



The Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health Quarterly Newsletter

SPECIAL: 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY EDITION

2021 GRADUATES CELEBRATE IN STYLE IN THE NEW PATIENT PAVILION OF JEFFERSON CHERRY HILL HOSPITAL



Project SEARCH class of 2021 celebrated their success in a ceremony held at Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital on June 7 in the beautiful courtyard of the Atrium Cafe. Shown, from left, displaying their Project SEARCH Certificates, are Jordan, Marcus, Eddie, Naitri, Owen, Amelia, William, Jessica, and Dalton.

Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health Turns Five!

Five years ago, Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health became one of the first Project SEARCH programs in New Jersey and the first in South Jersey. Since its launch in 2016, 38 students from Y.A.L.E. School have taken part in the program at Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital. About a third of the graduates have been employed by Jefferson Health – New Jersey. Others have been hired by various businesses in the community including Cooper University Hospital, Virtua Health System, AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, Wawa, Lowes, CTDI, and many others. Graduates work an average of 26 hours per week earning an average of \$12.30 per hour. The program has been honored each year since its inception for its outstanding employment outcomes. In 2020, the program was chosen from among more than 600 Project SEARCH sites to receive the Spotlight on Innovative Employment Award from the Project SEARCH International Organization.

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Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health Turns Five!

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Peggy Chapman, Y.A.L.E. School Assistant Director, recognized the 5-year milestone in her remarks to the fifth Project SEARCH Graduating Class on June 7. "This partnership," she said, "is about to have its five-year anniversary." It was July 2016 when members of the Steering Committee and then Kennedy Health hospital administration began their partnership to launch a collaborative program, Project SEARCH.

The partners included Y.A.L.E. School, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Samost Jewish Family and Children's Service. It is these same partners, along with Jefferson Health, that continue on the Steering Committee now, "shaping the program with a single-minded mission, blended model, and shared purpose that never waivers," Peggy said.

"The Business Advisory Council," Peggy added, "is a premier partner in Project SEARCH, and we are grateful to these community businesses and organization leaders who donate their time to our interns and spread the word to employers to help find viable employment opportunities for our interns."

Janeene Martin, JFCS Sr. Employment Specialist/Project SEARCH Supervisor, also remarked that "Jefferson Health and Project SEARCH was and is the perfect match because Jefferson believes in diversity; they believe in innovation; they believe in the program. They knew the presence of Project SEARCH could bring about long-term changes in business culture in the community, creating positive effects on attitudes about hiring the population we serve and the range of jobs in which our interns *can* be successful."

Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health appreciates the Project SEARCH National Organization Co-Founders and National Consultants, whose direction these past five years has been invaluable. Thanks also to the leaders at the state level including Jennifer Joyce, the NJ DDD Director, Supports Programs and Employment Services; and Solo Okonkwo and Cheryl Vail, NJ DVRS Project SEARCH State Coordinators, whose leadership at the state level has guided the Jefferson Health program and the other 11 programs in the state.

Also, thank you to Lisa Dutterer, Cherry Hill Vice President of Operations and Project SEARCH Business Liaison, for her leadership and commitment to the success and growth of the program and of each individual intern.

And most of all, thank you to the on-site staff and the participating department managers and mentors who make Project SEARCH possible every single program day! Since 2016, 20 Jefferson Health departments have participated in the program including Storeroom, Food Service, EVS, HIM, Patient Transport, BCLS, Facilities, Health Care Access, MSC Mail, Patient Accounts, PC Support, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Magee Rehab, Surgical Services, Lab, Administration, Behavioral Health, Emergency Room, and JHA Voorhees.

Take a look back at the first four graduating classes on pages 5 and 6.

New program at Jefferson Stratford Hospital to begin this fall

Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health is about to reach one of its long-term goals, to open a second Project SEARCH program at Jefferson Stratford Hospital. The second program will allow more life-changing opportunities to both high-school students and young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities. Diane Rossi, Stratford Vice President of Operations, has been looking forward to the start of the program for a long time. The new site was approved by the National Project SEARCH Organization and the Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health Steering Committee this summer and is expected to begin this fall. What a fitting way to mark the program's 5th Anniversary!

