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# Transition Works

*Where your future begins*

## Nebraska VR

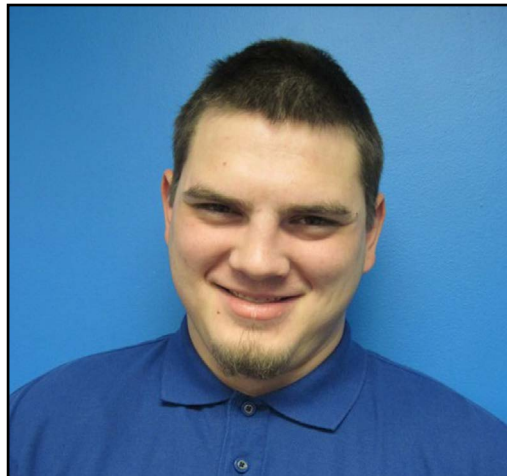
Nebraska Department of Education

## A Student's Story: The Turn-Around

Rusty Foster is a young man who, at age 19, has already turned his life around. At 17, Rusty was homeless and at risk of becoming a high school dropout. He moved out of his father's home and bounced from friend to friend with his few personal possessions to find a place to stay. Add to this the fact that he was in trouble with the law and it was clear his life was not on the right track.

Rusty has a learning disability in reading and math. By the time he reached his final year at North Platte High School, he was struggling with school and trying to figure out his next steps. He considered college to become an auto mechanic, but lacked funds. Then, Nebraska VR Employment Specialist Katie Cain suggested Project SEARCH as a way to build work skills and develop job references. Rusty liked the possibilities this offered.

Project SEARCH is a partnership between Nebraska VR, businesses, schools, and other agencies that provides work experience for students with disabilities to help transition from high school into the workplace. North Platte's Project SEARCH site is at the Walmart Distribution Center and combines classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training in various areas within the warehouse facility.



~Rusty Foster

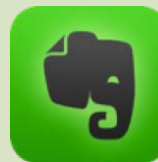
After Rusty made it through the application and interview process, Katie assisted him in getting together documents needed for employment such as Social Security and ID cards. Meanwhile, he worked on gaining confidence and skills on the job. He is especially pleased with the progress he's made in communication skills. Rusty explains he didn't know how to reach out for help and was afraid to talk in front of others. Dee Tuenge, Project SEARCH Instructor for North Platte Public Schools, says Rusty is "not only capable of asking for help, but is now able to offer and give others great advice." Rusty says, without Project SEARCH, he would not have stayed in school. After graduating in 2013, he was offered a full-time job at the Distribution Center. He says it's physically hard working 12-14 hour shifts three days a week, but he enjoys the challenge. (Continued on page 3)

## What's Appening



### StudyBlue

Want to study on the go? The StudyBlue app has over 150 million flashcards from colleges and high schools around the world. You can view a set of flashcards anywhere, any time and quickly study the topic of your choice. You may share with classmates, discuss, and ask questions directly through the app. Teachers can use StudyBlue to create flashcard decks and assign them to their students. Even if you only have a few minutes to spare, you have time to study!



### Evernote

Need help getting organized? Evernote lets you take notes, capture photos, create to-do lists, and record voice reminders whether you are at home, school, work, or on the go. Keep track of your homework assignments, snap a photo of the whiteboard at school, or record a reminder. You can even share this information with others through e-mail, Facebook or Twitter. Check it out!

*Both apps are free for iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, and Adroid devices.*





## Employers Speak

It is important students understand the expectations of employers as they prepare to enter the world of work. Here are some simple tips for success provided by a Nebraska employer.

**Tip #1:** If you are asked to come to a business to interview, make sure you know these things BEFORE you hang up the phone:

1. Time of the interview.
2. Where you need to report (main lobby, cafeteria, service entrance, etc.).
3. Name of the person you are supposed to meet for the interview.

Knowing these details shows that you are reliable and can follow directions.

**Tip #2:** An interview is not the time to talk about your personal life or your personal problems. The person interviewing you has a job they need to fill and needs to find the best person for that job. An interview is a professional setting. You need to talk about why you are the best person for the job and what you can bring to the company.

**Tip #3:** Dress appropriately for an interview. Make sure your clothes are clean and not wrinkled and that you have showered. If you would wear an item of clothing to go to a party, wash your car, or go to the gym, it's not appropriate to wear to an interview. By making sure you are well groomed and dressed nicely, you will make a good first impression on a prospective employer. A good first impression says that you are taking the interview, and the job, seriously.

