

The *Transition* TIMES

Winter 2010–2011

Is there an **Optimist** in the house?

Is your glass half full or half empty? I choose to see the glass half full. When you read the success stories in this edition of *The Transition Times*, I hope they will cause you to smile, be happy, and be more optimistic about the future of our students and the transition programs our district offers.

Be sure to read the feel-good story on Kristina Katzenberger, a former Lakewood Ranch High graduate, who is living her dream and is now working as a pet groomer.



After you've read the positive articles in this newsletter, find out if you lean toward optimism or pessimism in your outlook on life. Go online and Google this: *Happiness Quiz—Is your glass half full?* Here's wishing you a glass overflowing with happiness!

Diane Roberts

FDLRS/ESE Transition Specialist

The Ultimate Student Outcome: **Excelling at a Job You Love**

As the saying goes, "Find a job you love, and you never go to work again." That's what happened to Lakewood Ranch High School (LRHS) graduate Kristina Katzenberger! Kristina loves working with animals. After graduation, she pursued her passion by enrolling at the Florida Institute of Animal Arts in Winter Park, in their Pet Grooming program.

Kristina was successful at the Institute and earned her diploma on August 27, 2010. At graduation, she received the esteemed "Devil Dog" award for grooming the most difficult dog. She also took the oath of the Animal Caregiver Creed.

Kristina is a true Manatee County success story. She had many great teachers and supporters along the way. She thanks those who went the extra mile: Sarah Smitman at Lincoln Middle School, Joni Olsen and Ryan Clark at Palmetto High School, and Donna Dooley at LRHS.

Diane Roberts, Manatee County FDLRS Transition Specialist, connected Kristina with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Counselor, Ada Brown. Ms. Brown participated in Kristina's Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and when Kristina was found eligible for VR services, Ms. Brown finalized her Individualized Plan for Employment. Based on her interests and abilities, Kristina was on her way to fulfilling her dream of working with animals.

Kristina is now employed by Pets Plus in Parrish. She recently groomed a cocker spaniel for an AKC show and the dog took first place! Her parents say, "Krissie has always had a gift with animals. She trained her horse, Shadow, to ride English and western. She also rescued her dog, Jasmine, an Australian Shepherd, and has trained her for obedience, rally, and agility."

Kristina Katzenberger graduating...working...and loving it!



ACT *Shaping the Future*
ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Adult, Career & Technical Education / Exceptional Student Education Transition

Manasota Business Leadership Network

BLN Provides Free Workshops to Local Businesses



Accommodations in the Workplace

Joan Altavilla, senior manager of occupational safety and environmental health for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, presented a workshop on Accommodations in the Workplace on September 30, 2010, at Manatee Memorial Hospital. In her presentation, Joan provided solutions for reasonable accommodations for employees returning to work after long and short-term disabilities. She also spoke about ways to assist in hiring individuals with disabilities. A big thank you to Manasota Business Leadership members, Karen DeSimone for facilitating the workshop, and Tim Schoonmaker for the delicious breakfast.



L to R: Manasota Business Leadership Members Ben Mills, Karen DeSimone, Diane Roberts, Joan Altavilla, and Davis Graham

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues in the Workplace

Karen Berner Arcuri, a licensed mental health counselor at Manatee Glens, presented a workshop on Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues in the Workplace on October 22, 2010, at the Sarasota County School Board. Karen provided information on employee and employer costs of mental health and substance abuse, how to recognize behavior that may indicate issues, and the role of the employer in assisting employees struggling with mental health and/or substance abuse. Karen's expertise in this field was evident to all as she answered and discussed many questions from participants. A special thank you to Manasota Business Leadership members, and to Sarah Hickey and Holly Derrick for the coffee, breakfast pastries, and securing the site.



L to R: Eladio Amores, Sarah Hickey, Paul Welch, Diane Roberts, Karen Berner, and Ben Mills

Save the Date!

Next Up: Eladio Amores presents a workshop on *Hiring Incentives* on Jan. 14, 2011 at 8:30 a.m.

The workshop will be held at Sarasota Jobs, Etc. located at 3660 N. Washington Blvd. Suite 216 Sarasota, 34234.

