

July 19, 2019

2019 Summer Work Experience Programs Launch
Harney County School District Supports 10 Students with Summer Jobs

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)



James Teeman working at Harney County Library.

This is the third year that the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services, Oregon Department of Education (ODE), and Vocational Rehabilitation have collaborated on summer work experience pilot programs for youth.

This summer, there are 26 programs statewide with more than 400 participants. More than 180 students participating have an intellectual or developmental disability. Each year this pilot has been offered, it has grown in

number of students and programs participating.



Gabe Cate working at McDonalds in Harney County.

The goal of the summer work experience pilot program is to develop a work experience program that increases job opportunities for young people with disabilities. Contracted programs must focus on community integration and the summer work experience must include community-based experience. At least 20 percent of the participants must have an intellectual or developmental disability.

This year, new programs participating include (but not limited to): Baker County School District, Harney County School District, Phoenix-Talent School District, Salem-Keizer School District, Opportunity Foundation, Dirkse Counseling and Consulting, and Youth Rising in

Klamath Falls. Returning programs from 2018 include: Lincoln County School District, Umatilla School District, Grant County ESD, and The Arc of Lane County.



Lily Taylor working at Gallery 15 in Burns.

All the students are in paid community jobs through the pilot. Many of the programs also include activities for job shadowing, volunteering, and job readiness preparation, such as resume-building and interview skills.

“One of the aspects we are really focusing on with program participants this year is to ask them, ‘How would you keep this program going into the future?’,” said C.J. Webb, Pre-Employment Transition Services Program Coordinator for VR.

“How can you build a sustainable model for summer work experiences going forward?”

[Harney County School District No. 3](#) is participating in the summer work program for the first time this year. Deborah Titus, transition specialist, said the program has been a great success.



Illexys Stewart-Graf working at The Donut Hole.

“Every single student is in a work experience related to something they would like to do in the future,” she said.

There are 10 students, all from Burns High School, participating in the program. Their summer jobs include information technology at Harney District Hospital, compiling research and helping with the summer reading program at the Harney County Library, and baking at the Donut Hole.

“Every single employer loves the experience of working with these kids,” Deborah said. “Because the jobs are tailored to their interests, the students are excited to be there, and the employers really like that.”

One student who loves art got a job working at Sage Work Design, doing murals and design work. Another student who had previously worked at a thrift shop said he preferred working at a fast food restaurant. His summer work experience is at

McDonalds, and Deborah said they are helping him get his food handler card so he can work his way up to additional tasks, or future job opportunities.

Deborah said the program has been successful beyond what she imaged.

“In 20 years of doing this work, I can honestly say this is the best thing we’ve ever done,” she said. “I’ve been so pleased with how open the community has been. I think the program has helped me to be bolder in supporting students and looking at job options for them.”