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Transition Works

Where your future begins

Nebraska VR

Nebraska Department of Education

A Student's Story: A Community of Support

There is a consistent theme when talking with others about Lupe Valle. Everyone mentions his smile. However, Lupe's success has come through hard work, determination, and a strong community of support.

As a child growing up in Texas, he had little formal education or training. When he moved to Nebraska at age 15, he had few communication, reading, and math skills. As the only deaf person when he enrolled in Kimball High School, he needed an interpreter but had no sign language skills. He advocated for an interpreter to help him be a member of the football team. In addition to assisting Lupe directly, interpreter Connie Dietrich, taught a sign language course for students, teachers, and others to help them communicate with him. This is just one example of the community of support surrounding Lupe.

Lupe's community of support expanded when he enrolled in LifeLink in Scottsbluff. This transition program provides opportunities for students with disabilities, ages 18-21, to prepare for employment and independent living. Lupe had a goal of becoming a welder like his brother, so he enrolled in the Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) welding program. Using a classroom interpreter, he took Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes to improve his reading and communication skills.



~LupeValle

Randy Thurston, ABE instructor at WNCC, worked alongside his interpreter to help Lupe learn American Sign Language and written English. It wasn't always easy and Randy reports that sometimes it was very discouraging. But, they celebrated accomplishments such as when Lupe learned how to communicate with the HandiBus to schedule transportation. Welding instructor, Dean Rindels, also worked closely to support Lupe, describing him as "always happy, with a twinkle in his eye, and friends with everyone." (Continued on page 3)

What's Appening



VoCal XL

Need voice reminders to complete tasks? VoCal XL creates calendar entries using your voice rather than typing. You can also set activity reminders for certain times of the day. Reminder sounds can be customized with your own voice. The audio calendar allows for repeat reminders and a full calendar view!



Collegiate Dictionary

Want a tool for reference, education, and vocabulary building? Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary app offers voice search that allows you to look up a word without having to spell it. You can find synonyms, antonyms, example sentences, Word of the Day, and more. The voice search feature will help you find definitions and use the integrated thesaurus.

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





Employers Speak

It is important students understand the expectations of employers as they prepare to enter the world of work. We've asked Nebraska employers to provide some simple tips for success. Whether you're a high school student, an educator, or a parent - read on!

Tip #1: Be on time!

Tip #2: Dress appropriately.

Tip #3: Be respectful. Always say please and thank you.

Tip #4: Sit up straight and look at the person speaking to you.

Tip #5: Take your time answering questions — don't panic.

Tip #6: If you do not understand something, ask questions.

Tip #7: Be honest.

Tip #8: Do not have anything in your mouth during an interview.

Source: Gayle Sutherland, Human Resources Manager
Allmand Bros., Inc.
Holdrege, Nebraska

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions from parents, students, and educators

Q: What is the role of Nebraska VR in transition planning?

A: Nebraska VR works with students with disabilities to prepare for life after graduation. To help these students plan for their employment future, Nebraska VR cooperates with schools across Nebraska to provide services.

This helps students move from school into a job, post-secondary education, or other services upon graduation from high school.

Q: Should a student participate in transition planning?

A: Transition planning is most effective when the student is involved. Students involved in the planning are more likely to take responsibility for carrying out the transition plan and have a sense of control over the outcome of the plan.

The process provides opportunities to learn about strengths and skills, as well as the disability and its impact on work, learning, and independence. Discussions will include information about the accommodations needed at a job and in the future.



A Student's Story: A Community of Support

(Continued from page 1)

Throughout Lupe's journey, Nebraska VR has been at the center of his community of support. They assisted with career planning and evaluation in high school; provided financial assistance for college, tools and transportation, purchased an iPad and other devices for communication and independent living through the Assistive Technology Partnership, and provided placement and on-the-job training services. Nebraska VR Specialist Nicole Fisher notes, "There was a tremendous amount of coordination between programs, it was truly a community effort."

Lupe graduated from WNCC with a Certificate in Welding and recently completed on-the-job training as a welder at Scottsbluff Industries, where he now works full time. Gunther Koob at Scottsbluff Industries recalls that he initially had concerns about employing Lupe. One related to safety due to his hearing impairment and the other was communication. Lupe now works in an area where safety concerns are addressed and a co-worker and interpreter worked together to develop methods of communicating with him.

What's next? Lupe says he wants to "be the best employee he can be" and continue to learn welding skills. Lupe has certainly proven that with determination and a community of support, there are many possibilities!

The Facts About Project SEARCH

Great things happen when a partnership exists for the benefit of others. An example of this is the work being done between Nebraska VR, Nebraska businesses, area school systems, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Assistive Technology Partnership, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The Project SEARCH experience includes a combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations with the goal of competitive employment for people with disabilities.

Let's take a brief look at a few myths and facts about Project SEARCH.

Myth Project SEARCH doesn't exist in Nebraska.

Fact Nebraska VR has fourteen Project SEARCH partnership sites across the state. Business partnerships include a retail distribution center, hotels, and hospital work settings.

Myth Project SEARCH is just like any other high school experience.

Fact Project SEARCH is a seriously unique high school transition program that provides real-life work experience to help youth with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to adult life. Each student participates in three 10-week internships during the school year. In each rotation the student learns job-specific skills while having the opportunity to put employability skills into practice. Monthly progress meetings are held to help students define their career goal and to plan necessary steps to achieve that goal.

Myth There is no specific goal for Project SEARCH participants.

Fact The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total workplace immersion in a large business. For five days a week students report to the host business, learn employability skills in the classroom, and job skills while participating in a variety of work experiences. Students end their day by reflecting, problem solving, planning, and journaling key learning points. The goal upon program completion and graduation is to utilize skills acquired during the internship for gainful employment.

Myth Any high school student can participate in Project SEARCH.

Fact Students who have completed their academic requirements may apply if they are in their last year of high school. Each interested student is required to make a formal application to the program and to interview with a selection committee. Students are selected through a rating process by a committee consisting of representatives of a school, Nebraska VR, and the Project SEARCH host business. All students must be eligible for services with Nebraska VR.

Contact Nebraska VR by calling toll free 877-637-3422 or find an office near you at: <http://vr.nebraska.gov/offices/index.html>.



VR

Nebraska VR

Jobs Driven Training Strategies

Are there more opportunities for hands-on training for students and adults with disabilities?

Certificate Programs, inspired by the Project SEARCH concept, offer hands-on training programs for students and adults with disabilities. The programs are business driven, short term, real life trainings that teach both technical hard skills and soft skills giving workers the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to pursue in-demand jobs and careers.

Learn more about Certificate Programs: http://vr.nebraska.gov/partners/certificate_programs.html. Contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions by email at: marketingteam.vr@nebraska.gov.

Nebraska VR
Department of Education
State of Nebraska
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

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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

Nebraska VR
PO Box 949847
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
Toll Free: 877-637-3422



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Nebraska VR - *Where your future begins*