

CTC

College Transition Connection, Inc.

“Learning is for everyone”



www.collegetranstionconnection.org

Summer Newsletter 2010

Welcome! For this newsletter we have asked each school to write a little summary of what they've been up to and how their programs are growing and developing. For additional information on each school, visit the CTC website, www.collegetranstionconnection.org, for links to each school's program and contact information.

College of Charleston Update

The REACH (Realizing Educational and Career Hopes) program at the College of Charleston is a four-year innovative post-secondary program for adults with intellectual disabilities who desire inclusion in the academic, residential, social, and cultural college experience in a supportive environment. The REACH Program embraces the principles of access and equity to all opportunities in society, and promotes the advancement of academic knowledge, social skills, independent living skills, and career options for individuals with disabilities. The structure of the program most closely aligns with the inclusive individual support model described by Hart, Grigal, Sax, Martinex, and Will (2006). With support from a CTC grant, the REACH program will commence in the Fall of 2010, and students will begin their freshman year by engaging in person-centered-planning with our new REACH program director, Edie Cusack. The REACH program will be tailored to meet the individual needs of each student, though we anticipate that the typical REACH student will enroll in two inclusive courses and one support course (as needed) each term. Within the inclusive courses, each REACH student will participate in the full curriculum with typical peers, but will be responsible for

learning a portion of that curriculum, with assignments and exams modified to meet each student's individual needs. REACH students will receive further support for their transition to college through support courses (e.g., basic computing, self-advocacy, life skills) that are designed for REACH students to maximize access to and utilization of resources and support across campus (e.g. library resources, technology, fitness facilities). REACH students will also participate in internships designed to enhance professional development and prepare students for competitive employment.

The REACH program is committed to the philosophy that the true college experience includes the option of an inclusive residential experience in which REACH students live on-campus with other College of Charleston students. Furthermore, we believe that the residential option is an essential bridge to successful independent living for individuals with intellectual disabilities. To enable the full college experience, and to promote the development of essential independent living skills, REACH students will have the option of living in a house with typical students who wish to experience an inclusive residential environment. The house will include two resident assistants as well as twelve students (the twelve will include both REACH and traditional students). Finally, a significant emphasis of the REACH program is the provision of social and cultural opportunities that define the typical college experience, and that allow for the development of social skills appropriate to college-age students. An extensive peer mentor system is under development to ensure that REACH students are full participants in the various social organizations, sporting events, and cultural experiences at the College.

Coastal Update

Coastal Carolina University LIFE™ Program just concluded its inaugural year with four students from across South Carolina. The program in its first year provided students with opportunities to take classes, attend on-campus events and practice work skills. The students learn independent living skills, personal development skills, career exploration, positive academic experiences, social development while also taking FYE (First Year Experience), Career Exploration and PALS (Physical Active and Life Skills) classes across campus. Students engaged in different events across the campus such as building houses for Haiti, utilizing the academic support centers, entering the Nutrition and Healthy Bodies Poster Contest, speaking at the South Carolina Special Olympics Conference, attending athletic events, volunteering on Campus Beautification Day, attending the *Will Roger's Follies* play, meeting the author of the university's Big Read book, attending a campus-wide Student Awards Ceremony, attending student-related events such as movie night, intramural events, capture the flag, helping to plant flowers, and participating in many other student organized activities and events. One student participated in the university's marching and pep band. Another student participated as a student equipment assistant for the football team. Yet another student worked in the campus library at the circulation desk. Two of the Coastal Carolina University LIFE™ Program students also had the experience of living on campus in a dormitory which provided them with the experience of being accountable for their own personal welfare with the support of the Coastal Carolina University LIFE™ Program mentors.

Overall this first year was a great success due to the support of the students, parents, faculty, staff, administration and the Coastal Carolina University community. Coastal Carolina University looks forward to accepting the second cohort of students to begin fall of 2010.

Clemson Update

The ClemsonLIFE Postsecondary Transition Program provides a postsecondary experience for students with intellectual disabilities on the campus of Clemson University. Staff provide instruction on employment

skills, independent living skills, technology, and nutrition/cooking to the participating students. Students take Clemson University Leisure Skills classes and interact with over 100 Clemson University student volunteers for social interaction. Students also participate in employment internships to practice employment skills and some enroll in classes at a local technical college to further chances of employment. Independent Living skills are reinforced through the residential component where three ClemsonLIFE students live with one Residential Supervisor in on campus and off campus apartments. Staff members include an employment specialist, a volunteer coordinator, a curriculum coordinator, several graduate education students as class instructors, and a behavior specialist to assist with behavior struggles. The program attempts to integrate all components of successful independent living and employment into a well rounded postsecondary experience for students with intellectual disabilities. Students are scaffolded as they work through the two-three year program plan as independently as possible.

USC Update

The students and faculty of CarolinaLIFE had an exciting year in 2009-2010. Because we added a residential component in our second year, we encountered many new learning experiences and our faculty grew as we added new teachers and residential mentors. Our students participated in many new courses including Yoga, Women's Self Defense, Intermediate Swimming,, Movement in Theater, Play and Early Childhood Education, and Photography in Art. Our students had many social and service experiences; they performed in Off-Off Broadway, became involved in social sororities and the USC service council, volunteered for the Pubic TV booth at the State Fair, participated in the Relay for Life, and walked to raise money and awareness in the Breast Cancer Walk for Life. Our students did job observations and job sampling experiences in many places around the university and Columbia area including the bookstore, University gyms,, local hotels, Riverbanks Zoo, and area stores and restaurants. Our second-year students participated in job internships at the Strom Thurmond Fitness Center, the Columbia YMCA, Logan Elementary School, and Kindermusik

preschool classes. In fact, “our” Kindermusick teacher, Alison Trotter, was named inspirational teacher of the year by Kindermusik International for her work with Bryann Burgess and CarolinaLIFE. Alison has created a wonderful blog about her teaching experience, which she shares with other teachers during our state presentations. We also have two important announcements for the 2010-2011 academic year. First, we have expanded our program to three years. We are excited by the prospects and challenges this change will bring. Second, we are very pleased and excited to announce that there will be a new director of CarolinaLIFE, Dr. Anthony Plotner (Tony). Tony joins us from the University of Illinois as a faculty member at USC with time dedicated to CarolinaLIFE. He has a wealth of experience in post-secondary programs. Karen Pettus and I will continue enthusiastically in supporting roles in the program. We are so happy that USC has made this step to insert the CarolinaLIFE program firmly in the university structure. We look forward to a great year ahead!

Winthrop Update

The Winthrop Transition to College (WTC) program is a collaborative, dual enrollment program between Winthrop University and Rock Hill and Fort Mill School Districts. In 2009-2010, eight high school students ages 18-21 came to Winthrop two-three days a week. In fall 2009, students worked on learning the campus and community skills. In spring 2010, one WTC student enrolled in each of the following classes: Teaching Science in the Elementary School, Teaching Math in the Elementary School, Theatre for the Elementary Classroom, Dance for the Elementary Classroom, Rock Climbing, and PiYo. Two students worked a few hours a week on campus in Printing Services. All involved—WTC students, parents, student mentors, and faculty—believe that it was a very successful first year!

How you can help!

Please consider a donation to CTC so we can continue helping South Carolina’s colleges and universities create model programs for our young adults with intellectual disabilities. We are a 501-c3 non-profit organization. We are most appreciative of any consideration.

Our mailing address is P.O. Box 31656, Charleston, SC 29417 and our phone number is 843-763-4169. Thank you.