Please RSVP to Diane Roberts at robertsd@manateeschools.net

Community Haven

Mentoring, Leadership, & Growth

There have been many exciting changes in the Transitions program at Community Haven. We are now in ten schools throughout Sarasota and Manatee Counties providing our High School High Tech (HSHT) program and our WorkTrek program to over 250 students.



Disability Mentoring Day at Publix



In October we kicked off our Job Shadow program by celebrating Disability Mentoring Day (DMD). The Transitions program partnered with two Publix Supermarkets and two high schools to bring groups of students for a day of touring the business and learning about various careers. The 8th Avenue West Palmetto Publix hosted the day for a group of Palmetto High School students. This trip presented a good opportunity for students to learn to become more independent by using the MCAT public transportation system. Another group of Transitions students from Booker High School visited the University Walk Publix in Sarasota. This group also enjoyed visiting the various departments, participating in a cooking class, and eating lunch that was included with the tour. Each student was given a balloon and rose for participating. The trip was deemed successful when all the students spontaneously shared that they would enjoy working in a supermarket and the manager guaranteed each one an interview if they were ever to apply for a position.

Camp Ocala Leadership Training

Beginning in December, students participating in the Transition Program attend leadership training at Camp Ocala. This is an opportunity for High School High Tech students from various schools to get to know each other while working on developing their skills as leaders. The students are referred by our staff and their teachers to attend this three day overnight camp. They will participate in a series of interactive games and workshops that are designed to develop their social and leadership abilities. They will also get to be outdoors, share meals, stories, and have fun!

For more information on Transition Services, contact Roy Nelles, Program Director, at 941-355-8808 ext. 242



“Always do more than is required of you.”

George S. Patton, American General



Easter Seals

Tales of the Brothers Brownfield

Stephen and Todd Brownfield are both recent graduates from Bayshore High School (BHS). Following graduation, they both made the decision to attend Easter Seals' Vocational Introduction and Preparation (VIP) Academy to improve their vocational skills and obtain assistance with securing employment.

Stephen's Success

From day one, Stephen Brownfield was eager to find employment. Having volunteered at DeSoto Square Mall, numerous county fairs, and BHS athletic activities for many years, he was well-prepared but had never had a paying job. Stephen dove right into the routine at the VIP Academy, eagerly participating in all activities and community-based work experiences (CBWE), including requesting applications from every employer he met.

One experience took place at Global Organic Specialty Source, Inc., one of the VIP Academy's many CBWE sites and the largest locally-owned supplier of

organic produce in the region. Staying true to form, Stephen requested an application from Ronni Blumenthal, Vice President of Administration at Global Organic. In the weeks that followed, Ronni and many other employees noticed Stephen's abilities and commitment. Don Herndon, Director of the VIP Academy, received a call from Ms. Blumenthal stating that she may have a position that would fit Stephen's skills and abilities.

Stephen's initial entry into the workforce was as a box maker at Global Organic, working full time and receiving full benefits. He immediately excelled at his job and began helping with some



Stephen Brownfield

custodial duties during his downtime. Because of his motivation and independence, he was quickly promoted to porter. Stephen's supervisor states that the warehouse has never been as clean as it is now. Stephen's coworkers have embraced him and he is proud to be part of the Global Organic family.

Todd's Triumph

Stephen's brother Todd was also very involved in volunteer activities at BHS, and like his brother before him, was motivated to meet with employers and become employed. After only a few weeks of participating in the VIP Academy's real-world activities, Todd's confidence began to soar. Soon he was ready to begin approaching employers for work. Walgreens Pharmacy on SR 64 West offered him a part-time position that included receiving trucks, unloading pallets, and filling specials.

After a few months, Todd earned a more secure position that includes everything from receiving trucks to stocking

shelves and assisting customers. Todd enjoys his job, adding, "It's like having a whole other family...everybody is concerned about the welfare of others, and together we help our customers."

Todd continues to attend the VIP Academy a few times a week depending on his work schedule. He is highly respected by his peers and serves as a wonderful role model for the rest of the VIP Academy students.

The Brothers Brownfield's work ethic is contagious to the students at the VIP Academy, and as a result, their motivation to become employed is at an all-time high. Way to go Stephen and Todd!



