



SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE

Manatee ESE Transition Programs

Spring 2005

WHY DO I LOVE THIS JOB? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS.....

First, I get to work with a fantastic group of professionals, who truly care about students. Secondly, when you work with caring individuals who are enthusiastic and positive, you hear about the many successes of our ESE students as they are transitioning into the real world. In this spring edition of Spotlight on the Future, you will read about some of those successes. Also, this year we have increased our program by providing more job coaches, which has brought about an increase in the number of OJT contracts for our career experience program. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the number of students being hired by our business partners. One of our newest business partners, Manatee Apparel and Graphics, was awarded the Florida Federation on Career Development and Transition’s Outstanding Business Partner Award for the State. The new carpentry programs at Manatee High and Palmetto High are assisting those ESE students who wish to enter the very lucrative field of construction. ESE students who are enrolled at Manatee Technical Institute are being taught strategies to help them become more successful in their selected vocations. Students who are in need of Vocational Rehabilitation services are now being served by three School-to-Work VR Counselors instead of one. The number of ESE students entering Manatee Community College in the fall has increased, and there is a real collaborative relationship between the district, MCC, and our agencies. Having said all of this; now let me get back to why I love this job.....read on and you will see.

Diane Roberts
FDLRS/ESE Transition Specialist

Hiring Practices Initiative Grant Helps Students Secure Jobs

Bill Bishop, Palmetto High Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coach, has used funds from the Hiring Practices Initiative Grant this school year as an incentive for students who are in his OJT Career Experience Program. After a short trial period, students are rewarded by receiving a stipend while they are being trained in various custodial and other building maintenance skills. Bill, a former guidance counselor, takes time with students in stressing interpersonal skills that employers say need to be emphasized in school to work OJT programs. The hope is that these students will be well prepared to work within the school system, as well as in city and county government positions.

The district secured a contract with Headstart/Early Headstart (a government agency) this year, and now Bill has a student, Sheretta Waters who trained there and is presently on the county payroll. Sheretta works with the students in Mrs. Mercer’s Headstart class in Palmetto. Mrs. Mercer stated that, “the kids love Miss Sheretta”, “she’s one of the family and fits right in, and we are glad she’s here.” Good luck, Sheretta!



Sheretta with students at Head Start

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A " Job" well done

Congratulations go out to Chelsey Ross for completing her Diploma Option 2 Graduation Training Plan at Publix on University Parkway with flying colors. Pat Ross, Chelsey's mom, and an instructor at Manatee School for the Arts and Sciences, credits the Diploma Option 2 program as being a key to Chelsey's current success. She states that it is a major accomplishment for all of us and I, like Chelsey want to thank all of the people who work tirelessly for the betterment of ESE students. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Mrs. Ross.

Chelsey has had a roller coaster of an education, with extreme high points and dangerous low points. Middle school was a dangerously low point and after many conferences with staff, Chelsey ended up at Harlee Middle. Although this was a tough decision it ended up being a great one. Chelsey progressed to Southeast High and began once again to fall through the cracks. She ended up in a residential setting and again after devastatingly low moments; Chelsey herself called Diane Roberts, ESE Transition Specialist, and reported that she was ready to graduate from high school. With the help and support of Dan Murphy, Publix Manager (University Parkway), and Stu Bergmann, Diploma Option 2 Job Coach, Chelsey Ross age twenty-one will graduate this May from Southeast High.

Mrs. Ross included the following paragraph that was dictated to her by Chelsey. Mrs. Ross states that Chelsey still has a problem with written language, but Chelsey said if anyone wanted to **ask her** about the program she could **talk** forever!

Chelsey's Comment.....I am happy for this opportunity because it is a great program. It has helped me keep my job and graduate from high school. I hope some other students will get this same chance to improve their life. I also want to say thank-you to Diane and Stu; and all the managers at Publix who worked together for me, so that I could graduate.



Chelsey at the prom.

I heard it through the Grapevine.....

