


ENDEAVOR FOR EMPLOYMENT

MSU program provides job training for individuals with disabilities

Michigan State's inclusive atmosphere offered all types of programs to benefit others. Spartan Project SEARCH was one of these programs that helped provide job training for young adults with disabilities. The program allowed its students to seek employment and discover what they were capable of. It was an experience that would ultimately have

a significant impact on their lives and prepare them for the career ahead of them.

Each student served as an intern at their respective location around MSU's campus. Interns were required to follow a schedule that consisted of their internship and classroom time provided by



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Ingham Intermediate School District. The school district also supported the program with an instructor, a curriculum and students from their schools.

The program's interns worked at numerous places around MSU such as the Dairy Store, 1855 Place, the Brody Sparty's, the MSU Bakery and Holden Dining Hall. Brandon Falcsik, one of the program's interns, worked at the Holden Dining Hall.

"I like that everybody's nice," Falcsik said. "They'll come and check on me and if I'm not doing something right, then they'll talk me through it, tell me what I did and tell me why it's wrong and what I should do."

Relationships were also forged at Spartan Project SEARCH. The bond between those involved in the program was one that had formed through the care and support they had for one another. According to John Wenzel, services coordinator for Spartan Project SEARCH, program alumni were still often involved with the program after their internships.

"Almost all of our interns end up getting hired on campus often in a place where they were an intern or they did an internship rotation," Wenzel said. "It's really cool to see them remain a part of the MSU community. We have events and we invite all of our alumni to those events."

Those who worked with the program spent a lot of time with the interns. They helped the interns stay on track, while still giving them

independence. Brooke Locher, Spartan Project SEARCH instructor, enjoyed her work with the students.

"I think the biggest thing for me is, over the year, being able to see the growth of the interns, and getting to see some of that self confidence and being able to see them out in the environment, out in the world with everybody, and just having their role, and having their part, and the ownership that they take over: 'I'm getting a job, and I'm gonna be independent. I'm gonna do all these things,'" Locher said.

Thanks to Spartan Project SEARCH, students were able to overcome the challenges that came with their disability. Students and employees in the program had to invest their time and put in the work for everyone to succeed. The interns were given an opportunity, and it was one they did not waste. Through Spartan Project SEARCH, students were able to be independent and develop skills that would help them thrive in the workforce.

TOP: Spartan Project Search instructor Brooke Locher was mentoring students how to operate in their positions. Student Parker smiling to us. **LEFT:** Sam Wiley was updating data by using his laptop. In his second internship rotation, he worked at Spartan Linen Services.