

**Director's Note**

The summer months bring new developments and exciting potential for the future of LinkAbilities. As many of you know, the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant is rounding out its final year in December. Through this grant, LinkAbilities has been afforded the incredible opportunity to evolve into a center of technical assistance for sector-based training programs. With the success of Project SEARCH throughout the state, and with new sector-based programs in development, LinkAbilities has proven its strength in convening partners and creating a meaningful product. Due to these strengths and successes, LinkAbilities intends to continue similar efforts under sustainable streams of funding identified through future partnerships and grants.

With great planning and identification of stakeholder buy-in well under way, LinkAbilities intends to become the Technical Assistance hub for sector-based and best practice programming in the state of New Hampshire. We will continue to identify effective and efficient models in the field of workforce development, working on behalf of partners across the state to create better employment outcomes and greater successes.

While all of this planning is underway, LinkAbilities continues to be an active member in numerous employment efforts around the state. Please take a moment to read through our newsletter and learn about all of the wonderful efforts that are taking place on behalf of individuals with disabilities. It goes without saying that none of the initiatives LinkAbilities has a hand in would be possible without the incredible commitment and dedication of our partners, friends, and community members. We thank you for allowing us to be a part of the journey and look forward to many new milestones!

Sincerely,



Emily Manire,  
Director of LinkAbilities



"...LinkAbilities intends to become the Technical Assistance hub for sector-based and best practice programming in the state of New Hampshire."

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Director of LinkAbilities



Expanding the work force. Connecting all abilities.

LinkAbilities  
144 Canal Street  
Nashua, NH 03064  
603.459.1796  
603.889.5460 fax  
ContactUs@LinkAbilities.org  
[www.LinkAbilities.org](http://www.LinkAbilities.org)



LinkAbilities is a project of Gateways Community Services and is made possible under an agreement with the State of New Hampshire, Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Developmental Services, with Medicaid Infrastructure Grant funds provided by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under CFDS 93.768.

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**In the Community**

**Statewide Community of Practice Looks for Employment Success**

It is with great excitement that LinkAbilities shares news of the recent development of a statewide Community of Practice on Employment. Under the guidance of multiple partners throughout the state, New Hampshire has developed a leadership base that is committed to increasing successful outcomes of employment for people with disabilities. Dedicated members include representatives from Area Agencies, Mental Health Centers, the Bureau of Developmental Services, NH Vocational Rehabilitation, the Bureau of Behavioral Health, employment providers, and the Department of Education.

This dedicated group meets bi-monthly to share and develop best-practices and related policies. Members seek to promote and encourage employment as a viable option for all individuals, and will work collaboratively to determine best methods of achieving greater success. We encourage membership from all levels, sectors, and interests, and hope that you will consider joining the movement. If you would like more information on meeting dates and times, please contact LinkAbilities at [ContactUs@LinkAbilities.org](mailto:ContactUs@LinkAbilities.org) and we will make sure you have every opportunity to join and mobilize!



**INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER**

- Letter from the Director
- Employer Spotlight
- In the Community

SUMMER/FALL 2011

**CONNECTIONS**

EXPANDING THE  
WORK FORCE.



CONNECTING  
ALL ABILITIES.

LinkAbilities is a nonprofit resource that promotes public and private partnerships to address workforce needs and challenges for employers and people with disabilities in the Greater Nashua community. We seek to develop a variety of sector-based training initiatives, school-to-work programs and certification standards by creating a coalition of businesses, community organizations, employment providers and people with disabilities.

LinkAbilities is proud to lead the movement to create standards and "best practices" within the business and public service communities.

**St. Joseph Hospital Project SEARCH Graduates its Third Class**

The Carl Amelio Room at St. Joseph Hospital was packed for the graduation of the third St. Joseph Hospital Project SEARCH class on Monday, June 20th. Nine students were recognized for successful completion and participation in the school-to-work program for high school students with developmental disabilities. Nashua Mayor Donnalee Lozeau served as the guest speaker and representatives from both Senator Shaheen and Congressman Bass' offices were on hand with remarks.

Now the focus turns to finding jobs for the graduated students. Several of the students have already received offers of employment from employers such as the YMCA, St. Joseph Hospital, and Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinic. The other graduates will be pounding the pavement over the next few weeks and are hoping to find a job by fall.

Within the last year, Project SEARCH expanded to Concord, Manchester, and Keene within Concord Hospital, Catholic Medical Center, and Cheshire Medical Center, respectively. Expansions are also underway in Dover and Claremont/Lebanon. Project SEARCH originated at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and is quickly launching pilot programs across the country and in England and Australia.

