



Project SEARCH Celebrates Nine New Graduates

OAKLAND - Nine people graduated on January 27 in an upbeat ceremony marking the completion of the seventh year of Alameda County's groundbreaking Project SEARCH program, which provides internships and career opportunities to individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.

The graduates said they would begin immediately seeking out permanent employment. Each said they believed their prospects were vastly enhanced by the on-the-job experience they received through Project SEARCH.

One place the graduates will surely look for work is Alameda County, which has a strong track record of hiring internship graduates into full-time jobs. In all, 18 graduates of the County Project SEARCH program have moved on to permanent jobs with Alameda County, while many others have found paid employment elsewhere – including the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and St. Mary's College in Moraga.


Strong supporters of the program include the District Attorney's (DA's) Office and Sheriff's Office, which have both hired several Project SEARCH graduates. Brianna Murray, a Project SEARCH graduate who recently completed her third year with the DA's office, attended the graduation ceremony and told the latest graduates that Project SEARCH has prepared them well for fulfilling employment. "Keep positivity in your life," Brianna said. "That way you can get a great job just like I have."

Project SEARCH has more than 400 distinct programs worldwide championing work opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Alameda County launched the first public sector Project SEARCH program in California in 2009, and it has since become a centerpiece of the County's multifaceted approach to emphasizing diversity and inclusion in its employment practices.

"Every year we get a new group of workers who come in here and set a positive example for the rest of us in terms of professionalism and 'can-do' attitude," said County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi, a champion of the program.

In January, Alameda County was honored by International Project SEARCH for its success in helping to place interns into permanent paid employment. The award came after it was shown that 80 percent of the County's interns in 2015 were placed into permanent jobs.

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