



Arkansas Transition Services Newsletter

Spring 2019

Meeting of the Minds - Planning for Progress of Work Experiences in Transition Classes

by Bonnie Boaz

By now all are most likely aware that no new applications are being taken for the Opportunities for Work-Based Learning (OWL) programs through Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. There are many successful OWL programs, 32 to be exact, but at this time funding is not available for any new programs.

We knew this would be disappointing to many districts who planned to submit an OWL proposal, so we decided to begin to work on tools and strategies that will allow districts to add a work experience program to their Transition program/class regardless of outside agency funds.

We know that those districts who currently have OWL programs will not let them go away—they have seen the benefits of students receiving work experience and know that it must continue! In April we asked representatives from OWL programs around the state to attend the Arkansas Transition Services'

"Meeting of the Minds," as a way to help come up with strategies to overcome barriers to setting up a work program. Fourteen districts were represented that day and the information, suggestions, ideas, and resources they shared were amazing!

For every barrier we presented to them (based on input from the field), they were able to come up with ideas to get beyond those barriers. They were convincing when they told us they could not give up the partnerships they have established in their communities or the opportunities they have afforded their students with disabilities. They not only provided resources and ideas on how to get work programs and school based enterprises started, but also strategies for sustainability of programs.

We are currently working on this to provide to you all through our next Transition Class training. Please stay posted for more information!

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Read on the next page how OWL programs are partnering with local businesses!

Bryant High School OWL Program Recognizes Pookie's Popcorn for Partnership

BY Becky Runnels

Kim Simmons, owner of Pookie's Popcorn, and the Bryant High School OWL and H.I.R.E. program have partnered to work with interns in her small business. Pookie's Popcorn is located on Reynolds Road in Bryant, AR. Pookie's has been so successful that a new location will be opening in Benton, AR in the near future.

Before opening Pookie's, Ms. Simmons worked in a variety of sales position – including retail, food service and newspapers. She was a paraprofessional with special needs students in the Bryant School District. Ms. Simmons has a heart for giving back to the community.

Ms. Simmons hosted two interns for the 2018-2019 school year. While one student did very well in his internship, another student was not able to perform up to the level needed to work in her shop. This was an excellent learning experience for both of the students.

This partnership between the BHS OWL program and Pookie's Popcorn has helped the program by providing an additional "off campus" location for students to work. Also, the shop is located very close to the high school campus so transportation is not an issue.

We, at Bryant High School, feel confident that this partnership with Pookie's Popcorn will continue for years to come.

Crossett High School Partners with Fire Department

BY Donna Culpepper

10th grader at Crossett High School, Joshua, has spent the second half of his sophomore year in the OWL Program (Opportunity for Work Based Learning). Joshua expressed that he wanted to work in the fire department. After talking with Assistant Chief Willhight about the OWL program the fire department was glad to have Josh on board. Josh has enjoyed his time after school with the young firefighters and medics. The guys have given him a great experience, showing him about "Fire Life". What they have also done has guided him down the path of a potential full or part time post-high school career. Successful partnerships with public agencies and local businesses are key to supporting these wonderful young adults in the OWL Program governed by Arkansas Rehabilitation in collaboration with Arkansas Transition Services.

Students like Josh get the chance to see what careers are really like when they job shadow at places like the Crossett Fire Department. Josh's job was setup with Assistant Chief Willhight in January. The fire department welcomed Josh with open arms after school. He has been going to the fire department twice a week for two hours and helped do odds and ends jobs around the fire station. Josh has really enjoyed the job shadowing and extra money this opportunity has given him. Most students in high school don't really know what they want as a career after high school. Being able to see what goes on in a career first hand gives students an idea if they would want to spend time in school for it.

Armored High School's Local Business Partners

BY Kelley Hopper

Armored High School has had great community partners for the 2019-2020 school year. Some of these businesses partnered with our D.E.L.T.A. program last year and some are new for this year. Our students travel to a different business, practically, every day. Arkansas Northeastern College has allowed our students to work in the library. Blytheville Country Club has allowed our students to complete various tasks such as, setting up the dining room, light cleaning, and filing. Hopper's Exxon and Hubbard and Hoke Furniture stores have also hosted our students. By **speaking at the Lion's Club meeting**, we gained two more partners in Mailboxes and Beyond and State Farm Insurance. All of these businesses have formed great relationships with our students. They have acknowledged holidays and other special events in our students' lives. They have welcomed them and exposed them to many different aspects of their businesses. One of our students commented that she really enjoys helping the businesses complete their tasks and she really enjoys the opportunities that the O.W.L. program has created. We appreciate them so much!

