



We just couldn't resist sharing this one!

Some of the Project SEARCH guys fresh from their shopping spree at the American Girl store at Mall of America...

Newsletter Project SEARCH UK

Issue 1 | Autumn 2011

News & Events

Read all about the Project SEARCH 5th Annual Conference in Minneapolis and how Pip Critten charmed our American colleagues

Site Updates

- New sites for 2012
- The Private Sector takes on Project Search
- The number of jobs we have achieved for 2011

Spotlight on...

Learn about the new training available for all UK Project Search sites on Teaching & Coaching for success.

Welcome to the first edition of the Project SEARCH UK Newsletter

Over the coming months we aim to share all the amazing work happening across the UK

We hope this newsletter will provide a link for all our UK sites between network meetings and visits. We also hope it will help to increase the level of communication between the Project SEARCH UK sites and an opportunity for all of us to share advice, information, guidance, and ideas for smarter ways of working and to promote the work we are all purposefully engaged in to support the goal of paid jobs for students. Please take the time to read through it and give us your comments.

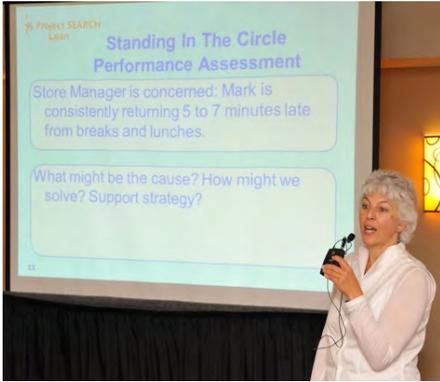
In this first addition of the newsletter I would like to formally welcome and introduce Debbie Robinson to the Project SEARCH Team. Debbie joins us from the Department of Health Valuing People Team, where she was the Regional Programme Lead for London. With her experience and expertise in strategic planning and commissioning, as well as service development in learning disabilities and mental health I'm sure we will be able to put Debbie's skills to good use over the coming weeks and months.



Now is a busy time for Project SEARCH so we are fortunate that Debbie is able to join us. Debbie's first tasks will be to carry out a full audit on a few of our sites and to be editor of the newsletter.

We have been very busy over the summer and later on in the newsletter you can read more about the International Project SEARCH Conference, new training available and a couple of success stories from the Sandwell and Plymouth sites. Happy reading!

Anne O'Bryan
UK Project SEARCH Lead



News & Events

The Project SEARCH 5th Annual Conference and Inaugural Gala took place in the great city of Minneapolis and Pip Critten from Plymouth flew the flag for the UK ...

[New website launch... call for pictures and success stories...](#)

Project SEARCH colleagues test the new Teaching & Coaching for Success training co written by Anne O'Bryan ...

[Find out what's been happening around the country and catch up with some of the sites in the site update section...](#)

Pip Critten, from Project SEARCH Plymouth, reports from the International Conference

I recently had the honour of being invited to be a speaker at the Project SEARCH international conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota in the USA. I am delighted that PLUSS, my employer, saw the huge benefits and funded the trip.

Here in Plymouth, the Project SEARCH partners are Derriford Hospital NHS Trust, PLUSS, City College Plymouth and Serco, a subcontractor to the hospital. Our Interns work five days a week in real working environments within the hospital and follow an academic qualification we have put together through the National Open College Network (NOCN).

I wanted a consistent and accessible way to present the rotation opportunities to our Interns, all of whom have Learning Disabilities, so they could choose where they might want to work. I also needed a way that the interns could match their own skills to the skills that would be needed to do the jobs.

Together with my colleague Zenta Zubka-Hill from City College Plymouth we devised a system that enabled us to meet these needs.

I saw it as a great honour to be asked to talk about this at the international conference and was delighted that Susie Rutkowski, one of the two founders of Project SEARCH, said,

"We had great feedback on the session at the National Meeting.

Due to our critical goal of employment for every intern, we desperately need sessions that focus on strategic development of internships that teach competitive skills and students active participation in the job search process!

Your information and success leads to that!

Also, we feel that you represent the UK sites very well with your advanced understanding of the model and outstanding attention to the goals of jobs/careers, student self advocacy and acquiring employability and specific job skills."