GRADUATION SPEECHES



The 2021 Project SEARCH Graduates addressed guests including Jefferson managers and mentors, Steering Committee and BAC members, Project SEARCH staff members, school district representatives, family, and friends. Pictured above are Naitri, Owen, Marcus, Jordan, Jessica, Dalton, Eddie, Amelia, and William. Each intern described his or her experience during the program year and their aspirations for the future.

Graduation Highlights

[View the Graduation Video Here](#)



Addressing the graduates in front of the water wall were Lisa Dutterer, Cherry Hill Vice President of Operations and Project SEARCH Business Liaison; Peggy Chapman, Y.A.L.E. School Assistant Director; Ernie Laux, Y.A.L.E. School Project SEARCH Instructor; and Janeene Martin, JFCS Employment Specialist/Project SEARCH Supervisor.

Lisa encouraged the graduates to carry the Jefferson values forward as they head out into employment. She said, "Be bold and think differently. Go bravely into the next phase of what you want to do. Put people first. Always find a way to connect with people, putting those relationships first. And do the right thing – for yourself, your patients, your family, and your co-workers."

Peggy extended a figurative "group hug" from Project SEARCH to all the interns so that they would know that wherever they go, wherever they work, Project SEARCH would always be there for them.

Ernie, beaming with pride for all the graduates, told them: "You are the heart and soul of this program. Look how confident you have become. You are all ready to go into the world. We all are so proud of you!"

And Janeene, comparing the transition of the interns to that of a butterfly, said, "During the life cycle of a butterfly, there is a *transition stage*. BIG changes occur during this time. Each and every one of you has made amazing strides in preparing yourself for the next step of this program -- EMPLOYMENT. You are ready to emerge from *your transition stage*, as a vibrant, colorful winged butterfly and experience the world.

"Congratulations! We can't wait to see what you do next!"



Among the 70-some friends, family members, Steering Committee and BAC members, school district representatives, Jefferson Health mentors and managers in attendance at the graduation were Ryan Bennett, Branch Leader, BB&T Now Truist Bank; Dana Earley, Corporate Manager of Communications Jefferson Health New Jersey; Jaime Whalen, Vice President / Commercial Banker, BB&T, Now Truist Bank; Debbie Deissroth, DD Coaching & Consulting, Chair Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health Business Advisory Council; bottom left are Heather Edwards, JFCS Skills Trainer; Owen, Graduate; and Kelly Almasy, Y.A.L.E. Skills Trainer, Assistant Teacher; and on right, Billy, Project SEARCH 2019 Graduate, Mentor, and Patient Transport employee at Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital.

SPECIAL: 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY EDITION

2017 AND 2018 GRADUATING CLASSES



Graduates from the program's first two years secured employment after graduation at several large companies in the community including Jefferson Health, AtlantiCare, Virtua, McDonalds, Eden Corporation, Wawa, Lowes, Sedexo, Marshals, PowerBack, and Global Geeks.

2017 Graduates: In the top photo, back row from left are Solo Okonkwo, NJ State DVR Project SEARCH Coordinator; Cody, Steven, Anthony, Joe Devine, Jefferson Health – New Jersey President (retired); Adham, and P.J. Bottom from left are Laini, Debbie Deissroth, Project SEARCH Business Liaison; and Sara.

2018 Graduates: In the bottom photo, back row from left are Ernie Laux, Y.A.L.E. School Project SEARCH Teacher; James, Jason, Tyler, Anna, Nyasia, Brittney, and Jonathan. Pictured in the front row are Karen Spieker, JFCS Skills Trainer; Kelly Almasy, Y.A.L.E. Skills Trainer/Assistant Teacher; Janeene Martin, JFCS Job Developer; Kaneko Stokes, JFCS Skills Trainer; Debbie Deissroth, Project SEARCH Business Liaison and Business Advisory Council Chair; Peggy Chapman, Y.A.L.E. Assistant Director.

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2019 AND 2020 GRADUATING CLASSES



Since Project SEARCH, graduates from the program's third and fourth years became employed at Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital, Jefferson Washington Township Hospital, AtlantiCare, ShopRite, Medford Leas, Kingsway Church, Goodwill Industries, Wawa, TJ Maxx, Pizza Hut, and CTDI.

Pictured from the 2019 class in the back row are Kyle and Steven; in the middle row, Tyler, Melissa and Nick; and in the front row, Billy and Cathy.