Todd Brownfield

"The quality of an individual is reflected in the standards they set for themselves."

Ray Kroc, Businessman

Manatee High School

True Student Role Models

Robyn Clemons is a student in the Manatee High School (MHS) OJT Career Experience Program at Blake Medical Center. Currently, Robyn is assigned to the Happy Cubs daycare center at Blake. She assists teachers with projects at center time, distributes foods at snack time, and works with the children individually to help them learn letters and days of the week. She also enjoys playing with the children outside and assisting in getting the children to sleep for their naps. This is a great opportunity for Robyn; she is able to explore her career interests in child care while earning credits toward graduation. After high school, Robyn is interested in attending MTI.

Selena Pinto is also participating in the OJT program at Blake Medical Center. Presently, Selena is gaining work experience by working in food services. She is filling and delivering requisitions to numerous departments throughout the hospital and does an excellent job entering coupon codes into the computer, as well as any other assigned tasks. Selena has a great attendance record and always comes to work prepared. After high school, Selena hopes to attend MTI.

Both, Robyn and Selena have excelled in the classroom and have outstanding work ethics. They are a wonderful asset to Blake Medical Center and are true role models for the MHS OJT program. Robyn and Selena, well done!



Robyn Clemons (top) and Selena Pinto on the job at Blake Medical Center.

Classroom Enterprise: a Beehive of Activities

Ms. Tracey Swart, Manatee High School VE teacher extraordinaire, is an advocate for hands-on real life experiences for her students. Ms. Tracey (as her students call her) has students working all over the MHS campus promoting their classroom enterprise. Students prepare pregame meals for the number-one ranked MHS Hurricanes football team each Friday before their game. Students also man the concession stand for the basketball team, and prepare and deliver coffee, snacks, breakfast, and lunches to teachers and classrooms.

With the assistance of aides Vivian Robinson and Nicole Kelly, Ms. Tracey's classroom is a beehive of activities from beginning to end, from the first day in August to the last day in June. Administra-

tors, teachers, students, nurses, secretaries, and staff are coming and going throughout the school day. While it might seem to be chaotic, the fact is that students are so engaged in the tasks at hand that academic and social skills learning is accomplished in a very natural, relaxed environment.

Ms. Tracey is there at every event with unlimited energy, compassion, charisma and leadership skills that would leave most teachers in awe. She has high expectations for her students and wants them to have the ultimate high school learning experience. Students participate in the OJT career experience and career placement programs, where attendance, following directions, and having a good work ethic are emphasized. Students attend the prom and participate in home-



L to R: Tracey Swart (Ms. Tracey), Vivian Robinson, and Nicole Kelly

coming and other normal high school activities. This is not just a wonderful lesson for Ms. Tracey's students in adjusting to real-world activities, but also the entire student body is learning valuable lessons in tolerance, compassion, acceptance, and understanding that it's not about the disability—it's about ability. Congratulations to Ms. Tracey Swart and her students for a job well done.

Bayshore High School

Career Experience Partnerships Bridge the Gap

BHS and Bayshore Elementary

Bayshore High School (BHS) senior Kaneshia Crumity is one of five students who now works at Bayshore Elementary school in a career experience program. Kaneshia loves interacting with children and chose to gain her work experience as a teacher aide. She is assigned to two different first and second-grade classrooms. Laura Campbell, Assistant Principal at Bayshore Elementary, was happy to begin this partnership that gives secondary students valuable career experience and also provides extra help at the elementary school. In addition to Kaneshia, four other students work at the elementary school in various positions including food service, maintenance, and teacher aides.

As the OJT career experience teacher, Bonnie Condor recommended students that would do a great job working at this elementary school in their field of interest. Kaneshia loves what she does. Some of her duties include helping students on the computer, reading in small groups or one-on-one, and reviewing vocabulary. According to Ann Boecher, Bayshore Elementary teacher, “She was so great with the kids right from the start.” The teachers are thrilled to have Kaneshia providing more individualized attention and assisting in the learning environment. By forming this partnership with the elementary school, BHS students will have more career and employment opportunities in the future.

“Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.”

