



Fifth Third Bank and Project SEARCH Celebrate Milestone at Cincinnati Children's

Recently, representatives from Fifth Third Bank and Project SEARCH came together to celebrate a major milestone. Fifth Third Bank presented Project SEARCH with a gift of \$149,000, bringing their total contribution towards this life-changing program to more than \$1 million – all of which was raised through its annual Tee Off for Project SEARCH golf outing – now in its ninth year.

Contributions from this year's event will continue to help expansion efforts for the growing program.

“This gift from Fifth Third and from other generous donors allows us to strategically grow Project SEARCH to better serve more young adults worldwide,” says Erin Riehle, founder of Project SEARCH and director of Disability Services at Cincinnati Children's.

Founded at Cincinnati Children's nearly 20 years ago, Project SEARCH is an internationally recognized job-skills training program for individuals with significant disabilities and has grown exponentially since it was founded in 1996. From a single site in Cincinnati, Project SEARCH now has more than 300 locations across the United States and overseas – in part from the kindness and generosity of donors, like Fifth Third.

The program partners with schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Services and a diverse team of employers to transition students with special needs from high school to meaningful employment. “This program provides opportunity and hope for our graduates and allows them to establish independence in their lives,” Riehle adds. “The generosity of donors has made a major impact on our participants, their families and their employers.”

Support from Fifth Third has enabled the program to open and operate three classrooms in space provided by the bank in Madisonville, downtown Cincinnati and Grand Rapids, Michigan, while also supporting the efforts of the Project SEARCH team at the medical center.

Project SEARCH has been recognized for its overwhelming success by various state and federal agencies including the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission, the State of Ohio Governors Council and the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment.

Thanks to generous supporters, Project SEARCH is changing the lives of individuals with disabilities throughout Cincinnati and beyond.