From the 2020 virtual graduation, pictured in the back row are Peggy Chapman, Y.A.L.E. Assistant Director; Ernie Laux, Y.A.L. E. Project SEARCH Instructor; and Barbara Abrams, JFCS Director, Special Needs Programs. In the second row are Lisa Dutterer, Cherry Hill Vice President of Operations and Project SEARCH Business Liaison; Kenny, Cheryl Vail, NJ DVRS Project SEARCH State Coordinator; and Gabe. In the third row are Jake, Chris, Matthew, and Jeffrey. And in the fourth row are Kelly Almasy, Y.A.L.E. Skills Trainer/Assistant Teacher, and Janeene Martin, JFCS Job Developer/Skills Trainer/ Project SEARCH Supervisor.



SPECIAL: 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY EDITION

MY EXPERIENCE WITH PROJECT SEARCH AND JEFFERSON BY LAINI, 2017 GRADUATE

It's been five years since I was an intern with Project SEARCH and I can't believe it. A lot has happened since then, with the transition to Epic and the COVID pandemic, but I'm happy I've been holding down my job with Jefferson for as long as I have.

I remember that first internship rotation vividly, for better or worse. I was with Environmental Services. Through struggling to empty trash cans and clean ICU patient rooms, I quickly realized I was not cut out for manual labor. And so, I made sure my next two internships were desk jobs.

I excelled at my second internship so much that they often ran out of work for me to do. A task that my mentor expected me to complete in at least a week was finished within days. Because of this, I remember helping at HR and the Medical Records people on days I didn't have enough work for the entire day.

When I first heard that an office in Voorhees was interested in taking on an intern, I was apprehensive, to say the least. I outright cried, even. But in the end, I enjoyed that internship, even though I could no longer go to the cafeteria or see my fellow interns.

And at the end of the program, I was officially hired as a file clerk. I've been cozy in my place at Jefferson all these years. It gives me a reason to get up in the morning and out of the house. I love feeling useful by doing referrals through Epic, and my coworkers treat me well. I'm happy with my job, and I want to be able to stay with Jefferson for the foreseeable future.

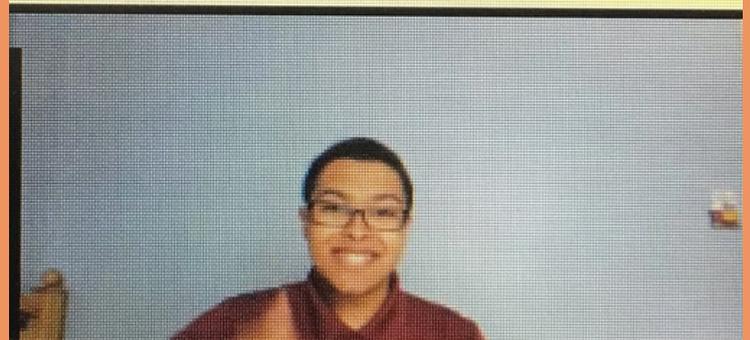
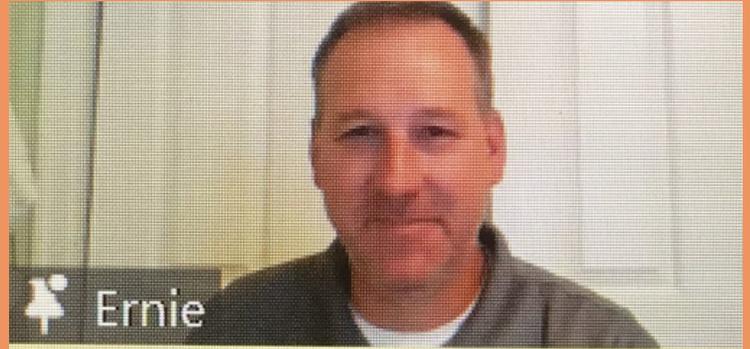
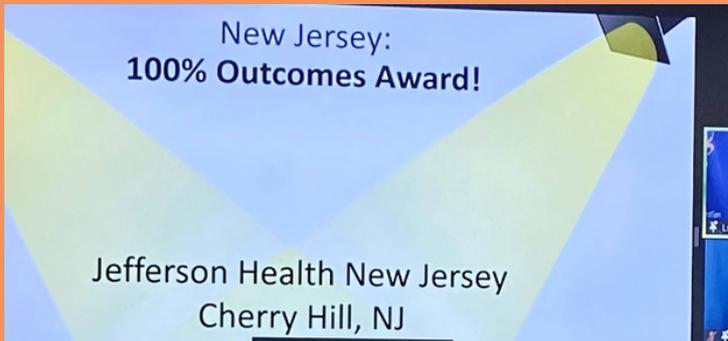