During the three day event there was a wide variety of speakers in the break out sessions covering topics for prospective new projects, sites that have been running some time, student selection, marketing and a whole lot more.

In addition to my own I attended eight sessions and found them all to be of benefit.

I gave my lecture on the first full day and enjoyed a "Full House". Extra chairs were brought in and people ended up standing and sitting on the floor. Perhaps, they just wanted to see the quaint old Englishman in a suit – the novelty factor.

Being with almost 500 other like minded people all willing to freely share their wealth of knowledge and experience brought many benefits to me as a practitioner which has helped me to be more effective.

I gained more knowledge than I gave and was honoured to have represented the UK and PLUSS at this prestigious international event and to be told by Susie Rutkowski, co-founder of Project SEARCH, "We heard such great comments about your session! Thanks for coming across the pond and contributing so much to many of our Project SEARCH friends. You ARE awesome".

I would urge all UK sites to try and make next years conference, you won't regret it.



A date for your diary...



Project Search International Conference 2012

Next years conference is being held in Austin, Texas and will take place the week of 23 July. There is also now the addition of sessions for students and families so get your cowboy boots and hats at the ready and we'll see you there!

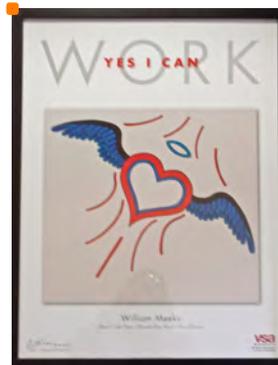
NATIONAL NETWORK

The next meeting is being hosted by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and will be held on Friday 2 December 2011 at:

Beeches Enterprise Centre
23 Beeches Road
West Bromwich
B70 6QE

Once again we are very fortunate that our meeting coincides with a visit to the UK from Erin & Susie and they will be joining us for the day.

Could you please let us know who from your teams will be attending so we can make sure we have enough space to accommodate everyone and we get the cookie count right.



A picture of success

This was one of the items on offer for the silent auction at the 2011 Conference Gala event. A young man called William Meeks from the VSA Project in Minneapolis painted it and we think it says it all

"WORK – Yes you can"



Call for information

We will soon see the launch of the new Project SEARCH website and the new database. The website will enable all of us to access a range of information and resources to help us in our work but will also be a place to share our achievements and ideas.

We want to make sure that all the hard work and effort that you are putting into getting jobs for your students is shared across the international community of Project SEARCH. So please send us your pictures, success stories.

New training available for all sites...



Teaching



Coaching



Success

TEACHING & COACHING FOR SUCCESS

Feedback from Project SEARCH sites and a Lean analysis of our 60% success rate led the Project SEARCH Institute team to develop a new workshop for educators and supported employment specialists.

Teaching and Coaching for Success is a two-day training session on educational and supported employment strategies relevant to Project SEARCH interns. Sound, research-based techniques are discussed and how they can be used to help meet the high expectations of Project SEARCH, which starts with the assumption that every intern will gain competitive employment. We demonstrate how to design meaningful internships in which students can learn systematic and complex work starting with business analysis at the level of the community (the 1000 metre view), to the hands-on teaching of complicated tasks at the worksite (the 1 metre view).

The training describes some new ways of tracking skill acquisition that make use of Lean tools, systematic instruction (TSI) and customised student profiles. Creative ways to teach employability ("soft") skills are also presented in light of their demonstrated importance in the success of any young employee. The workshop also highlights the role of each Project SEARCH partner as well as successful strategies for collaboration among all the partners.

This course has been run ten times in the US and twice in the UK. Participants have appreciated the overview from high aspirations to successful outcomes. UK Project SEARCH intends to provide this training to all sites that are interested. Please contact us for more information or to schedule the training:

E: Anne.O'Bryan@projectsearchuk.com

T: 01225 858886

Project SEARCH goes postal at Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Alex Harris sorts it all out...

My name is Alex Harris and I am a Project SEARCH student in Sandwell, which is in the West Midlands, England.



On 5th January 2011, I started an unpaid placement at Sandwell Council House working in the mailroom. During the first 2 weeks I was a bit nervous because I was in a new environment and didn't know anyone. After the third week I felt more confident about myself as I was being helped by Sam, my Project SEARCH Job Coach. My colleagues were also very kind and supportive.