Albert Schweitzer, physician



Kaneshia Crumity reads with a student from Bayshore Elementary.

BHS and Westminster Communities

Westminster Communities has provided invaluable career opportunities for ten Bayshore High School students this fall—six who work at the Manor and four who work at the Shores and Towers. According to Bonnie Condor, OJT Career Experience Teacher and Job Coach, “Forming this partnership with Westminster Communities has proven to be a wonderful work experience for our students.” Students not only learn to complete job tasks, they also learn the importance of attitude, cooperation, attendance, quality of work, and responsibility. Students

are placed in a position at the Manor, the Shores, or Towers based on their career interest. The various job areas include maintenance, housekeeping, laundry, dining services, and grounds maintenance. It is inspiring to observe the supervisors working with each student as they continue to encourage and help Bayshore students learn how to adapt to various employment situations. This partnership between Westminster Communities and Bayshore High School is an example of bridging the gap between school and employment.



BHS students work at the Westminster Manor (top) and the Shores.

Southeast High School

Yvonne Alvarez: “Thanks Wakeland Staff and the Career Experience Program”

Yvonne Alvarez is no stranger to Wakeland Elementary School, having trained for three years as a teacher’s aide with Ashley Fulmer. Yvonne was such a big help in the classroom that Mrs. Fulmer often said she didn’t know what she would do without her. “Having Yvonne to assist allows me to spend more time teaching the children,” Mrs. Fulmer told the audience at the Southeast High School (SEHS) OJT banquet last spring.

This new school year brought many changes for Yvonne. When Wakeland’s front desk assistant, Mrs. Rosa Castro, was going on maternity leave, someone needed to fill in. A bubbly personality and an ability to converse in Spanish would be a plus for her replacement. Under the excellent tutelage of Mrs. Castro, Yvonne filled those requirements and seamlessly took over the busy position as front office receptionist.

Soon, Yvonne was checking attendance, answering/transferring phone calls, translating for parents with questions, entering data on the computer, and operating the Raptor system for visitors, volunteers and substitute teachers. She receives and delivers messages for Wake-

land’s staff, makes copies, sends and receives faxes, and delivers mail and fliers to teacher’s boxes. She reminds teachers to turn in their attendance and contacts custodial staff to assist when needed.

Now Yvonne feels she has the best of both worlds, and loves both assisting teachers and working the front desk. The faculty and the office staff treat her well, and while at first she wasn’t sure about leaving “her” students, she was willing to try the receptionist position. She still gets to see the students, but she’s enjoying the new administrative challenges.

“Thanks to the Wakeland staff, I’ve been inspired to do better in school,” she shares. “They’ve helped me reach my dreams and goals in life and they never give up on me, always telling me not to quit—just keep on going.” She also credits the OJT program for giving her “the career experience that I wouldn’t have gotten otherwise or anywhere else,” and says, “It feels good every morning to know I’m going to learn something new and become better at it. I would not have had this great opportunity if not for the OJT program and Wakeland Elementary.”



Yvonne Alvarez with Ellen Benshoff, Wakeland's registrar.

Mrs. Ellen Benshoff, Wakeland’s registrar says, “I’m proud of Yvonne, and how she continues to do her best. I continually tell her to never give up and to set goals. I suspect someday I’ll see her as a clerk, registrar or secretary somewhere in the school system.”

“Someday” may come sooner than anyone expected. Upon Mrs. Castro’s return in January, Yvonne’s presence has been requested at the reception desk at Johnson Middle School. Principal Omar Edwards asks, “How soon can she get here?”

A Clean Sweep for Brittney

Brittney Krnjaik has been taking care of people since she was eight years old. It was just she and her mother at home in Tennessee when her mother was diagnosed with cancer. And it was just Brittney who took care of the house and microwaved dinners for the two of them. A year later, after her mother passed away, Brittney went to live with her father. Soon after, three step-siblings joined the family and again, Brittney was the one who took care of them. So it was no surprise to the IEP team, when Brittney, chose housekeeping at the Courtyard by Marriott for her OJT job site.