Steve Jensen, Southeast High School Job Coach, recommends Eduardo Ibarra, be recognized for the excellent progress he has made this year in his on the job training career experience program. Eduardo does everything that is asked of him says Grapevine Manager, Nancy Taylor. He cleans the outside patio, keeps the coke and ice machines filled and does dishes. He also keeps the tables cleaned and sets and fills up various containers used in the Grapevine. Eduardo began working in the Grapevine in January and is going to be graduating this year. Eduardo hopes to get a job at Manatee Memorial Hospital when he graduates. Congratulations and Good Luck Eduardo.



Nancy Taylor, Manager of Grapevine and Eduardo

Manatee Memorial Hospital hosts Southeast High School's Job Partnership Banquet

Manatee Memorial Hospital has been a friend to the Exceptional Student Education On-the-job training program for approximately 18 years. Laura Lynch, Southeast High OJT teacher, acknowledged many outstanding students at this year's annual awards partnership banquet. In addition to Manatee Memorial Hospital, Laura has career experience programs at the following business sites: Ballpark Deli and Sub Shop, First for Kids, Headliner Express/Boats-R-Russ, Jake's Automotive Center, Manatee Memorial Hospital, Pats Pros Automotive Warehouse, and Roy's automotive Clinic. Many students in Laura's program are hired right out of the career experience program or they transition to Manatee Technical Institute to further their careers.

Congratulations to the following students:

Manatee Memorial Hospital:

Latoya Armstrong (cath lab)
Stanley Jones (central stores)
Amy Fessenden (*hired in transportation)
Gloria Gonzalez (medical records)
Christine Hallock (same day services)
Ashley Hines (sterile processing)
Eddie Melendez (food & nutrition)
Levonta Murray (radiology)
Walter Watson (food & nutrition)
Emile Wesley (central stores)
Morris Williams (environmental services)

Parts Pros Automotive Warehouse:

Christopher Anderson

Roy's Automotive Clinic:

Emery Bush (will attend MTI)

Ballpark Deli and Sub Shop:

Adrian Myles (hired by Ballpark Deli
and will attend MTI)



First for Kids:

Jennifer Ralph (hired by First for Kids)

Headliner Express/Boats-R-Russ

Casey Sloan (will attend MTI)

Jake's Automotive Clinic

Michael Denton (will attend MTI)

Local Vocational Rehabilitation Office Receives National Award

The Manatee County Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is the winner of the IAWP (International Association of Workplace Professionals) Award for Specialized Customer Service. The nomination was made based on the number of successful placements done by the local office and the liaison relationships that exist between the office and others within our community. This reflects very favorably upon the association between the local office and the School Board of Manatee County. The award will be presented during the June 8th conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. At the same time, local unit supervisor, George Barthalow, will be honored by the group with the individual award in the same category.



What a difference a year makes in the lives of two Southeast High Students

When Chris came to the OJT program at Manatee Apparel Graphics, he didn't say much and he would look down as he talked to you. That was at the beginning of the school year, now Chris is very vocal and gives his opinion when asked. Chris always has terrific advice for his fellow workers. He will greet customers with a handshake, as he looks them in the eye. His attention span has increased greatly. Chris pays attention to details as he does many jobs at Manatee Apparel Graphics. He has become a super window washer, shirt folder, leaf blower and all around good worker. Chris will be graduating and leaving Southeast. He recently attended the prom and had a great time. Way to go Chris, we will miss you and we wish you well.

Jacob first came to Manatee Apparel Graphics with the OJT program because it was better than being in class. That attitude soon started to change. Jacob has become a team leader with his fellow OJT students and an important part of the whole Manatee Apparel Graphics team. He is always willing to help out anyone who is in need of it. He will help other students with a job until they are comfortable doing it themselves. When one of the owners of Manatee Apparel Graphics was looking for afternoon help, the first person he thought of was Jacob. Jacob had a class at school he had to finish and the owners of Manatee Apparel Graphics was willing to wait two weeks for Jacob to finish his class because they wanted him to fill the position. He is now designing graphics as well as doing an array of other jobs in the shop. Jacob is to be commended for his motivation in advancing from the OJT Career Experience program to the OJT Career Placement program during this school year. Now that is Transitioning!!! Keep up the good work, Jacob.



