



Prepared by: Abilis | abilis.us

Contact: Jenifer Howard | 203-273-4246
jhoward@jhowardpr.com
Erica Klair | 203-249-4878
klair@abilis.us

For Immediate Release

Learn about Abilis' Project SEARCH Programs in Greenwich & Darien

Project SEARCH is a Nine-Month Internship Program that Helps Young Adults with Disabilities Train and Find Employment

GREENWICH, Conn., March 1, 2022 — **Abilis**, the nonprofit organization that provides services and support to more than 800 individuals with special needs and their families, is hosting a **Project SEARCH Information Night** on **Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.** This free event will be held **at the Darien YMCA**, 2420 Post Road, Darien, Connecticut, and is open to families with young adults with disabilities, ages 18-30. Space is limited and registration is required at abilis.us/calendar. The Project SEARCH Information Night will provide information on two internship programs Abilis runs in partnership with Greenwich Hospital and the Darien YMCA. To learn more about this Information Session and Project SEARCH, email Monica Smyth, program manager of Project SEARCH at smyth@abilis.us.

Project SEARCH's nine-month internship program helps young adults who have the goal of being competitively employed. The two programs are held in partnership with Greenwich Hospital, which offers hospital-related jobs, and with the Darien YMCA, that offers positions in different departments, including the childcare center. The program offers total immersion in the workplace and facilitates the teaching and learning process, as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Interns participate in three unpaid internships throughout the program and explore a variety of career paths. Along the way, the interns increase their independence, self-confidence, and self-esteem preparing them for future employment.

Project SEARCH is a collaboration between Abilis, Greenwich Hospital, Darien YMCA, various local school districts, and the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services. To be eligible for Project SEARCH, applicants must be between the ages of 18 and 30 and have a developmental disability, eligible for development or disabilities services, and want to work competitively. If the young adult is currently a high school student, a recommendation is required by their school district. For other young adults, tuition is paid by the Department of Developmental Resources (for those eligible) or a family may choose to pay privately. The Greenwich Hospital Project SEARCH program starts September 2022; the Darien YMCA program starts January 2023.

Applications for both programs are being accepted now and it is recommended that if you are interested, you apply, as positions fill quickly. Applications are in both English and Spanish and available online at abilis.us/project-search.

“Project SEARCH is such a great program for young adults with special needs transitioning from school towards a life of greater independence,” noted Amy Montimurro, CEO and president of Abilis. “Interns work with a team that includes their family, a Project SEARCH instructor, an Abilis job coach/developer, and a mentor with either Greenwich Hospital or the Darien YMCA. The interns begin their day learning employability skills in a classroom, then spend time daily in their internship where they are taught distinct skills and receive feedback for improving skill development. At the end of the day, the interns return to the classroom to reflect on their day, discuss challenges and evaluate progress.”

To learn more about Abilis’ Project SEARCH, contact Monica Smyth, program manager with Project SEARCH at smyth@abilis.us.

Abilis celebrated its 70th year in 2021 of being a 501c3 non-profit organization that supports more than 800 individuals with special needs and their families from birth throughout their lives. Abilis is a leader serving the special needs community in Fairfield County, Connecticut, in towns including Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Ridgefield, Stamford, Westport, Weston and Wilton, and has a long-standing reputation for individualized, high quality care. For more information, visit www.abilis.us, or facebook.com/Abilisinc, twitter.com/Abilis, or instagram.com/abilis_us

Project SEARCH was developed at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. Project SEARCH is a business-led, one-year work-preparation program for young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Most participants are enrolled while transitioning from high school to work. The hallmark of Project SEARCH is total workplace immersion, which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training. Project SEARCH's primary objective is to secure competitive employment for every program participant. For more information, visit www.projectsearch.us.

#