Brittney is now living with her aunt Tina Maxey in Bradenton. Her aunt, a parent liaison at Southeast High, said, “Brittney is a

remarkable young lady whose infectious smile and motivation to provide assistance, without question and even before requested, make her an amazing addition both to our home and to Southeast.” This talent has transferred to her work in housekeeping at the Marriott and has not gone unnoticed by her supervisors.

Brittney earned the respect of co-workers through her effervescent personality and her willingness to complete her assigned tasks as well as take the initiative to find other things that need to be done. Tom Jung, manager of the Marriott, saw the potential in Brittney and offered her a job as soon as she turned 18. She recently worked her first shift and even stayed beyond her scheduled time to make sure everything was done before



Brittney Krnjaik

she left. It’s amazing to find a student who sees a purpose to a job that most would overlook, and make it a mission of excellence in her life. Brittney has brought sunshine to her new home, her new school, and now her new job. Laura Lynch, Southeast OJT teacher, stated, “We all expect her transition to a career will go just as smoothly and wish her the best in her new position!”

Braden River High School

Sophomore Sensation **Jacob Towler**

Whenever you ask an employer what they want to see in a new employee, most managers and supervisors reply with comments like: “must be a team player,” “work hard,” “have a positive attitude,” “be very proactive,” “have a strong willingness to learn,” “arrive to work on time,” “be flexible,” and “be dependable!” Those comments are exactly what Jacob Towler exemplifies on the job.

This is Jacob’s first year in the Career Experience Class at Braden River High School (BRHS) and, Jacob is working hard like a mature and seasoned OJT student. Brain

Pettis, OJT teachers, says, “The main challenge for most students is they have never had a real job with real responsibilities and this new challenge can often lead to some students dropping OJT as a class.” This was not the case for Jacob! From day one, Jacob has dived right into work at the Terrace Beach Café.

Owners and managers, Dave and Holly, have been very pleased with Jacob’s performance. According to Dave and Holly, Jacob has many great qualities; however, what impresses them most is that Jacob is self-motivated. He finds whatever needs to be done and takes care of it



Jacob Towler at the Terrace Beach Café

right away. Jacob has been working at the Terrace Beach Café for about two months and has been offered part-time employment on the weekends. Jacob has expressed, “Too bad the Terrace Beach Café isn’t open for dinner during the week because I would work after school during the evening to make extra money.”

“I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed.”

Booker T. Washington, Educator

Chase Freeman: **“A” Student Inside and Outside the Class**

Working hard and taking orders is nothing new for BRHS sophomore Chase Freeman. His dedication to commitment and excellence stems from his upbringing and his active involvement in the BRHS JROTC. The skills that he has learned over the years has helped Chase become an excellent custodial assistant at Bashaw Elementary School.

Chase’s work site supervisor, Rex Ballenger, said, “If Chase were old enough, I would hire him full time right now. Chase never gives me a problem, always does what he is told,

does good work, and he begins working on some things without me even telling him.” Chase loves to work hard which pleases his teachers and supervisor. He often wants to know what he can do to make his grades even better so that he can make the JROTC Raiders drill team (a high honor in JROTC).

Chase would like to join the military after high school. He is not sure if he wants to join the army or the navy. Whichever branch he decides, working as a custodial assistant will come in handy. Brian Pettis, BRHS OJT teacher, says, “ Take it

from me, after serving four years in the U.S. Navy, you have to clean EVERYTHING TO PERFECTION!”



Chase Freeman (on right) with supervisor Rex Ballenger.

Schuyler Zoutendyk: **Mixon's Rising Star**

At Mixon Fruit Farm, quality and excellence are paramount. You will immediately notice this when you enter the gift shop and deli. The store and deli are so immaculate that even a marine drill sergeant would be impressed! Brian Pettis, BRHS OJT teacher, asked the managers and owners at Mixon Fruit Farm if they would be interested in having some students from the OJT career experience class train at their business. They agreed to give Schuyler Zoutendyk the opportunity to practice his work skills, since he

had previously been a volunteer and had proved to be very reliable and hardworking.

