

District Spotlight Thanksgiving in Harrisburg

by Jennifer Williams

The staff of Harrisburg High School was recently treated to a Thanksgiving feast. The meal was planned, prepared, and served by the students in the transition classes. In the planning process, students searched recipes, made shopping lists, and determined the amount of supplies needed. The classes took a field trip to the local grocery store where they compared product pricing to stay within their budget and purchased the items necessary for their meal. During the meal prep, students practiced food handling/kitchen safety skills, teamwork, measurement, and following directions to prepare their recipes. The staff was invited to eat during their lunch period during which the students served and cleaned up afterwards. The teachers were very complimentary of the hard work the students put into planning and preparing the meal. There were many full stomachs and smiling faces all around!!



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Opportunities for Work-Based Learning - Quickly Growing in Arkansas!

by Bonnie Boaz

It has been an incredibly busy first semester as I'm sure you all would agree! Many of you might remember that last May we began promoting the Opportunities for Work-based Learning (OWL) program as a collaboration of schools, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Arkansas Transition Services. This collaboration is about providing work experiences for students with disabilities while they are in high school. Work experience is a predictor of post-school success, with research proving that when a student has work experience in high school they are five times more likely to be employed when they leave high school! That is a number that keeps us working hard to help you make these programs work!

After an informational/planning session last June, the applications began coming in. A committee of ARS and ATS representatives reviewed the applications and in the end, sixteen schools' proposals were accepted as part of the OWL program! The work quickly began and it has not slowed down! We have been so impressed with the planning and ideas that are coming to fruition in your districts and that are leading to students with disabilities getting the much needed work experience. There other districts who are contracting with a Community Resource Provider in their area to help provide Pre-Employment Transition Services. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services provides funds to these CRPs for those services, once their proposal is approved. If you will remember, after the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandated that vocational rehabilitation agencies allocate 15% of their total funds toward providing transition services. That has been a challenge for VR agencies around the country, as they were not given MORE money, but directed to adjust spending to all the different areas of service they provide. We are fortunate in Arkansas to have great colleagues at ARS who understand the importance of providing Pre-Employment Transition Services, and have worked hard to make it happen.

While Transition Classes have been in place in some schools for years, adding the work experience component is new to most schools. There have definitely been some bumps along the way, but that was expected with this brand new program and all the logistics involved. We are happy to say that it feels the road is getting a little smoother and we love hearing all the success stories you are reporting! ARS and ATS continue to provide informational sessions on OWL for those who are considering starting a program. ARS has been great about providing periodic "check and connect" calls for those schools who have OWL programs. This provides an opportunity to ask questions, ensure schools are on the right track, get ideas, discuss different strategies to help overcome barriers, and to hear success stories!

Here are some numbers for your review just for the first quarter of reporting from 16 districts who are providing the Pre-Employment Transition Services in the OWL program:

Total # of students served in the OWL program: 349

Total # participating in on-campus work experience: 1420

Total # participating in off-campus work experience: 1447

Total # of districts implementing a school-based enterprise: 6

Total # of students participating in the SBEs: 80

Wow! It is so exciting to see these numbers and they will grow for sure! What a difference it makes when we all work together!

We will be setting up some informational sessions in the New Year and will pass those dates on to you! In the meantime, if you have questions let us know! Also, be on the lookout for a NEW application for those interested in starting a program in the 2018-2019 school year!

OWL Success Story

by Alma School District

The OWL Program has already made a difference in school districts across Arkansas! A high school junior in the Alma School District was struggling to make good decisions, and was often absent from class. Once the Transition program began, he visited with VR Counselor, Christina Clausen, he began to understand the importance of the Transition program. He is now making an effort to be responsible both at school and in the community. Through the "Me" curriculum, he is learning how to self-advocate and is realizing that he can have a bright and promising future if he continues to set goals for himself. His attendance has improved and he has begun to participate in after school events with Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at High School football games. We can't hear enough of these stories and will keep telling them as you tell us!

Healthcare Needs Assessment

by Carrie Tuttle

Do you know how knowledgeable your students are about their personal healthcare needs? Many of our students have healthcare needs that they need to be able to independently manage. All students need to manage their health in general, whether they need supports or not. Healthcare transition is an area that sometimes is overlooked, but it is one of the most important! If our students aren't healthy, they may not be as successful in reaching their goals. There is also the consideration of transitioning from pediatric healthcare to adult healthcare that cannot be forgotten. One method of determining their knowledge and skills in this area is using the **Healthcare Transition Readiness Assessment** that you can find on our website in the Assessment section.