Chris at Southeast High prom

(photo on cd or hard copy that could be scanned in. caption Jacob at work at Manatee Apparel and Graphic)

PALMETTO HIGH'S WINNING COMBINATION: OJT & RIGOROUS/RELEVANT ACADEMICS IS THE ANSWER TO "WHY DO I HAVE TO LEARN THIS?"

Francisco Martinez and his cousin Julie Martinez demonstrate how successful a student can be when you combine career skills along with rigorous and relevant academics. Francisco and Julie have gone the extra mile in their families by being the first to ever graduate from high school.

Mike Ingram and Julie Tillett, career education teachers, feel that students learn best by tying academics to real-world practices and life experiences. Francisco and Julie understand why academics are important and help in the work place. Both Francisco and Julie were successful in the career education classes at Palmetto High. Francisco participated in Mr. Elkin's Construction Class and Mrs. Tillett taught Francisco the applied math he would need to be successful in his construction class. Now, Francisco has taken those skills and is using them in the area of building maintenance at his job site Country Lake Communities



Julie took the skills she learned in her career experience class on the worksite to assist her manager in training on the registers at Albertsons.

Congratulations to Francisco and Julie on earning their high school diplomas and securing good paying jobs upon leaving school. They are truly wonderful role models to the other OJT students

Lakewood Ranch's David Applegate Succeeds despite Challenges

David Applegate is 18 and has faced many challenges during his 18 years. David who has Cerebral Palsy (CP) is employed at Wal-Mart on St. Road 70. He first started in the OJT Career Experience program when he wasNow David is employed at Wal-Mart full time. Candace Carlucci, LWR OJT teacher, says that David is well loved and respected by many of the Wal-Mart associates. She says Wal-Mart employees stop her regularly to tell her what a great job David is doing. David graduated in December, but will walk with his classmates in May. Congratulations, David.

(photo of David will need to be scanned in or I can get an old one off of cd)

Bright Futures for Student Builders at Palmetto High and Manatee High

If you want to see happy productive kids having fun while they learn, visit the construction trades classes at Palmetto High and Manatee High. These students are all members of the Future Builders of America. During a recent visit to Palmetto High School here is what the students told me about their construction class.

“I like the fact that you get to be outside and build stuff for other people. It makes me feel excited that I could build something. I learned to do math better than when I was in the classroom. The most important thing I have learned is to be safe it is the most important thing to remember when you are in construction.” ***Dominique Freeman***



Students at work in Mr. Garcia's construction trades class.

“I like working with my hands, I like to build things. Being outside is fun, and Mr. Garcia has taught us how to use tools and the skills needed to get a good job.” ***Erik Ramsey***

“It is fun to build stuff, my favorite thing to build is small things like a small picnic table and chair. The most important thing I have learned is how to use power tools.” ***Bradine Davis***

“I like to work on projects it keeps me out of trouble. I was always in trouble 4 or 5 years ago. The most important thing I have learned is how to cut wood, make tables and chairs.” Chris Mulex

“This class has given me a chance to learn more about construction. It helps me with math, such as learning how to measure and read rulers. The most important thing I have learned is how to cut wood and build things. Safety is important, we are taught to stay focused on what we are doing and to not get distracted. I want to go on to MTI and study carpentry.” ***Geovanny Cruz***

Moving Technology Forward

Manatee Middle & High School Students Triumph at the 26th annual Florida Technology Student Association State Conference and Competitions held in Orlando in April, winning first place in more than 30 categories.....



Julie Tillett, Mike Ingram, Diane Roberts, and Stu Bergmann assist with judging at the TSA competition