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# Time is

# money

## New Interns and another productive year ahead!

The new school year started August 15<sup>th</sup> marking Project SEARCH's second year with Martin Health System at the North Hospital. Other than following the school year calendar all other elements of the program are business related. Participants are Interns here to learn and master all the job tasks they are given in various hospital departments. Each intern is assigned to a different department every nine weeks. Interns will rotate through four departments this year with the goal of employment. This year additional departments are participating which looks to be a growing trend.

### Department Internships

- ✿ Operating Room Aide
- ✿ 4th, 5th, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Service Assistant
- ✿ Patient Transport
- ✿ Nutritional Services
- ✿ Patient Services
- ✿ Café Nutrition Worker
- ✿ Meals on Wheels
- ✿ Steward
- ✿ Recovery Stocking
- ✿ Wound Care Assistant
- ✿ Emergency Department Aide
- ✿ Bio-Medical
- ✿ Oncology
- ✿ Environmental Services
- ✿ Records Clerk
- ✿ Radiology
- ✿ Central Sterile
- ✿ Materials Warehouse



Martin County  
Project | SEARCH



## How Project SEARCH started...

Women Who Make a Difference

# Working Wonders

By Elissa Sonnenberg



Everyone deserves a chance to take pride in a job well done.

**W**hen Annie Sublett smiles—which is often—it’s easy to see how much she loves her job in the dental clinic at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. In the past five years she has missed fewer than five days of work. Between blushes and broad grins, the sweet-faced 26-year-old, who has Down syndrome, expertly identifies the nearly 200 shiny instruments she sterilizes and sorts daily.

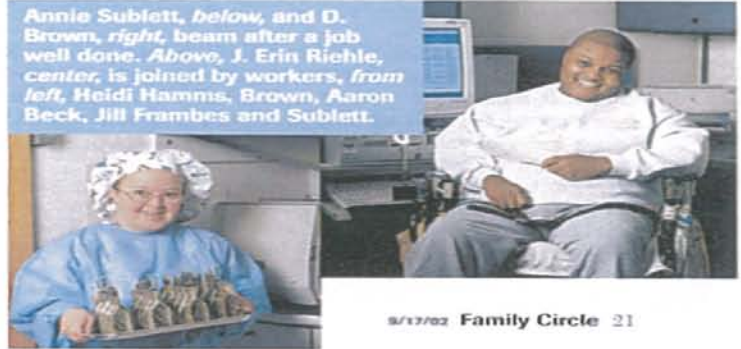
Her mother, Mary Ann Sublett, marvels at the changes she has seen since Annie’s first day on the job. “Before I knew it, she was riding the bus,” explains Mary Ann. “Annie had never ridden the bus by herself.” With her paycheck Annie is able to buy CDs, and proudly makes her own weekly church offerings. Mary Ann continues, “She does things I can’t even imagine. She’ll get up on a Saturday morning and run the sweeper, dust the furniture, clean the counter. She does more things like an adult.”

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[www.familycircle.com](http://www.familycircle.com)

At work Annie’s a regular member of the hospital team. She dresses in scrubs like other employees and eats lunch with a mixed group in the cafeteria. Most days she makes room at her table for the best friend she has known since age four, co-worker Jill Frambes, who also has Down syndrome. For her job Jill sets up sterile instrument trays for

Annie Sublett, below, and D. Brown, right, beam after a job well done. Above, J. Erin Riehle, center, is joined by workers, from left, Heidi Hamms, Brown, Aaron Beck, Jill Frambes and Sublett.



9/17/02 Family Circle 21



“She changed everyone’s idea of how to work with people with disabilities.”

**Women Who Make a Difference** Continued from page 21  
the operating rooms. Jill’s boss says the 25-year-old flawlessly arranges up to 80 items.

Annie and Jill’s challenging mainstream work, as well as jobs for hundreds of other young adults with disabilities, is part of Project SEARCH (Students Exploring Alternative Resources at Children’s Hospital), a program started in 1997 by nurse J. Erin Riehle.

When Erin served as director of Cincinnati Children’s emergency department, she had trouble finding reliable help to stock ER supply shelves. She turned to Hamilton County’s Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, with a question: Could a person with a disability do that job?