This assessment is quick and simple and asks the student's questions related to their knowledge and readiness to manage their own healthcare needs. If you identify deficit areas, you then have the ability to write activities into the Transition Plan for the upcoming academic year that will assist the student in being more independent in this area.

There are four areas that are addressed in the **Healthcare Transition Readiness Assessment**:

1. Knowledge of Health Issues/Diagnosis
2. Being Prepared
3. Taking Charge
4. After Age 18

This assessment is a great option for all students. It is essential that our students of all cognitive levels become as independent as possible in being knowledgeable and responsible for meeting their healthcare needs.

Each newsletter we will alternate putting the spotlight on an exceptional district or an exceptional student in transition. If you would like to submit one of these, please let us know! Our next newsletter deadline is **Feb 1**.

Game of Life Transition Fair

by Lisa Washington

In the continued effort to support and prepare high school students with disabilities for work, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014) has provided the means for additional collaboration between agencies across the State of Arkansas with the opportunity to expand transition services in the five focus areas of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS). PreETS are the, "earliest set of VR services" student can access to explore vocational opportunities and receive training and other supports to achieve meaningful employment outcomes after high school graduation.

With supports from the District VI Field Manager, Gaye Jones-Washington,

vocational rehab counselors and the community, Tynesha Ivory hosted an event for area high school students/teachers and parents to the first community block party in Hot Springs. Committed to creating more meaningful and innovative activities for transition services for area high school students has become priority #1. "The purpose of the event was to expose high school students to local resources and other service providers they (students) could utilize as they begin to prepare for their lives post-high school."

Students from Garland, Hot Spring, Clark, and Pike Counties were tasked to navigate their way to each "station" (representing a stage in life), where they were given different scenarios of life that required students to do some "adulting" by making decisions based

on their individual profiles and careers. The event has received positive feedback from the participants--from the students as well as the community service providers. Tynesha is already planning on ways to improve and expand this event to include more counties in her district.

*Visit our website for additional WIOA Facts at:
<http://www.arkansastransition.com/images/wioa%20facts.pdf>

**Based on the top 25 job demands currently in Arkansas:
<https://www.dws.arkansas.gov/>



Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Presents
**Game of Life
 Transition Fair**

Sponsored by



IPSE Summit

by Bonnie Boaz

If you have ever helped an individual with an intellectual disability plan for life after high school, you may have struggled along the way. There is a great need for more programs for students with intellectual disabilities at the post-secondary level. Over the last few years, interest in Arkansas has grown to include programs in the post-secondary education setting. There are many students who would benefit from the opportunity to be a part of a program on a college campus, but who currently don't have the opportunity.

I recently attended the Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Summit at the University of Central Arkansas. The IPSE Summit's purpose was to educate stakeholders on how an IPSE program can provide for the needs of students with intellectual disabilities and help prepare them to work and live in their communities. It was also their goal to encourage other institutions to explore and learn how IPSE programs can benefit the institutions, both financially and in the spirit of diversity.

The University of Memphis for Intellectual Disabilities, UMID, is one of 25 Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs currently funded by the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). The movement towards inclusive post-secondary programs for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are a direct

outcome of the Higher Education Act of 2008, which defined Comprehensive Transition Programs. If a program is at CTP, then students could apply for federal financial aid.

These programs can provide the opportunity for individuals with intellectual disabilities to receive services on a college campus that will help prepare them for work. There are many other opportunities as well: opportunities for socialization with peers without disabilities, the opportunity to be a part of programs and clubs that are only available on the college campus, the chance to live away from their parents, and many other opportunities including making choices and decisions on their own (with some support as appropriate of course).

As I write this, there are 268 Institutes of Higher Education in our country that have chosen to develop postsecondary education programs, serving over 6,000 students. Arkansas has the opportunity to join in this movement. Arkansas currently has four programs that are included in the Think College network, some of which are CTPs: the 3D program at Pulaski Tech (a CTP), The Academic and Career Achievement Program or "ACAP" program at South Arkansas Community College (a CTP), Launch at the U of A, and Empower at the U of A and We will keep you posted as progress is made and updates are available.

