

Business Connections of VCU

Monthly Spotlight

Crystal Hence has all the skills a good job coach should have. She is the sole job coach for Project SEARCH at St. Francis Medical Center, where she works with an average of six students at a time. She is persistent on her job leads and not shy about approaching employers. Crystal advocates for her clients and knows when to ask for help or accommodations when needed. She is reliable and consistent in a field where everything changes. We are sharing this story about Crystal's recent work in helping her client Jalen to find his dream job!



The Materials Management Team at St. Francis Medical Center has a new employee. Jalen, a former Project SEARCH intern was hired by the team after making a positive impression during his 8-week internship. "It was his first internship, which is usually the biggest unknown," explained Crystal. "That's when the interns are just coming in and we really don't know a lot about them or how that internship will go."

Jalen came into Project SEARCH knowing that his dream job was to work in a hospital, he just wasn't sure what position would be best for him. Well, it didn't take him long to figure it out. The first internship in materials management just clicked for him. Crystal noticed immediately how well he was doing. She noted that the team wanted to hire him right then, but they didn't have a position available. So Jalen went on to complete his second internship, attending to patient rooms and stocking supplies. He did well with this work too, but around the time it was coming to an end, Crystal got word of a position opening up in materials management! She stepped right in to complete the application with Jalen.



Since being hired Jalen has been soaring! Crystal started training with Jalen the first week and all he needed was a daily check-in. Because of Jalen's experience from his internship, he already knew the job quite well. Some of the things they worked on during his initial training was professional social skills and work place etiquette. A little over a month in his job Crystal is promoting Jalen's independence by only checking in with him once a week. Crystal recognizes his talent for this position, but also knows that he will be supported by his co-workers. Jalen's team is full of mentors and natural supports! Just to name a few, he has: Diondra, a Supply Chain Tech like Jalen, she knows the job and thrives in sharing her knowledge with Jalen; Jeanmarie, supervisor, has been a mentor since the start of his internship; Adrienne, manager, has had her eyes on him since the beginning and recognized his potential; and Joseph, director of materials management, remembered Jalen's affinity for this role and kept the door open when a position became available.

You can tell that Jalen stays motivated for his busy week because he wakes up every day at 4 a.m. He works Monday through Friday, for a total of 32 hours a week. Jalen has task assignments of four different kinds: unloading trucks, sorting supplies, delivering supplies to his units, and ordering new supplies or "buttoning" as they call it on the team. Jalen is a member of a health care system that ranges from environmental service techs to surgeons. It is evident from the harmony among the materials management team that St. Francis relies on quality employees to achieve the highest quality of care for their patients. Jalen, in every sense, fits this team.

Thank you, Crystal, for facilitating the opportunity for Jalen to obtain such a meaningful job!!