At the start of my placement I was being taught the easier tasks, such as date stamping letters and putting information onto the computer. After a couple weeks my mentor, Rosetta, said she wanted to teach me some of the harder tasks like franking the outgoing mail, sorting of incoming mail and my favourite task, the trolley run!

Rosetta said she felt comfortable giving me more responsibilities because she had seen what I could do in the workplace. Rosetta has been a perfect mentor and, with Sam, helped me to learn to do the tasks by myself.

After nine weeks in my placement a colleague left and Rosetta's Manager, Angela, gave me the chance to apply for the part-time vacancy. I was really chuffed and happy when I heard that I got the job. It was my first paid job! My family was really proud and my mum cried when she heard the news. I spent some of my first pay cheque on a PlayStation 3 computer game.

I enjoy working in the mailroom. We have fun but we work really hard too.

By May, I had learnt the job 100% and I no longer needed support from Sam, although he was always there if I need him. Then, in June, changes in the mailroom meant I was offered a full time fixed term contract until March 2012. I work 37 hours per week and earn around £13,000 per year.



Because of my work, I am more confident and relaxed when I meet new people. I feel really lucky that I was selected for Project SEARCH and really proud I am working.

I don't think I would have got a job without Project SEARCH and I would like to thank everyone involved.



PROJECT SEARCH GRADUATION DAY AT NORSE IN NORFOLK



8 July 2011 was a special day for 10 young people in Norfolk as their success in taking part in the innovative work based learning course was marked with a graduation ceremony.

The students, who carried out three workplace rotations during the academic year gained invaluable experience and transferrable skills within departments including Bus Maintenance, Payroll, Human Resources, general administration, Catering and Community Equipment Services.

WHO'S KEEPING SCORE?

We all know how important it is to keep raising expectations and aspirations for our young people, particularly when the national figure for people with learning disabilities in employment is around 6.4%. One way to do this is to show people that the young people we are supporting are being successful in getting paid jobs, whether part time, full time or temporary.

The percentage of jobs recorded so far across all UK sites for 2010/11 is 35% (over 5 x the national average) as at 9 August. Of course we expect more graduates to be successful in securing employment and we look forward to hearing the updated figures at the next network meeting in December, so please come prepared to share your data with the rest of us and let's celebrate the number of jobs achieved this year.

We are also very proud to announce that Wishaw General achieved 100% jobs for last year's students, so congratulations goes to them and they have just raised the bar for the rest of us!

At the Graduation Ceremony at Head Office, Fifers Lane the 10 students were presented with a certificate and commemorative watch by Paul Bonham - Commercial Director, Transport Division, in front of an audience of family members, carers, mentors, managers and other Norse employees.

Our thanks goes out to all staff that have helped, and continue to help, make this project a huge success, and our congratulations to Sarah who has since secured employment at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel.

We wish the other students every success in securing future employment.



Tribute to Paul McCourt

Paul joined Project SEARCH when he was seconded from the Department of Work and Pensions to work in the Valuing People Team in the Department of Health back in 2009. Paul was passionate about his work to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities and this was demonstrated by his commitment to supporting the development of Project SEARCH here in the UK following a visit to The Children's Hospital in Cincinnati.

Paul will be greatly missed but his legacy remains and will always be a reminder of his passion and commitment.

It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the sad passing of our colleague and supporter Paul McCourt

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends at this difficult time.

Message from Erin & Susie

Paul was a great support to us in the early days of setting up Project SEARCH in the UK and whilst we struggled at first to understand his accent, the like of which was new to us, it was soon very clear that we were speaking the same language – that of wanting to support people with learning disabilities to get paid jobs. We will miss Paul but will continue to do the work he was so passionate about and achieve good outcomes for people.



We are interested to hear what you think about the newsletter and to have your input...

In this regard we would encourage you to get in touch and send us your thoughts, photos, success stories and ideas for articles to include in future newsletters.

In addition, if you want further information about anything you have read in this newsletter then let us know.

Debbie is main contact for the newsletter, so please email her directly:

debbie.robinson@projectsearchuk.com

We look forward to hearing from you and in the meantime have a great first term!