

Autism in the Workplace

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Beneficial for your Business...
Beneficial for the Student...
Beneficial for the Community...

What is Autism?

Autism is a brain development disorder that makes communication and social interactions challenging. Current estimates indicate that one in every one hundred and fifty children have some form of autism.

Although most businesses have historically employed persons with ranges of disabilities, autism in the workplace is a relatively new concept.

Most persons with autism require some form of assistance; we provide the assistance and you provide the opportunity. Employing people with autism is efficient for the business, is great for your image, and gives someone an opportunity.

Job Training Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities: A Sound Business Decision

PAAL students are an asset to your business or organization because...

- Students are reliable and efficient workers;
- Students enjoy job assignments;
- Students are interested in repetitive, entry level tasks that usually full time employees do not enjoy;
- Passing along these tasks to our Students enables other employees more flexibility;
- Work performance and product quality are strictly monitored.

"It has been a rewarding experience to work with PAAL and the students"

Michael Chain
General Manager – The Desmond Hotel – Malvern, PA

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What Types of Jobs are Appropriate?

A: PAAL Students have participated in a variety of jobs ranging from administrative tasks, dining, culinary prep work and kitchen support, landscaping, farm work, retail stocking, housekeeping, kitchen and dining room support.

Q: How Do We Get Started ?

A: A highly trained vocational expert will visit your facility to discuss your needs and how we can successfully and cooperatively meet those needs. Your supervisor's will be briefed on every step of the process and will have all of their questions answered before the student begins.

Q: Do I have to Pay the Students?

A: No. Students participate under Department of Labor Laws as "volunteers" not requiring payment, as your business is actually providing a "vocational job training experience". The Department of Labor provides you a form assuring you of this.

Q: Will someone from PAAL be on the job with the students?

A: Students are *always* supervised by highly trained teachers. The same teacher will always accompany the student for consistency and quality for the student and you.

United States Department of Labor School-to-work

- A learning experience at an employer's work site under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 ensures the following:
- The learning experience encompasses a sequence of activities that build upon one another, that increase in complexity and promote mastery of basic skills in a manner the "school" experience cannot.
- The learning experience has been structured to expose the student to all aspects of an industry and promotes the development of broad, transferable skills.
- The learning experience provides for real tasks, which push students to develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills enabling them to be independent.
- The student receives ongoing instruction at the employer's worksite and receives close on-site supervision throughout the learning experience, with the result that any productive work that the student would perform would be offset by the burden to the employer from the training and supervision provided.
- The employer, student, and parent or guardian understand that the student is not entitled to wages or other compensation for the time spent in the learning experience.

- Positive experiences for the student, teacher and employer.

PAAL's Community Partners

- ACAC Fitness and Wellness Center
- Ashbridge Assisted Living
- Brandywine Hospital
- Chester County Government Services Building
- Desmond Hotel
- Downingtown Country Club
- Evergreen Dry Cleaners
- French Creek Country Club
- LeBeau Gardens
- Riverstone Café
- Wawa
- Winner's Circle

About PAAL

Preparing Adolescents & Adults for Life (PAAL) was established in 2006 by Mission for Educating Children with Autism (MECA) as a unique, community-based program for adolescents and adults with autism. Best practice indicates that individuals with autism learn best in natural surroundings. PAAL draws upon the community as it's classroom to combine traditional educational instruction with real life lessons in living and working in the community, maintaining a home and caring for oneself.

PAAL maintains a professional collaboration between the educational system, families, local businesses and the community at large to develop and make reality a vision for the student to achieve an independent, productive adult life participating fully in their communities.

About MECA

Mission for Educating Children with Autism (MECA) was founded in 1997 to establish a state-of-the-art education program for individuals with autism. For over a decade, MECA has expanded its focus to the community to raise awareness and facilitate participation by community organizations to increase successful experiences for our children. MECA serves Berks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties.

For More Information about MECA and the PAAL Program
Phone: 610-873-6291