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BUSINESS Connections

VCU

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Comments from the Director

It has been a few short months since Howard Green retired from VCU and Paul Wehman asked me to take over the management of our Business Connection services. As someone who began her career as a “trainer advocate” (for the young people that is what we use to call an Employment Specialist) it seems very natural. I still get excited about someone’s first day of work or a new business relationship. Of course 25 years ago we did not have DRS authorizing intervention hours or a program called Partnership Plus, so there has been a learning curve.

VCU’s Business Connections, like other CRPs in Virginia, is faced with Order of Selection with all categories being closed. So while everything in the program was initially moving at a break neck speed, authorizations have slowed and we have delayed plans for hiring of new staff. When we are not busy searching for jobs we are using this lull in services to develop new and stronger business relationships and to document some of the exciting outcomes that we have helped individuals with significant disabilities to achieve. For example, on the second page we have highlighted how we use job restructuring to improve employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities. To learn more about additional VCU-RRTC articles and projects visit our website at www.worksupport.com.

Vicki Brooke

VCU-RRTC Business Connections
Director of Employment Services
vbrooke@vcu.edu
804.828.1873



Notable News for VCU-RRTC

We are excited to introduce Rachael Rounds! Rachael is the newest employment specialist joining the VCU RRTC team in November, 2010. She received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from VCU. Rachael has direct service and administrative experience in the supported employment field. Her caseload consists of primarily Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services and Department for the Blind and Visual Impaired customers. Rachael earned ACRE-certification through the supported employment web-based certificate series in 2011. We hope you have the opportunity to work with her in the near future!

Using Job Restructuring to Improve Employment Outcomes



VCU-RRTC JOB COACHES

At VCU-RRTC, we know that the best job match for an individual may not always be listed in the wanted ads or on the popular job search engines. Our goal is to support individuals with significant disabilities in locating long-term employment in a position that meets their interests, skills and abilities. To accomplish this goal, our talented staff of employment specialists, pictured to the left, regularly work with businesses to restructure job opportunities.

Among the individuals who were supported in employment in the past year, 10 are working in positions that were significantly restructured or carved to meet the needs of the employer as well as the specific talents of the jobseeker. The table below provides a listing of job titles and primary functions of the created job. Additionally, please read Maurice G's Success Story to the right, which highlights his customized position with Conner Brothers Collision Center.

Examples of Carved Jobs

Shop Support Technician – Automotive Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Light custodial work in main shop and front offices - Remove trash and debris from property - Wash and detail cars before final delivery to customer
Greeter at Craft Store - Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greets all customers at front door - Directs them to appropriate location and answers questions - Distributes and returns shopping carts
Food Prep. Team Member – Retail/Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare quesadillas and Panini sandwiches according to restaurant recipes - Assist with cleaning kitchen and dining areas as needed
Back Room Associate - Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unpackage new clothing items after removal from truck - Lays clothing out in piles according to department - Sorts items and hangs clothing
Infection Control – Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stocks isolation carts (with gloves, gowns, and masks) throughout the hospital - Cleans & replaces hand sanitizer machines throughout the hospital
Teacher's Assistant – Hospital's Family Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assigned to different classrooms to provide assistance working with the children, playing games, preparing art projects - One day a week works in the kitchen to prepare lunch for the students
Central Sterile – Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peel packing instruments to be sterilized - Transporting case carts - Stocking supplies
Nutrition Services – Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removes trash and boxes from kitchen and brings to the dumpster - Scraps patient trays & operates dishwashing machine - Wipes down tables & chairs in cafeteria & sweeps floors cleans bathrooms
Intensive Care Unit – Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stocks bedside carts, syringes & needles - Removes soiled linen from the room - Transports deliveries to lab as needed
Environmental Services Team Member – Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stock supply closets throughout hospital - Remove boxes from each floor in hospital & bring to the trash compactor

SUCCESS Story



Maurice G. was hired by Conner Brothers Collision Center in November 2010 as a shop support technician. In addition to school-based work experience, Maurice completed vocational training programs in the Virginia Community College System. Maurice's strengths included a strong work ethic and desire to try new vocational experiences.

Conner Brothers worked with VCU-RRTC job coach, Chandler Moore, to design a position for Maurice at their Hull Street shop.

Maurice performs light custodial work and also helps wash and detail cars. This position requires attention to detail, as well as stamina and skills with basic shop tools. The Conner Brothers technicians worked closely with Maurice as he learned the shop routine.

Hull Street manager, Scott Faulkner, has been impressed with Maurice's abilities and willingness to work. He stated, "Maurice fits in well with the team here at Conner Brothers. He has specific janitorial duties that he performs twice a week, and these chores are done solo. Once they are complete, Maurice will check in with me for any additional tasks. He is most willing to help out when and where he can. Maurice is often paired with our "Parts / Detail" technician Jonathan, and together they clean and prep freshly repaired vehicles, check in and label parts, and take care of larger cleaning projects.

We were so impressed with Maurice's abilities and willingness to work that we offered him another shift at a second Conner Brothers location."



Business Connections
 VCU-RRTC
 1314 West Main Street
 Richmond, VA 23284
 Vicki Brooke: 804.828.1873
vbroke@vcu.edu
www.worksupport.com