Person-Centered Planning

by Karen Randolph

Coming this summer to a selective number of Co-ops is the PCP training. No, it's not a mind altering drug, but it can assist you and your IEP team in writing an effective Transition Plan. Whether your student has lots of support or is undecided on a career goal, Person-Centered Planning is a great way to get everyone to the table to discuss future plans for a specific student. This method helps with ALL students, from students with mild to severe disabilities in all grades.

It's an informal meeting held anywhere that is comfortable for all who are involved in this person's life. The student's favorite food (even just a snack) and drink can be offered, making the atmosphere relaxing and opening dialogue for future plans or concerns. Individuals are invited by the facilitator to provide valuable information about the student or provide services that can assist in planning for their future, such as career/job/volunteerism, education/training, and independent living/community participation. It can be a positive experience for the student, family members, school personnel, vendors, and community members in creating an action plan that meets the needs of this young adult.

The facilitator will keep the meeting running smoothly by establishing a designated recorder and using a series of maps. These maps drive everyone to be on the same page as to student's desires, wants, and needs. The maps include "Dreams & Hopes/Fears & Nightmares, Who Is the Student, and Student's Ideal Day," to name a few. The recorder is writing the responses from the group on the maps, which can be used in writing more meaningful goals and activities for the student's transition plan.

This half day training will be offered at SOUTHEAST, SOUTHCENTRAL, ARKANSAS RIVER, GUY FENTER, NORTHWEST and OZARKS UNLIMITED CO-OPS. During this training, you and a team member can learn the basics of how to facilitate a Person-Centered Planning meeting. Arkansas Transition Services will provide follow-up technical assistance to any team that decides to implement this practice. Please visit our website www.arkansastransition.com to find out where and when this and other trainings will be offered at each of the Co-ops.

Hope to see you this summer at our Transition Trainings!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Arkansas Transition Services Summer Trainings at Coops

Transition Assessments

June 3 – Great Rivers
 June 17 – DeQueen Mena
 June 24 – Southeast
 June 26 – Crowley's Ridge
 June 26 – South Central
 June 27 – Northwest
 July 8 – Northeast
 July 9 – Arkansas River
 July 16 – Southwest
 July 18 – Guy Fenter
 July 24 – Ozarks Unlimited

Person Centered Planning

June 25 – Southeast
 June 27 – South Central
 June 28 – Northwest
 July 10 – Arkansas River
 July 19 – Guy Fenter
 July 25 – Ozarks Unlimited

Evidence-Based Practices

June 4 – Great Rivers
 June 11 - PCSSD
 June 24 – Southwest
 June 25 – DeQueen Mena
 June 25 – Southeast
 June 27 – Dawson
 June 27 – South Central
 June 28 – Northwest
 July 9 – Crowley's Ridge
 July 10 – Arkansas River
 July 19 – Guy Fenter
 July 25 – Ozarks Unlimited
 July 29 – Northeast

Toolkit

June 3 – Great Rivers
 June 24 – Southeast
 June 24 – Southwest
 June 25 – DeQueen Mena
 June 26 – Crowley's Ridge
 June 26 – South Central
 June 27 – Dawson
 June 27 – Northwest
 July 8 – Northeast
 July 9 – Arkansas River
 July 18 – Guy Fenter
 July 24 – Ozarks Unlimited

Other Events

Jump Start 2019 – June 2 – 21
 College Bound Arkansas – June 12 – 14
 Youth Leadership Forum – June 23 – 28



Take 3! Third Annual Film Camp Proves to be Another Success!

by Bonnie Boaz

April 29 – May 3 proved to be just as exciting of a week for the annual Inclusion Films Short Film Camp as the last two years! A continued collaboration among Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Arkansas Transition Services, Special Education Supervisor, Deborah Swink, the staff at Northwest Arkansas Community College, and of course, the staff of Inclusion Films, along with the Arkansas Department of Career and Technical Education, helped make this year a great success! Funds were provided by these agencies to bring Inclusion Films to Arkansas so 50 campers could work on their “30 Minutes Tonight” short films. For many campers this was the first connection to ARS, an agency that can help students with disabilities reach their goals for life after high school. Also, for many, it was their first time on a college campus. Students began applying in January and were quickly connected to a local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from



Film Camp attendee, Garrett, works with Inclusion Film crew to get the right shot.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Four scholarships were made available this year through the generous efforts of Karan Burnette of Arkansas Autism Resource Outreach Center (AAROC), the Arkansas Mental Health in Education Association (ARMEA), and Joey Travolta of Inclusion Films.

The first day of camp, Joey Travolta and his team of instructors, Barry Pearl, Samantha Laurenti, and Roger Welch, wasted no time in explaining what students could expect for the week. After an introduction of Joey proclaiming, “Quiet on the Set!” and then explaining the theme of this year’s camp, students had an opportunity to ask questions and then the work began! Students were divided into three teams to begin planning, plotting, scripting, casting, and filming their way to short films that will likely be hard to believe were made in one week’s time!