Pictured is Laini at her desk at the Jefferson Health Administration Department in Voorhees. Since graduation, Laini has also been pursuing an English Degree at Rowan College at Burlington County where she's earned 47 credits while working and maintaining a 3.6 GPA.

[Click here to read a 2107 Philadelphia Inquirer article about Laini's experience in Project SEARCH.](#)

NOTES, AND NOTEWORTHY

Congratulations!



Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health was honored with a "100% Outcomes Award" on July 19th at the Virtual Project SEARCH International Conference. There are 623 Project SEARCH Programs in 47 states and 9 countries. Project SEARCH awards programs that have a 70% or higher employment rate in jobs that meet the Project SEARCH criteria:

- At least 16 hours per week
- Pays the prevailing wage
- Non-seasonal
- In an integrated setting (among coworkers with and without disabilities)

The Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health Program has received an Employment Outcome Award four times, every year since implementation. This year's award is significant because it is the first time that the Jefferson program received the award for 100% employment, especially meaningful because all 2020 graduates found employment during Covid when so many others in the community were being furloughed or laid off. Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health is one of 12 Project SEARCH programs in the state and the only program to achieve 100% employment of its 2020 interns.

In addition to being recognized for its outstanding outcomes, the Jefferson Health program presented at the conference. Elizabeth Barrow, Steering Committee Member; Janeene Martin, JFCS Sr. Employment Specialist/Project SEARCH Supervisor; and Peggy Chapman, Y.A.L.E. School Assistant Director (all pictured above) presented "To Work and Beyond: Insights for Maintaining Momentum Across Domains." The presentation discussed maintaining momentum when life challenges get in the way of forward progress. Anthony, a 2017 graduate and Jefferson employee, is a shining example of a young man who has overcome many challenges. Due to his perseverance, resilience and the support of Project SEARCH and his Jefferson Health family, Anthony continues to succeed at his job in the Emergency Department at Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital.

Ernie Laux, Y.A.L.E. Project SEARCH Instructor, and Jordan, Project SEARCH 2021 Graduate, presented "Intern Led Employment Planning Meetings," demonstrating how interns in the program lead their own employment meetings learning essential self-advocacy and presentation skills. The international conference brought together more than 1000 Project SEARCH program practitioners, partners, interns and families to learn and share best practices.

Project SEARCH at Jefferson Health is a collaborative program implemented by partners including Jefferson Health, Y.A.L.E. School, NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Samost Jewish Family and Children's Service of Southern New Jersey.

Project SEARCH Alumni News

2019 Grad Performing in Community Theater



Cathy, Project SEARCH alumni, is performing in Shrek The Musical at the Moorestown Theater Company this summer. Since graduation in 2019, Cathy has been working at both McDonald's and at Medford Leas. Cathy has recently taken on more responsibility at McDonald's by making specialty drinks. Come see her in the show or for a cool drink at the Medford McDonald's.

HIRED!

2021 PROJECT SEARCH GRADS IN THE WORKPLACE



Dalton was hired by Jefferson Health in the EVS Department just after graduation. Dalton's hard work, dedication, and positive attitude demonstrated during his second rotation in EVS makes him a good fit for Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital.



Marcus completed his third rotation at Cooper University Hospital after a successful interview at the BAC's reverse job fair. Just after graduation, Marcus was offered a job at Cooper in the Food and Nutrition Department.



Amelia was offered a job at Nordstrom just after graduation. Amelia, a Logistics Processor, is pictured here scanning and verifying information on merchandise. Amelia's dream is to travel, and she hopes to someday see as much as the world as she can.

Project SEARCH Bulletin Board



Welcome New Interns

COUNTDOWN

TO DAY ONE!!

SEPT. 9, 2021



BrightHorizonS9

To order Project
SEARCH attire, click
here



HIRING?

Contact

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