Schuyler was excited to have the chance to work at Mixon because he really enjoyed his summer volunteer time there. After a short time, deli manager Alfredo Nudi noticed just how hard Schuyler was working. Alfredo asked his supervisor if he could hire Schuyler on a part-time basis since Schuyler was dependable and the season rush was just around the corner. Schuyler has transitioned from volunteer to OJT student to



Alfredo Nudi with Schuyler Zoutendyk at Mixon's deli inside the gift shop.

working as a paid employee. He has worked weekends and special events to help meet the demand during the busy tourist season. Mr. Pettis says, "Schuyler has proved that he has what it takes to succeed in the workplace and has shown a lot of maturity since he has been in the career experience OJT program."

Lakewood Ranch High School

The following stories are about three students who not only have a great work ethic, but make my job seem easy and meaningful. The reports (and consequently grades) are consistently excellent. What a pleasure to have students like this to brag about! Candace Carlucci, Reading Teacher/Job Coach

Dependable and Caring **Luis Guadalupe**

Luis Guadalupe wasn't sure he wanted to stay in the Career Experience Program when we began in August. The uncertainty of how he would perform left Luis feeling nervous and tentative. We worked at tasks on campus at LRHS until our orientation process was complete at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. As students were given directions for tasks, I noticed Luis would always ask if there was something else he could do. He wanted to work. An added bonus was his attention to

detail and desire to do quality work.

Needless to say, they love Luis in the Dietary Department at the medical center. He's dependable, caring and has recently cross trained for Central Stores.

The more versatile workers are, the more valuable they become, and Luis has proven to us (and more importantly to himself) that he has what it takes to become part of the labor force. Luis is one of those students who consistently gives our program a great name!

“Nothing is particularly hard, if you divide it into small jobs.”

**Henry Ford
Founder, Ford Motor Co.**



Luis Guadalupe with Pat at the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center Dietary Department.

Warmhearted **Tricia Wears**

Tricia Wears had a tough act to follow at Kids ‘R’ Kids Volunteer Pre-kindergarten (VPK) program. Her predecessor, Tyler Lang, was not only honored previously as one of our students of the year, but was hired over the summer for paid employment at Kids ‘R’ Kids. Tyler was well loved by staff and children alike, and it seemed that no one would meet the high standards he set.

Tricia began at Kids ‘R’ Kids this fall and managed to quickly warm her way into the hearts of

everyone. She shows up daily with a great attitude and a calm demeanor that puts everyone at ease. The children look forward to her assistance, and we’re told she is sorely missed on Wednesdays when we are not off campus for work. Staff members say Tricia is often one step ahead, meeting the needs of children and teachers alike without being asked or directed. She has become a much-appreciated worker in her own right and will be the new ‘tough act’ to follow.

Tricia plans to attend MTI in cosmetology in the near future.

The VPK class has grown steadily over the years, and our students’ presence at Kids ‘R’ Kids has become greatly valued which is a win/win partnership for all.



Tricia Wears (left) with the VPK teachers.

“One moment spent sharing a good word can translate into hours of high productivity.”

Hal Pitt, management consultant

Enthusiastic **Ashley Gallon**

Working with high school students gives us an opportunity to watch incredible growth and change over the course of four years. Three years ago, due to some personal tragedies, Ashley Gallon lost interest in attending school. When school began this year, I met a very different young woman.

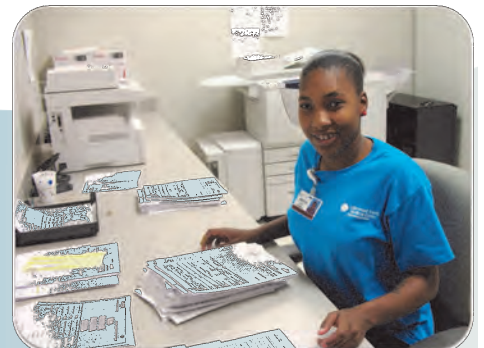
Ashley now works at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center in the Career Experience Program. She starts out in Patient Care at the beginning of her shift. She then moves to Medical Records where she completes the work with such efficiency that she is able to collect pumps that need cleaning from

all the patient care units.

Employees at the medical center say Ashley always has a smile on her face, a lilt in her voice and an enthusiastic attitude that is downright contagious. She has also been trained to update 19 bulletin boards and provide coverage in Central Stores when there is a need. She is our most flexible student volunteer.

