

## Columbine Health Systems

At the heart of the Columbine Health Systems beats the energy of a network designed to address the comfort and safety of seniors. That network offers a spectrum of services that include skilled nursing facilities, both independent and assisted living options, rehabilitation and therapy services, home care, pharmacy, and medical equipment and supplies.

The two campuses, located in Fort Collins and Loveland, provide senior clients and their families a chance to create a living environment that caters specifically to needs and provides a chance to continue living an integrated life.

Columbine has been part of the Larimer County community for 38 years and has always been locally owned and operated. Currently over 1,250 local residents are employed within Columbine, a number of which have been employed by Columbine for over 25 years.

Columbine is collaborating with the Poudre School District to provide hands on learning opportunities for students who are between 18-21 years of age who have developmental disabilities. The goal is to provide valuable experiences that launch the students into a successful career.

## Comments...

### From students:

"I loved it so much. I had a blast and got a career from it."

"In class I learned what career I wanted and the steps I needed to achieve my goals for what I wanted. Hopefully I can become a CNA."

"I learned about what I would do in the future."

"I learned that it is important to have long-term work goals."

### From the employer:

"I am honored and humbled by my experience. The opportunity to be surrounded by such devotion and compassion is awesome."

"Corey provided professional, caring service in an accurate and timely manner, while exceeding expectations of the residents and guests of the Winslow. He helped us to maintain the quality of cleanliness and professional appearance of our dining room."

"The job coach was an unbelievable talent. She was a joy to work with."

### About an employee:

"I could speak to Jessica's work habits, her enthusiasm about her job, the friendships she is forming with all she comes in contact with, her listening abilities and genuine interest. All that being said, I'd rather speak to her determination. I was driving to work fairly early on 287. Standing there alone at the bus stop, eagerly looking southbound for her bus, was Jessica. I thought to myself, "This is a determined and responsible young lady."

## Collaborating Partners

**Poudre School District**  
**Columbine Health Systems**  
**Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Fort Collins)**  
**Center for Community Partnerships, Colorado State University**  
**Foothills Gateway, Inc.**  
**Arc of Larimer County**



Project SEARCH is a business-led collaboration that enables young adults with disabilities to gain and maintain employment through career exploration and training .

Project SEARCH provides education and employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities.



Corey on the job in the Winslow dining room

The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community and workplace.

## What is Project SEARCH?

- An innovative school to work transition program for students with disabilities
- Begun at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1996
- Now has 140 replication sites across the U.S.
- Majority of projects within health care settings with additional in banks, universities, manufacturing and public sector

## What is The Project SEARCH Transition Program?

- Students with developmental disabilities from local high schools in the final year of schooling or have met graduation requirements
- School district teacher on-site of host company
- Unpaid internships through a variety of departments
- Invaluable hands-on work experience resulting in enhanced employment rate following graduation

## Typical Project SEARCH benefits for businesses with high turnover, complex and routine positions

- Decreased recruitment costs
- Pre-screened and qualified applicants
- Lowered training costs
- Improved quality of service
- Enhanced resident/family attitude through viewing role-models
- Expanded customer loyalty and satisfaction through employment of persons with disabilities
- Increased access to underutilized workforce
- Enhanced HR function



Michaela assists a resident with a recreational activity



Jessica sorts and delivers mail for multiple Columbine facilities



Corey sanitizes coffee urns in the Winslow kitchen