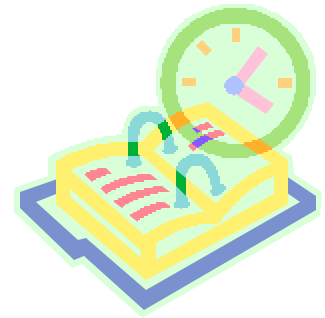
Coral Thorsen, Vocational Interagency Council of Sarasota and Manatee Counties Chairperson, and Michelle Adams, Manatee County Community College counselor, display table decorations at the December 7th VIC meeting. Decorations were made by Bayshore High School ESE students. The annual holiday luncheon was sponsored by Health South.



Brenda Clark, with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, presents a supported employment workshop at Daysprings Conference Center on December 8th and 9th for Manatee County and Sarasota County job coaches.

Mark Your Calendar

- Visions 2004 will be held in Jacksonville February 16th – 18th, 2004
- 2005 Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo will be in Baltimore, Maryland, April 6th – 9th 2005.
- Division on Career Development and Transition National Conference will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 20th – 22, 2005.
- Vocational Interagency Council of Sarasota and Manatee Counties will meet at 10 a.m. on February 22, 2004, at Manatee Community College.



It's ALL About the Kids...