“I knew no one with a disability,” admits Erin, 43. “None of us knew if it could work or not.” But she was determined to try. “Just about every child with special needs in Cincinnati will come through Children’s sooner or later as a patient. It seemed like a good idea to have at least a few people working here who could serve as examples of what they could do,” Erin says.

After Jennifer Linnabary, an employment coordinator with the Board of Mental Retardation, recommended Annie Sublett for the ER job, everyone had a lot to learn. “We had no idea how to interact with a person with a disability,” says Erin. Initially, co-workers treaded lightly around their new colleague, but soon she “changed everyone’s idea of how to work with people with disabilities.”

Within a year, there were 35 Project SEARCH employees at Children’s Hospital. Today, while some young adults in the program take jobs in other hospitals and businesses, about 75 of them staff Children’s at any given time. They pick up and deliver lab samples, sterilize equipment, greet young patients, and much more.

“I underestimated what they could do,” admits Linnabary, who helped develop the award-winning program with Erin. “It made us look at the ceilings we set.” Erin nods in agreement, adding, “The ceiling changes all the time.”

“Erin had the vision,” says Marie Huenefeld, secretary of the board of trustees of the Convalescent Hospital for Children, a nonprofit affiliate of Cincinnati Children’s that provided the first official funding for the program in 1998. “It’s wonderful to have somebody who is constantly trying to make things better,” she says.

“Erin has a passion about helping people achieve their potential,” agrees Dorine Seaquist, Children’s senior vice president of patient services. Today, two other area hospitals have similar programs. Erin has assisted officials from San Diego, St. Louis and Oklahoma City develop Project

SEARCH-type programs as well. “Erin has gone from knowing nothing about disabilities training and education to being an expert in the field,” says Susie Rutkowski, Great Oaks’ manager of disability education. She and Erin serve as co-directors for the program. “We’ve been able to significantly increase service to the special needs population, both youth and adults, through training and employment programs,” Rutkowski explains.

Meaningful work matters to everyone, says Erin. As an example, she cites employee Demetreus Brown, known as “D.” to his co-workers, who specializes in data entry. He inputs charges for items used by the hospital staff into its computer system.

Before joining the program the 34-year-old, who has been in a wheelchair since he contracted encephalitis when he was 20, lived in a rehabilitation center for 10 years. But now, with the help of a steady paycheck, he has his own apartment—and furnishings that he got when his friends at the rehab center threw him a shower. He proudly points to his newest purchase, a pair of bright white Max Air Nikes. “There are no boundaries here,” D. says enthusiastically while sitting at his computer.

“D. has grown a lot,” says his supervisor, Jack Burkett, who manages three employees with disabilities in his department of 15. “He’s very detail-oriented, more so than I am. It makes everybody else work harder.”

Not far from D.’s workplace, 25-year-old Heidi Hamms disassembles, inspects and cleans every incubator used in the hospital, which was named one of the nation’s top 10 pediatric facilities by *U.S. News & World Report*. Heidi, who has epilepsy and scoliosis, never felt she would be able to work at a regular job. At Children’s, however, she has not only memorized the process for cleaning the 40 parts of each incubator, but she has taught more than 60 managers—who do not have disabilities—how to do the job. “I like making sure nothing is missing or broken,” says Heidi, who examines every inch of each part, looking for tiny scratches and cracks that might compromise safety. “It’s a very important job and she realizes that,” says Delphia Hamms, Heidi’s mother. “She hasn’t peaked—she’s still learning.”

Erin points out employees’ accomplishments with an almost parental pride: Low absenteeism, high rates of accuracy and something that doesn’t show up on time sheets—a sense of enthusiasm that’s infectious. “It has become a much greater positive than we ever imagined,” she says. Seaquist wholeheartedly agrees. “The employees from Project SEARCH have been great workers,” she says. “You can’t be around people who are excited about their work without feeling better yourself.”

Erin believes there is much more that Project SEARCH can do. She plans, for instance, to start an exercise program for workers. Says Erin, “I don’t think there’s a better job in the world.”

In the busy dental clinic Project SEARCH’s first employee clearly feels the same way about her job as Erin. “I’m able to do this job right,” says Annie Sublett, whose pride in her work shines as brightly as her smile. “It feels good.”