Greenwood Transition Program

by: Zach Johnson, Assessor; Sebastian County Assessor's Office

We at the Assessor's office have been extremely pleased and honored to participate in the Transition program, alongside the Greenwood School District. The Transition program was designed to enhance the student's experience inside a work environment, while partnering them with local businesses in the community to help develop skills necessary to succeed. While this is true, the program has meant so much more than that to our team. We have been able to work alongside some great young adults who have taught us how to look at things from a different perspective. This has helped us to evolve as an office and provide better service to our customers. This is a great opportunity for local businesses in the community to get involved and to meet the future work force for our area. I would highly recommend becoming a part of this program.

Mapping Your Path to Success: Scavenger Hunt Transition Fair

by Darlene A. Owens, M.Ed., CRC
Pre-ETS Counselor

The Department of Career Education/Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Little Rock Field Office hosted its first Transition Fair on November 9, 2017. The event was held at Noah's Event Center 21 Rahlings Circle, Little Rock, and AR. The **Purpose/Theme:** Under the leadership of the Little Rock Field office District Manager, Ms. Robin Hunt, the local field office staff took on this opportunity of planning and coordinating this event. A lot of team effort and planning went into making this event a very successful one. Ms. Lakera Davis and myself, Darlene Owens, were the planning committee co-chairs. "MAPPING YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS" SCAVENGER HUNT was the theme of the transition fair. This theme was chosen because we wanted the students to look at life as an adventure. We wanted the students to look at the resources available to them to help them understand how they could guide and support their future. We didn't want this to be just another field trip, but to cause the students to really think about the choices they make in preparing for the future, and to see where they are in process and what is missing and what they can access to give them direction. As the students checked in, they were given a scavenger hunt form which contained 10 questions for them to answer by reading the questions and visiting the appropriate vendor booth and receive resources and the vendor signature. They were required to attend two career highlights as well. Once they completed the scavenger hunt form they could submit it for lunch and receive a ticket for a door prize entry. **Vendors:** We had 30 plus vendors attend the transition fair. Those in attendance included: AR Baptist College, UALR Disability and Admissions, UA Monticello, Pulaski Technical College, UCA, US Army, AR National Guard, PRIDE Industries, AEDD, Adult Ed, AR Transportation Services, AR Health Careers, Workforce Services, Services for the Blind, Access Schools, TEEM Academy, CADS Think Work 1st, ARS Services, ICAN, AR Kidney Disease Commission, AR Promise, APSE, Fire Department, Workforce Employment Bus, New Tyler Barber College, ACTI Admissions, Project Search, Medlinc, Paul Mitchell. **Schools Attended:** We had approximately 350 students to attend the transition fair. The high schools that

attended were Arkansas School for the Deaf, Central High School, Mills High School, Robinson High School, J A Fair, Lisa Academy, Quest Academy, Premier Academy, ACC/Metro, McClellan, ESTEM, Hall High School. **Catering:** The food was catered by Honey Baked Ham. **Career Highlights:** The career highlights was a segment where we invited different professionals to present to small groups of students their career paths and give the students opportunities to ask questions. Each presenter was scheduled 15 to 20 minute intervals and the students rotated in and out. Once the students completed their forms, they visited the Workforce bus and the fire truck for tours. **The Format:** The set up for the vendors/exhibit was set up in in the form of street names. We named each street as a way to give the students some clues for the scavenger hunt. We grouped each of the vendors in one of the 5 core services of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Those five core areas are; Job Exploration, Counseling on Post-Secondary Training Opportunities, Self-Advocacy, Work-Based Learning and Work Experience. **Thank You:** The support of our administration, Dr. Charisse Childress, Director; Mr. Allan McClain, Commissioner; Mr. Carl Daughtery, Chief of Field Services; Dr. Adrienne Robinson, Deputy Director; and Ms. Robin Hunt, District Manager, all of the LR Field Staff, Volunteer Field Staff from other districts, Vendors, Schools and Students was essential for the success of this event! It was well worth all of the planning that went into make this a success. Thank you All!!!



Red Carpet Film Premiere

by Lisa Washington



Lights! Camera! Action!

It was a black tie affair on the red carpet as supporters from across Arkansas converged on the North West Arkansas Community College campus for the event of the year for the Inclusion Films Camp premier of --- "The Bizarre Zone!" As the stars (aka campers) along with their family and friends made their way down the red carpet, cameras flashed and fans clamored to get autographs from the films' stars for what has been said will set precedence for future film camps in Arkansas. Inside the auditorium, the audience was electric with anticipation and excitement as the lights went dim, the screen lit up and the film began to roll.