The most amazing part of this story is that Ashley goes home at the end of the day to take care of her five-month-old daughter, Ma’Kenzi and the proud father, Marcus, making sure all is well with her family. Ashley is on track to graduate in June. It’s been

a real privilege to watch Ashley grow into such a fine, responsible, young woman. She can only continue to shine and succeed with her great attitude and strong work ethic.



Ashley in Medical Records at the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center.

Palmetto High School

The Perfect Fit: PHS Career Experience and Sweetbay Supermarket

Since the beginning of the school year, Todd Connick, Jatesha Glenn, and Casey Collins have been the perfect fit for the Sweetbay Supermarket located on 7th Street in Palmetto. While one student is bagging groceries, another is pulling carts from the parking lot, and yet another is working in the frozen food aisle. The next day the students will rotate to different jobs. Career experience teacher, Bryan Wilkes stated, "Cross training the students will lead them to a better understanding of how a large supermarket operates." All

three students have begun the employee orientation program and are daily studying the training manuals.

Recently, the students' job duties have expanded to making announcements on the store PA system. This seemed to be the most difficult task for Casey, who is a very quiet person. He can be heard over the PA announcing to the employees that there is a team huddle in the produce department in ten minutes. "I am getting better; they could not hear me at first," Casey explained. However, practice makes perfect and Casey's



L to R, Todd Connick, Darryl Raulerson—Sweetbay Assistant Manager, Jatesha Glenn, and Casey Collins.

communication skills are improving on a daily basis.

"I would hire these students," is the answer Mr. Wilkes received when he asked Mr. Fulgham, the store manager, to evaluate the progress of the students. Good job, Todd, Jatesha, and Casey!

Empowering Students with Technology and Resources

Text-to-speech tools, posters, digital books, free downloads, and more

- ★ www.readplease.com/english/downloads **ReadPlease** 2003 text-to-speech (TTS) software reads text via Windows clipboard from any program. Adjustable voice speed (rate); offers full support for all Microsoft voices. Free download.
- ★ www.xmind.net/downloads **XMind** note taking software offers brainstorming and mind mapping software; provides an excellent way to share ideas. Free download.
- ★ www.cross-plus-a.com/balabolka.htm **Balabolka** text-to-speech software. All computer voices installed on your system are available to Balabolka. Free download.
- ★ www.bookshare.org **Bookshare®** is an online library of digital books for people with print disabilities. Bookshare® is free for all U.S. students with qualifying disabilities, thanks to an award from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- ★ www.donjohnston.com/products/rol_bookshare/index.html **Read:OutLoud** text-to-speech software for members of Bookshare.org only. In 2009 as part of their \$32 million U.S. Department of Education OSEP award, Bookshare chose Read:OutLoud by Don Johnston Incorporated as the text reader that would best achieve the goal of providing access to reading materials and enabling students to read texts with comprehension.

- ★ www.imdetermined.org This excellent **Virginia Department of Education's Self-Determination Project** website comes highly recommended. You will find numerous lesson plans, PowerPoints, videos, new tools for teachers, and much more. A must-see site.
- ★ www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org The Campaign for Disability Employment is proud to present the **What Can YOU Do? Poster Series**. The series is designed with many audiences in mind and includes posters that display positive messages about disability and employment. Use the posters to help spread the word that it's what people can do that matters at work. Free printable PDF downloads.
- ★ <http://askjan.org/ENews/index.htm> **The JAN E-News** is a quarterly online newsletter of the Job Accommodation Network. Its purpose is to keep subscribers informed about low-cost and innovative accommodation approaches; the latest trends in assistive technologies; and announcements of upcoming JAN presentations, media events, trainings, and Webcasts.
- ★ www.fyitransition.org This website provides helpful information and resources on post-school options for students with disabilities, their families, teachers, and other professionals.

“A mind always employed is always happy.”

Thomas Jefferson, U.S. President

School District of Manatee County

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Around the District

Watch for all of the publications keeping you informed about what's happening around the District in the Adult, Career & Technical Education department.



Transition Times, ACT Update, Career Pathways, Spotlight on Success, Take Stock Times, Careers in Action, Education Today/Career Tomorrow, and Technical Education Today.