As students began learning from these top notch instructors they were pulled one by one to complete an interview with Joey Travolta. This was just the beginning of their communication with him. The interviews are a way for Mr. Travolta to get to know the campers, but also to help them feel a little less anxious among the lights and cameras. It was evident that this strategy worked as campers quickly began joking with him. Once the interviews were



Film Camp student shows off the work of the makeup artist at Film Camp.

complete each team had to pitch their short film ideas to Mr. Travolta for final approval—although they did so with a bit of anxiety, all were approved and the creative juices continued to flow! There were also public service announcements they had to create and film. This year the theme for the PSAs was raising awareness of accommodations for the ACT for which students with disabilities might be eligible.

You might remember that week as severe weather week as well! Although students and staff took shelter, it did not keep them from creating and working!

By the end of the week, the three teams finished their part of the films and handed it over to the team of editors at Inclusion Films. They worked all weekend to prepare the films for a sneak peek at the Bentonville Film Festival! May 8. Once again, Cox Communications sponsored a sneak peek, this time at

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The Meteor in Bentonville. The room was filled with students and their families and all were thrilled to see familiar faces on the big screen!

It was a great way to celebrate all the hard work that took place in just one short week. We truly saw students evolve from teens who were maybe a little shy, to teens

who opened up and made new friends quickly. We saw others who weren't sure exactly how their ideas or skills would fit into working with a team, to teens who took their ideas and skills to a new level as they listened to those of fellow teammates. The problem-solving, communicating, decision making and team work skills these

students participated in during film camp will surely carry over into their future education and employment. Cheers to another successful Film Camp and Congratulations to all the campers! Thank you to the districts who were able to help their students experience a week at Film Camp.

2019 AITP Summer Connections

by Paul Johnston



Do you need to know more about agencies that can help your students? Are you not sure where you can go to get this information? Then come to Summer Connections!

Summer Connections is sponsored by the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership (AITP). AITP is a group of agency representatives with a vision of a state that respects and values all individuals with and without disabilities who fully participate together in all life experiences. Through coordination and collaboration of these agencies the mission is to

improve lifelong outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities.

For schools to effectively link students to agencies, they must be aware of these agencies and their services! The AITP recognizes the need for greater awareness and accurate information to school districts. The AITP invites up to five representatives from each district to attend Summer Connections, an important meeting and time to gather information that is critical to students' post-school success. Several agencies, both big and small, will be on hand to present information on services and eligibility requirements and talk one on one with those in attendance. This year we are focusing on students with all types of disabilities, with a little more emphasis on programs for those with severe disabilities.

Please join us at the Crowne Plaza Hotel from 8:30-3:30, (201 S. Shackleford, Little Rock, AR) July 29, 2019, for this excellent opportunity to learn from the agencies first hand! It will be a great opportunity to hear from individuals who have benefited from agency services and to network with other districts, as well as agency representatives. Registration is limited and early registration is encouraged. No registrations will be refunded after July 1, 2019. Registration is on the Arkansas Transition Services website, www.arkansastransition.com, under the Registration tab.

So register yourself and up to 4 of your friends, come to Little Rock July 29th, and be prepared to go back home with lots of great information to help your students!!

Transition & Summer: Going Hand in Hand

by Carrie Tuttle

Summer provides a great opportunity for students to work on various transition skills. There are many areas of transition that can be practiced in the home. Here's a top 10 list:

1. Sort laundry by color, material, etc.
2. Load and run laundry according to directions
3. Wash dishes that can't go in dishwasher
4. Load and run dishwasher, unload after running
5. Dust the furniture
6. Sweep the kitchen
7. Vacuum or sweep all floors
8. Change the bedding on your bed
9. Clean the bathroom
10. Straighten your bedroom

The yard also provides opportunities to gain transition related skills. Consider these ideas:

1. Pick up limbs and other yard debris
2. Trim trees and shrubs
3. Mow the grass to proper height
4. Use weed eater around fences, trees, flower beds
5. Weed flower beds and garden
6. Plant flowers and vegetables
7. Water lawn, flower beds, and garden
8. Clean fencing and decking
9. Learn how to use gas or charcoal grill
10. Pick vegetables as ready for use

The summer also affords students an opportunity to gain additional work-related skills. Here's a few you can recommend they do:

1. Investigate job opportunities in your community
2. Visit workplaces you are interested in
3. Apply for a job on-line
4. Apply for a job in person
5. Practice job interview questions & answers
6. Practice dressing for job interviews
7. If employed, dress properly for the job
8. If employed, be on time daily
9. If employed, demonstrate proper workplace behaviors
10. If employed, open a bank account

Have an idea for an article or a great story about a student, staff member, agency, or program in your school or district that you would like to share?

Let us know so we can include it in the next edition! Email: jennifer.bibel@arkansas.gov