For those of you who know of a student who would be interested in participating, the 2018 film camp is in the planning stages and has a date set for April 23-27, 2018, at the NWACC Campus. Applications will be available online at www.arkansastransition.com and will be available in January 2018, so be on the lookout!

Until then..... see you on the red carpet! Check out these links for more on Inclusion Films and the film camp:

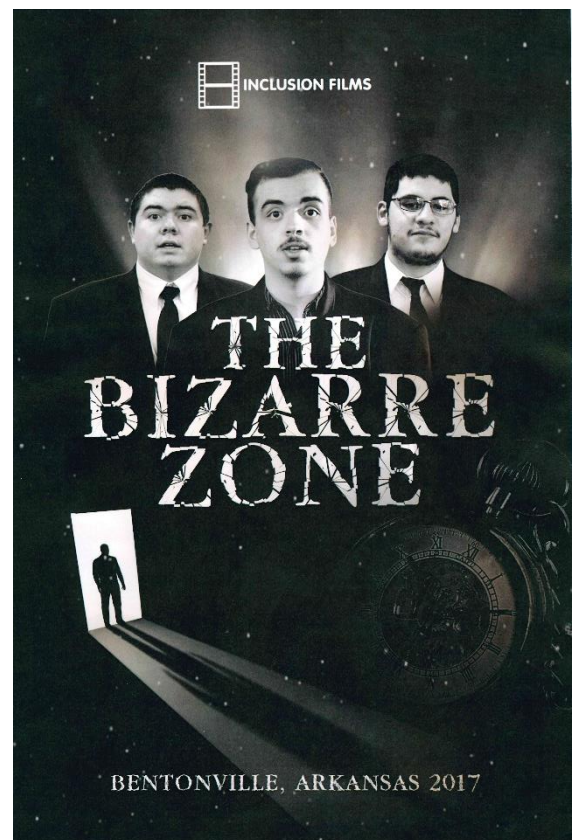
<https://www.inclusionfilms.com/thereel/>

<http://arcareereducation.org/news/blog/2017/09/15/film-camp-premiere-to-be-held-october-5th-6-9-pm-in-bentonville-featuring-student-filmmakers>

<https://talkbusiness.net/2017/04/inclusion-films-camp-at-nwacc-builds-skills-for-disabled-youth/>

<http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2017/apr/28/inclusion-film-camp-for-teens-comes-to-/>

http://www.futures-explored.org/film_camp_home.htm



Project SEARCH® Arkansas: ACCESS® Initiative Coming to University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in Fall 2018

by: Karen Randolph

Project SEARCH® Arkansas: ACCESS® Initiative in partnership with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services is an innovative job-training program, providing a nine-month internship for young adults ages 18-35 with developmental disabilities. The program is in partnership with ACCESS, a 501c3 non-profit offering evaluation services, full-time education, therapy, training and activities for individuals ages 6 weeks-35 years with language and learning disabilities, as well as Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

The goal for interns is to gain competitive employment skills through classroom and on-the-job training at various sites available in Arkansas. The University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) has been selected to be the first non-medical site in our state to offer a Project SEARCH program, and we are excited that young adults will receive employment training at our higher

education establishment. The program is also available in five medical facilities: two in Little Rock – the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas Children’s Hospital; Ouachita County Medical Center in Camden; St. Bernard’s Medical Center in Jonesboro; Mercy Hospital in Fort Smith; and CHI St. Vincent in Hot Springs. CHI St. Vincent’s Hot Springs program is a school-based model for students still in high school in three districts in the Hot Springs area: Hot Springs School District, Lakeside School District and Fountain Lake School District.

The UAPB Project SEARCH’s steering committee, which consists of various community, university, school district leaders and agencies, convened on campus the first two days in November to discuss timelines and program operations. Now young adults with disabilities in our state, have more opportunities to apply for

the Project SEARCH Arkansas: ACCESS Initiative program to best fit their post-secondary goal or desired location.

Those who are interested may apply online at

www.projectsearcharkansas.org.

Applications are available now for all Project SEARCH Arkansas: ACCESS Initiative locations. The deadline for all applications to be submitted is January 31st, 2018. Those who apply will go through an interview and assessment process sometime later in the spring to determine who is eligible. If you know of any young adults who may benefit from the Project SEARCH Arkansas: ACCESS Initiative program, please direct them online to apply.

To learn more about Project SEARCH Arkansas: ACCESS Initiative, visit www.projectsearch.org. To learn more about ACCESS, visit www.accessgroupinc.org.