Source: Amy Phelps, PHR  
Saint Francis Medical Center, Grand Island

## FAQs

*Frequently Asked Questions from parents, students, and educators*

**Q: Must a student be receiving Special Education services to be eligible for Nebraska VR services?**

A: No. A student may have a disability that does not qualify for Special Education services and still be eligible for VR services. This may include disabilities that are not readily apparent, such as arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome, epilepsy, kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, chronic depression, and learning disabilities, among others.

**Q: How do we find out if a student is eligible for Nebraska VR services?**

A: Ask a teacher, guidance counselor, or school administrator to put you in touch with the VR employment specialist assigned to your school. The employment specialist will then lead the process to determine eligibility. If eligible, the student's parent or legal guardian must sign a VR Application before services can begin.

Learn more about how to qualify for Nebraska VR services at: [vr.nebraska.gov/job\\_seekers/who\\_we\\_serve.html](http://vr.nebraska.gov/job_seekers/who_we_serve.html).



## A Student's Story: The Turn-Around

(Continued from page 1)

Rusty is excited when talking about his future. He wants to continue working at the Distribution Center, although someday may again consider college to become an auto mechanic. Dee Tuenge says, "Rusty has become a confident young man...and is a positive community member. He has worked hard to make positive changes in his life. Rusty understands the importance of setting goals, taking the steps to achieve them, making positive life decisions, and surrounding himself with positive individuals." It is clear that all of these factors have resulted in a turn-around for Rusty!

### Want to know more?

Visit Nebraska VR's website to learn more about Project SEARCH and the program sites located across Nebraska: [http://vr.nebraska.gov/partners/project\\_search.html](http://vr.nebraska.gov/partners/project_search.html)



## The Facts About Assistive Technology

Assistive technology, have you heard of it? This is a broad term that refers to equipment, devices or services to help an individual complete tasks as safely and independently as possible. While assistive technology (AT) is not a new concept, many people do not know about it or fully understand the potential it holds.

The Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) is an important resource for unlocking this potential. With offices across the state, ATP Educational Specialists are available to provide training and technical assistance, as well as locate equipment and funding for assistive technology for children with disabilities (birth to 21). ATP also provides services for adults with disabilities to assist them in identifying and locating equipment and services.

Let's take a brief look at a few myths and facts about assistive technology.

**Myth** Assistive technology is an "extra" that really isn't necessary.

**Fact** Almost 30 years of research and experience show that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective through the use of assistive technology. AT can enhance the lives of adults with disabilities, supporting them in being independent and productive members of their communities.

**Myth** Assistive technology is always complicated.

**Fact** Assistive technology can include low tech and low cost solutions such as pencil grips, simple communication charts or boards, large print books, or calendars/planners to assist with organization.

**Myth** Most people cannot afford assistive technology.

**Fact** Yes, AT can be costly. Specialized computer devices, wheelchairs or modifications to the school, home, or workplace (such as ramps or lifts) are expensive. However, there are many resources available to assist in the funding of these items.

**Myth** Parents are on their own to find assistive technology for their child.

**Fact** State and federal regulations require the Individual Education Program (IEP) team to consider whether assistive technology is necessary for the student to achieve educational goals, benefit from education, and make reasonable progress. The team must identify the AT to be used and determine how it will be made available for the student. As team members, parents provide valuable information in this decision making process.

Contact Nebraska ATP by calling toll free 888-806-6287 (Lincoln) or 800-652-0033 (Cozad). Visit their website at: <http://www.atp.nebraska.gov>.



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# Nebraska VR School Contact List

## Who is working with students at your local high school?

Find the Nebraska VR Employment Specialist working with student referrals for each Nebraska high school at: [http://vr.nebraska.gov/youth/for\\_schools.html](http://vr.nebraska.gov/youth/for_schools.html). Contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions by e-mail at: [marketingteam.vr@nebraska.gov](mailto:marketingteam.vr@nebraska.gov).

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## Connect with Us

Nebraska VR has a long history of providing transition services for youth with disabilities as they transition from school to work. We partner with parents, schools, and employers to help students prepare for the future. *Transition Works*, published by Nebraska VR, is intended for students with disabilities and their families, as well as educators.

Find additional resources for students at:  
[vr.nebraska.gov/youth](http://vr.nebraska.gov/youth)

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