Project SEARCH is a collaborative effort between St. Joseph Hospital, LinkAbilities, the Nashua School District (and surrounding school districts), New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation, The PLUS Company, Inc. and Gateways Community Services. The St. Joseph Hospital Project SEARCH Business Advisory Council includes members of Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinic, Home Health & Hospice Care, Sodexo, Greenbriar Terrace and Fairview Nursing Home.



Project SEARCH graduate, Jeff Hayward, speaks during the graduation ceremony.



Mayor Donnalee Lozeau poses with graduate, Amber Collins, during the ceremony.



Expanding the work force. Connecting all abilities.

## First STRIDE Class Graduates



The four graduates with their STRIDE Instructor, Martha Fortin.

The first class of STRIDE students has officially graduated! Daniel Brien, Tommy Gravel, Fred Purtell, and Joshua Richardson celebrated their achievement on June 29th with family, friends, and staff from Lowell General Hospital. STRIDE is a 20-week on-the-job training program for adults with disabilities, based completely on the needs and workflows of Sodexo managers. Each student participates in three internships, allowing them to learn skills necessary for competitive employment once they graduate from the program. The graduates will now be looking for jobs using the skills they have learned. STRIDE is a unique collaboration between The PLUS Company, Lowell General Hospital, Sodexo, and LinkAbilities. The next class of STRIDE students began their training at the end of July.

## LinkAbilities Hops on Partnership with HPOP

LinkAbilities has recently joined HPOP! The New Hampshire Health Profession Opportunity Project (HPOP) has been awarded a five-year grant by the US Department of Health & Human Services Office of Community Services. The funds will be used to train a minimum of 1,000 new and incumbent workers in direct and other related allied health care occupations. HPOP will utilize an employer-driven model to train, place and support committed candidates in jobs leading to career pathways and economic self-sufficiency.

In support of these goals, LinkAbilities, along with CEI enterprises from Maine, have been tasked to recruit persons in key leadership positions to form Business Advisory Councils (BAC) in the Concord, Manchester, Nashua, and Portsmouth regions. The ultimate goal of each BAC will be to advise the HPOP Project training partners regarding their anticipated and timely workforce needs. They will also help establish a network to facilitate job placement, on-the-job success, and upward mobility for HPOP program participants.



Social media is changing the way we do business on a daily basis, connecting people, businesses, and organizations instantaneously. LinkAbilities is on LinkedIn and we'd like you to connect with us. The more people we have in our network, the more opportunities for us to make additional connections with businesses and other support services. The more connections we have, the more you benefit!

**Spread the word!**

## HB 401 Passes, Allows for Unpaid Work Experiences

Thanks to strong leadership and hard work, HB 401 was approved unanimously by the New Hampshire legislature and went into effect on July 26, allowing adults with disabilities to participate in unpaid work experiences.

The bill, a modification to the Department of Labor rules under RSA 279:22, was a result of programs developed under the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, demonstrating that individuals with disabilities have many unrealized skills and abilities that can be nurtured when opportunities are developed within business settings.

Passage of the bill addresses liability concerns, clarifying that the agency or organization supporting and training the individual carries the insurance that protects all of the parties involved. The business where an internship is conducted must also register with the New Hampshire Department of Labor to become an approved internship site. A manual and training is in the works including a workshop session at the Employment Leadership Conference on October 13, 2011.



## DO YOU TWEET? FOLLOW LINKABILITIES ON

One of the best ways to stay connected with LinkAbilities is to follow us on Twitter. Stay connected to the developments in the disability workforce on both a state and federal level in no more than 140 characters!



## Finding Employment Success at Rose Haven

Lisa Sauls has only been working at Rose Haven Assisted Living Home for about six months, but the impact she has had on her coworkers and residents is apparent from the moment you walk in the door. "She is very uplifting," says Lisa's supervisor Cheryl Gerry. "She has such a positive attitude and the residents look forward to seeing her." In addition to her sparkling personality, Lisa assists with the housekeeping, cleaning the bathrooms, changing the trash, and other odds and ends that help free up the staff to see to the needs of the residents that live in this family-owned, 28-bed facility.

Cheryl explains that at first it was difficult for Lisa to keep up with all that needed to be done, but now she has a list of her daily tasks that helps her keep track. The list helps Lisa to stay focused on the many things that need to be done, and allows her to check them off as each job is completed. Lisa has been working hard with the aid of her list, and is now so familiar with her tasks, she can actually recite the task list in order from top to bottom.

Lisa says she loves working at Rose Haven, and her favorite part, besides the paycheck, is "...visiting with the residents and helping out with everything." The feeling is mutual says Cheryl, "The residents and the staff love her. She's part of the family, now!"



Lisa and her supervisor, Cheryl, at Rose Haven Assisted Living in Merrimack.

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