

DDSD Transition Age Youth Programs

DDSD partners with four organizations that provide direct supports to transition age youth with developmental disabilities statewide. They are; SUCCEED, Think College Vermont, College Steps and Project SEARCH.

Focus of programs:

- Post secondary education supports on college campuses
- Independent living skills that lead to living in an apartment
- Industry based work skills leading to careers in specialized areas of employment

Collective program features:

- Internships as teaching tools based on passions and areas of natural interest
- Transportation training
- Development of mentor relationships such as; internship mentors, department heads, Human Resource personnel, college professors, peer mentors, student services
- Job Development leading to job placement at graduation in competitive employment that is individualized and career-focused
- Close collaboration with DDS partner agencies to mutually support youth
- Membership on a DAIL organized PSE Consortium to share practices and resources
- Use DDS funding combined with other funds to provide direct services
- Memorandums of Understanding with the partner college or with the host business
- Job placement activities for 'jobs by June'.

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**The Post Secondary Education programs** support youth to succeed in fully integrated, campus based, college coursework at the collaborating Vermont colleges. Students select courses to satisfy the goals of self-designed college plans. Students earn 15 - 18 credits over two years earning *Certificates of Higher Learning* that are conferred by the colleges. Students participate in graduation ceremonies. Internships strengthen the college plan via hands on experience to compliment the area of study and job placement. Extra-curricular, as an important social component, is mentored and facilitated for all college students based on personal interests.

**1) SUCCEED** is a program of the Howard Center that provides college academic support at Burlington area colleges. The primary focus is to teach independent living skills to youth so they move into their own apartments with on-going support services at the end of the two-year residential program. The blend of the college experience and independent living skills maximizes the growth potential for students. SUCCEED, as a residential program, accepts students statewide.

**2) Think College Vermont** is a UVM campus based post secondary education program administered by the Center on Disability & Community Inclusion. Day students complete a two-year *Certificate of Higher Learning* based on their individually designed college plan. Students must commute to UVM.

**3) College Steps** is an independent post secondary education non-profit that supports students at Johnson State College, Castleton University, Southern Vermont College, and Lyndon State College. Each campus has a full time Coordinator who functions as an overall supporter and guide available to students throughout the day. Day

students complete a two-year *Certificate of Higher Learning* based on individually designed college plans. Students must commute to their area college campus.

**4) Project SEARCH** is an independent national program that has provided franchise licenses to Lincoln Street Incorporated, Rutland Mental Health Services, and Howard Center as approved Project SEARCH programs. Multifaceted skills are taught within a business where high school students spend their entire final year of school. Vermont's host business partners are Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC), The Edge Sports and Fitness Center, and Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC). These businesses dedicate their department personnel as mentors and provide three internship rotations for each student during the year. The Project SEARCH partnership consists of the local school district at each site, Agency of Education, DVR, a partnering DDS agency, and DDSD.

These programs are successful at offering learning experiences that result in occupations of personal choice and increased community independence. They have collectively enabled youth to attain occupations in media, public relations, human resources, data entry, baking, human services and with companies such as Agency of Transportation, Green Mountain Power, RRMC, and DHMC. The authentic experience of campus life and/or being an integral part of a business environment enables transition age youth to learn responsibility, develop technical skills, and come into their own as young adults at a more rapid rate of development.

**2016 Post Secondary Education Program employment rate:**

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>College Steps</b>    | <b>89%</b> |
| <b>SUCCEED</b>          | <b>50%</b> |
| <b>Think College VT</b> | <b>67%</b> |

**2016 Project SEARCH employment rate:**

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>DHMC</b>        | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>RRMC</b>        | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Edge Sports</b> | <b>67%</b>  |

**2014 total # graduates across all programs: 23**

**2015 total # graduates across all programs: 27**

**2016 total # graduates across all programs: 96**

**2016 employment rate of all programs combined 83%**

**Total training or educational sites statewide: 9**