Introducing Youth to the Working World

Transition Learning Center/South
431 Olean Road
Suite B/WOW
East Aurora, NY 14052

Transition Learning Center/North
2495 Main Street
Suite 422/WOW
Buffalo, NY 14214
Aspire of WNY, Inc.

History

- Formerly known as the Cerebral Palsy Association of Western New York, founded on September 19, 1947.
- Provides a broad range of services to nearly 3,400 children and adults with developmental and similar disabilities.
- Currently operates in more than 60 program sites throughout Erie, Niagara and Chautauqua counties of Western New York.
- Second largest human services agency operating in WNY
- **Aspire Mission:** Support children and adults with developmental and related disabilities, helping them to live their lives to the fullest by providing individualized assistance based on personal choices.
- **Services Provided:** Education and therapeutic services for children and young adults at our Center for Learning in Cheektowaga as well as several community-based self-directed and employment services programs to help the people we support find meaningful competitive employment and live as independently as possible.
Transition Services

- World of Work (WOW) Program
- Project Search
- Person Centered Vocational Assessments
  - Schools
    - Level 3
    - CBWA
    - College Support Plans
  - ACCESS-VR
    - Vocational Assessments
    - YES – Youth Employment Services
- Individual/Person Centered Internships
- Post Secondary Educational Coaching
  - Schools
  - ACCES-VR
  - Private Pay
- PROMISE Grant – Cornell Research Project
- Tower Grant with Daemen College
WOW Factors

- Founded in 2011, resulting from district & family round-table conversations
- South towns WOW was piloted with one district in September of 2011
- North towns WOW was piloted with one district in January of 2014
- WOW became a trademarked program in 2014
- Recognized as Best Practice Model in NY State 2014
- Aspire Transition Learning Centers (TLC) evolved 2015
- Currently work with 15 districts 25 local employers in Erie and Niagara County and have had 60 participants
WOW Program Description

- Community-based/Multi-Industry vocational program experience (P/T available)
- Focus on CDOS Credentials (Career Development & Occupational Studies)
- Work with students on the local, regents and alternatively assessed graduation track
- Up to 3 students/WOW Associate
- September – June Academic Calendar Year
- 2 Vocational experiences
- 4 days/week at worksite for 3 hours
- 1 day/week at workshop for 2 hours
- Multi-Year programming available
Application Process

- **WOW District Approval**
  - Must be authorized prior to application submission
  - Communications to be made with Paula Kerber, Coordinator of Student Services & Assessments, regarding District Approval

- **WOW Application of Interest**
  - Application can be completed by district or parent/guardian and submitted by the district
  - Application should be accompanied by a signed Release of Information Authorization
  - Submit Application of Interest and signed Release of Information to Paula Kerber
Application Process

- **Documentation**
  - Review gathered current reports such as IEP’s, Psychological Evaluations, OT/PT/Speech

- **Schedule Visit**
  - Contact district to schedule intake with student and district

- **Interview/Observation**
  - Explain and show WOW PowerPoint demo to student and staff, interview all parties, observe student in multiple settings such as classroom, internships, or other programming

- **Second Visit**
  - At times a student may require a second visit to obtain a full representation
Eligibility Determination

- **Behavior**
  - Conduct oneself in an appropriate manner

- **Independence**
  - Work independently without the need of 100% support from the job coach

- **Interpersonal Skills**
  - Engage in appropriate conversation & behavior

- **Attendance**
  - Ability to attend program for a minimum of 90%

- **Dress Code/Hygiene**
  - Maintain appropriate dress and grooming suitable for the work environment

- **Respect**
  - Respect peers, the job coach, and worksite employees, including property
Final Determination

- **Eligibility/Determination**
  - Eligibility is determined once all observations and documentation has been reviewed
  - Final decision is made by Aspire Coordinator of Student Services & WOW Associates

- **Notification**
  - Determination is sent to district and families within two weeks of the intake/observation
Collaboration & Communication

- **Open Door Policy**
  - Constant collaboration with district, family, MSC, therapies, etc.

- **Open communication**
  - E-mails, Phone calls and monthly reports

- **Monthly documentation**
  - Rubric format and narrative information that discusses student goals, strategies, adaptations or tools being used to promote independence, interventions, personal/employable skills, IEP goals and more
  - Explanation of tasks/jobs and skills developed at the site
  - Student workshop and worksite hours are compiled
Placement & Scheduling

- **Work Site**
  - AM 8 –11 am, PM 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

- **Workshop**
  - AM 9 am – 11 am, PM 12:00 – 2:00 pm

- **AM/PM Session**
  - Student academic/supportive service needs are taken into consideration when scheduling their session placement.