To find out more, visit the Project SEARCH Web site at [www.cincinnatichildrens.org/ps](http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/ps).

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## 2011 Project SEARCH International Conference



### Minneapolis, MN

The Fifth Annual Project SEARCH International Conference was July 12-15. Again this year Lean training was offered in the Lean Curriculum & Tools.

What is Lean and how does it relate to Project SEARCH? Lean has many components but one of the most important underlying principles is to create a problem solving philosophy in your organization that embraces people, change, and quality. Project SEARCH also believes in change, continually growing our capacity, updating our resources, and recognizing the potential in **all** people.

Lean is an outgrowth of the continuous quality improvement movement originated by Toyota. It has been adopted by healthcare, manufacturing, banking and many other large organizations and systems – the same industry sectors where we have Project SEARCH programs! Another important Lean component is to actively look for and eliminate waste in order to have the most efficient and productive work flow and final

Product. “Value Added” is a term embedded into Lean thinking. Every part of a work process should add value to the organization, product or outcome.

A main task for our instructors and job coaches is to analyze a job and work process and find the most efficient way to design and teach the tasks while incorporating the learning styles and personalities of the person. People with disabilities, when taught properly with competitive, marketable skills add value and help meet a business need. Recognizing these parallels, we want to incorporate Lean tools, processes, and philosophy into our Project SEARCH programs.

Lean believes in developing each person to be a leader, looking for ways to contribute to the organization by doing the following:

- ◆ Doing work in a standard way
- ◆ Recognizing that mistakes occur and being alert to identifying those mistakes
- ◆ Fixing the mistakes immediately
- ◆ Observing the work when and where it is being done in order to find the root cause of any issue or problem
- ◆ Being transparent during the problem solving process
- ◆ Asking questions reflectively and honestly – not jumping to conclusions
- ◆ Creating action plans, working the plan and evaluating the progress of the plan
- ◆ Respecting people

### PROJECT SEARCH CONGRATULATES EACH OF ITS 205 PROGRAMS ACROSS 39 STATES & 4 COUNTRIES ON THEIR GRADUATING CLASSES LAST YEAR!



Project SEARCH  
Inaugural Graduating Class of 2011



# Intern Interviews

## ~Jeremiah Blatch

Q - What do you think about Project SEARCH?

Jeremiah – It's a real good program. It helps improve my job skills. I started my first rotation in Environmental Services. I learned the proper way of cleaning and sanitizing equipment. I also did housekeeping in patient rooms and hallways.

Q – Where do you work now?

Jeremiah – I work in Radiology now. I sanitize wheelchairs and stretchers and put blankets and towels on wheelchairs for patients who need it. I also transport patients for x-rays.

Q – What do you like?

Jeremiah – I like working and helping the patients. If they have a bad day I pay special attention to them and give them extra care. I ask them if they would like a blanket, etc.

Q – What do you want to do in the future?

Jeremiah – I would like to work in the hospital because I love helping people. If I can't get into the hospital, I would like to work with children. Those are my two strong areas, helping patients and teaching children new things.

## ~Lacosta Jolly

Q – How did you find out about Project SEARCH?

Lacosta – Through my teacher Betty Feldman.

Q – What did you think when you first heard about Project SEARCH?

Lacosta – I knew I needed to get into the program so I can get on the job training and learn new skills.

Q – Where do you currently work?

Lacosta – In OR. I clean fixtures, prep patients for surgery, put blood pressure cuffs on patients and pick them up from the Recovery Room. I like working in the OR. New and interesting things happen every day. I like the challenge.

## ~Jahrod Oliver (Hired in Nutritional Services last year)

Q – What do you like about Project SEARCH?

Jahrod – It was a good program because it helps people be independent, be on time and teaches people to have goals so they can make it in the real world.

I started in Nutritional Services working as a dishwasher. My second rotation was in Environmental Services doing housekeeping jobs, sanitized guard rails; clean the floors with industrial cleaner. I did not finish that rotation because the dishwasher hurt his back and I was asked to take a temporary job for 30 days. That turned into a part time job for me and then a full time job. I love my job because I love working with people.

Q – Do you have any comments or advice for current interns?

Jahrod – Do the best you can, be to work on time and be a team player.



**Jahrod**

**We must become the change we want to see.**

~Mahatma Gandhi