- **Work Site Location**
  - Based on multiple factors such as:
    - Geographic location of all district
    - Number of students attending from district

- **Transportation**
  - Provided by the district
WOW Student Benefits...

- Transferrable skills for post-secondary settings
- CDOS Credential Work-based Learning Hours (tracked and documented by Aspire staff)
- Team-based experiences build vocational and soft skills
- Real-life teachable moments
- Self confidence/advocacy skills
- Real-world employer expectations
District Benefits...

- CDOS Credential Work-based Learning Hours (tracked and documented by Aspire staff to be submitted to State Education)

- Pre- and post- work skills assessments

- Work experience/skills apply to Career Plans, Employability Profiles, and Exit Summaries

- Potential District Reimbursement of program costs (STAC - stackable)
Curriculum

**Vocational Curriculum**
- Employable Skills
- Career Exploration
- Organizational Skills
- Technology

**Personal Skills Curriculum**
- Life Skills
- Communication Skills
- Health & Wellness
- Resources
Over the last 5 years, the WOW program has developed long-term relationships with many local employers.

This collaboration has cultivated a “Win Win” situation for the program, students, and our hosts. Needs of 25 employers are met, while the abilities and interests of the students are explored and developed.
Gardening Industry

Botanical Gardens
- Greenhouse
- Landscaping

Menne Nursery
- Animal care
- Human Resources
TGI Friday’s

- Host/Hostess
- Food Safety
- Food Preparation
- Portion Control
- Inventory Rotation
- Maintenance
- Curb Appeal
Nino’s Pizzeria

- Food Safety
- Food Preparation
- Food Line

- Lobby Attendant
- Maintenance
Bob Evans Restaurant

- Food Preparation
- Food Safety
- Dishwasher

- Host/Hostess
- Bussing
Senior Care Industry
Brompton Heights

- Dining Services
- Laundry Department
- Activities Department
- Chorus
- Exercise & Fitness
- Memory Unit
- Library
- Beauty Parlor
- Hospitality
Hotel Industry
Country Inn & Suites

- Guest Services
- Houseman
- Housekeeping
- Laundry Attendant
- Breakfast Attendant
- Maintenance Assistant
Grocery Industry

Orchard Fresh Market

- Bakery
- Floral
- Coffee Café

- Stock/Inventory
- Produce
- Prepared Foods
Wegmans

- Sub & Sandwich Station
- Coffee & Beverage Station
- Dining Room Attendant
- Prepared Foods
Hospitality Industry

La Galleria

- Landscaping
- General Maintenance
- Servers/Bussers
- Event set-up
- Dishwashing
- Stock/receiving
- Staff support
- Seasonal storage
- Inventory/Quality control
Retail Industry

Savers

- Provide Direct Customer Service
- Warehouse-Shipping & Receiving
- Various Departmental Work
- Recycling, packaging, and storage
- Organization and display of merchandise
- Create/Organize Merchandise End Caps
- Observe banking needs with Q & A
- Observe cashier with Q & A
- General housekeeping

TJ MAXX
Let’s Celebrate...

Annual Celebration Ceremony
Districts ~ Families ~ Guest Speakers
A YEAR OF SUCCESS!

Celebrating the Personal and Vocational Success of the World Of Work Participants
District Testimonials

Amherst CSD
...it is very apparent that your WOW Associates are building meaningful relationships with each of our students, making an impact on their future.

Pioneer CSD
...you not only educate our students to improve pre-vocational skills, you encourage and nurture them in hopes they will develop life-long health goals, thereby impacting their entire future.
“WOW workshop has helped me to be a better employee. I learned how to communicate with my boss and coworkers.” - Ryan

“WOW has not changed my goals for the future, but I feel closer to making them possible.” - Gina

“WOW has helped me learn real job skills, and I am treated like the other workers at my work sites.” - Matthew

“During WOW, I learned that I can be a hard worker, even when I least expect it.” - Shawn
Future Hopes...

- Seeking state and national recognition through franchising
- Continue to expand partnerships with employers and school districts
- Maintain and enhance technological advancements within the work industry and how to apply them
- Reach more families and school districts to expand round table discussions
Thank you for considering...

For more information about Aspire’s WOW Program or Transition Services
Contact Paula Kerber
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