

St. Joseph's Health Care London's Project SEARCH

February 4th, 2026



How Project SEARCH Started



- Program began in 1996
- Developed as a means to:
 - Meet entry level employment needs at Cincinnati Children's
 - Support the diversity initiative, and
 - Partner with schools and community services agencies to improve outcomes



What Project SEARCH offers:



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TVDSB's Program is Part of Something Larger!

- 771 Programs
- 10 Countries
- 47,447 People served since 2010
- 22 Sites in Canada
- [Project SEARCH in Canada](#)



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Recent Intern Outcomes

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
# Enrolled	3733	4166	4430	3318	3855
# Completed	3511	3868	4011	3049	3551
% Completed	94%	93%	90%	92%	92%
# Employed	2357	2907	2177	2233	2614
% Employed (All Jobs)	77.3%	75.2%	54.4%	73.2%	73.6%
% Employed (Meet PS Criteria)	67.1%	65.2%	46.1%	63.6%	67.0%



555

Number of active Project SEARCH program sites

Number of interns enrolled in Project SEARCH

3855

92%

Rate of program completion for enrolled interns

Percent of program graduates achieving competitive employment

73.6%

\$13.23

Graduate's average hourly pay

Average hours worked per week

24.79

Who does Project SEARCH serve?



Secondary School Students:

- Interns are at least 18 years of age, have not graduated from secondary school, have an IEP, and a diagnosed developmental disorder or qualify for DSO funding
- Have finished taking all credits or met their partial integration goals
- Have agreed that Project SEARCH will be their last year of school and have the goal of working at the end of the program



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Project SEARCH Model Overview

- Prepare student interns for challenging, complex jobs
- Teach essential, marketable skills
- Give student interns a year to build stamina and skills
- Add value to a workforce
- Focus on job development and employability
- Use a strategic, collaborative approach to training and employment

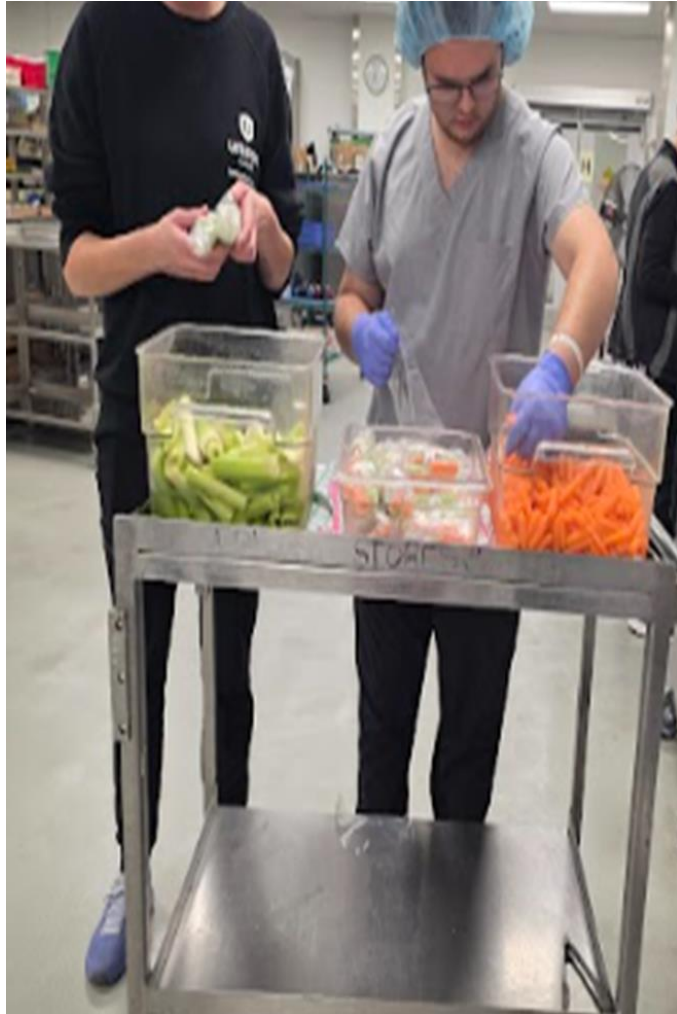


Basic Entrance Criteria

In regard to agency supports:

- Would benefit from personalized support in an intensive year of career development internship experience and
- Is eligible for or qualified for DSO and ODSP (required funding programs)

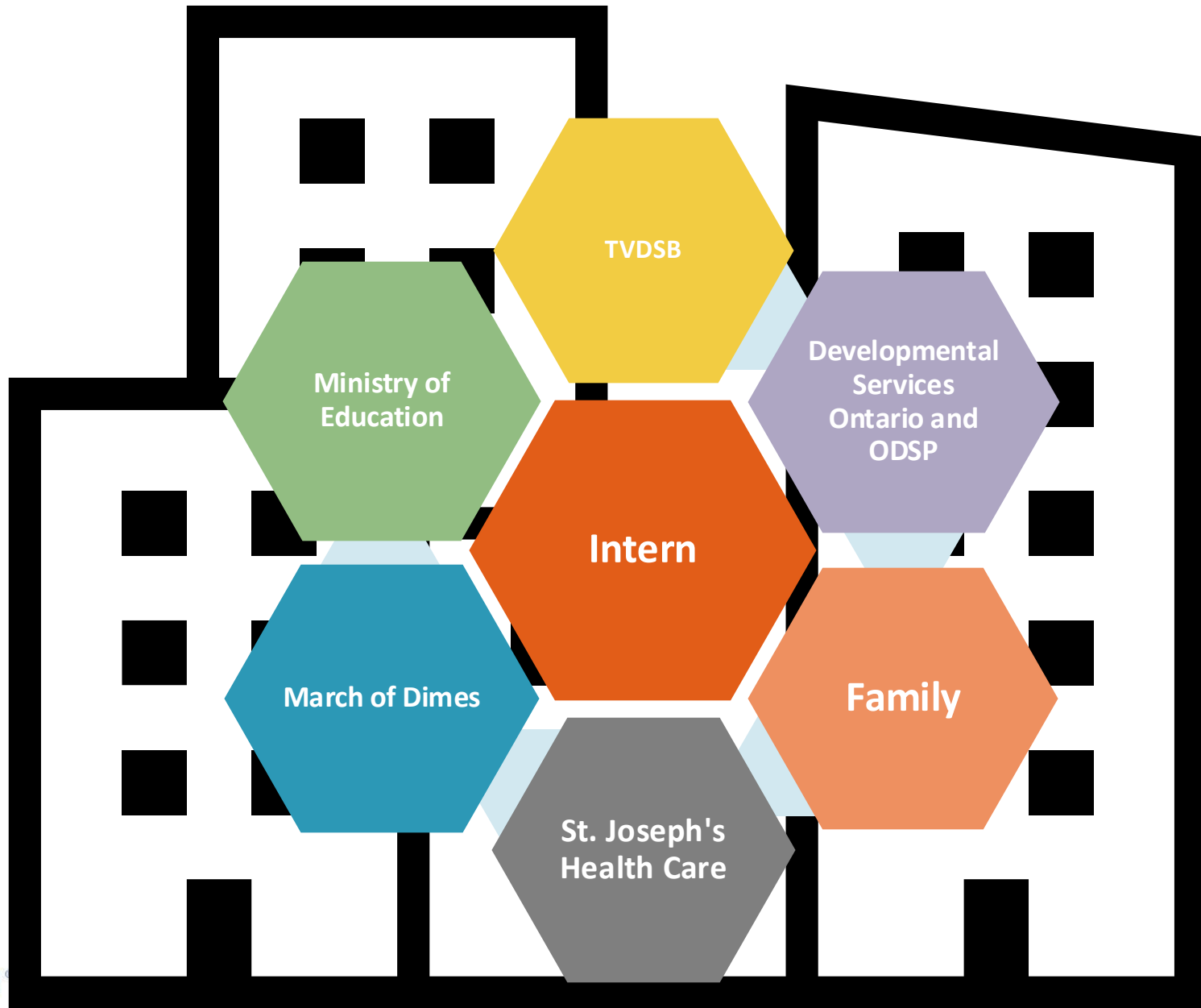




Personal Skills needed:

- Accepts feedback and can change behavior with teaching
- Will be able to follow the rules (policies, procedures, and guidelines) of the host business
- Will complete travel training to ensure they are able to get to/from the host business by themselves (bus fees provided)
- Is committed to working in the community (at least 20 hours per week) at the end of the program





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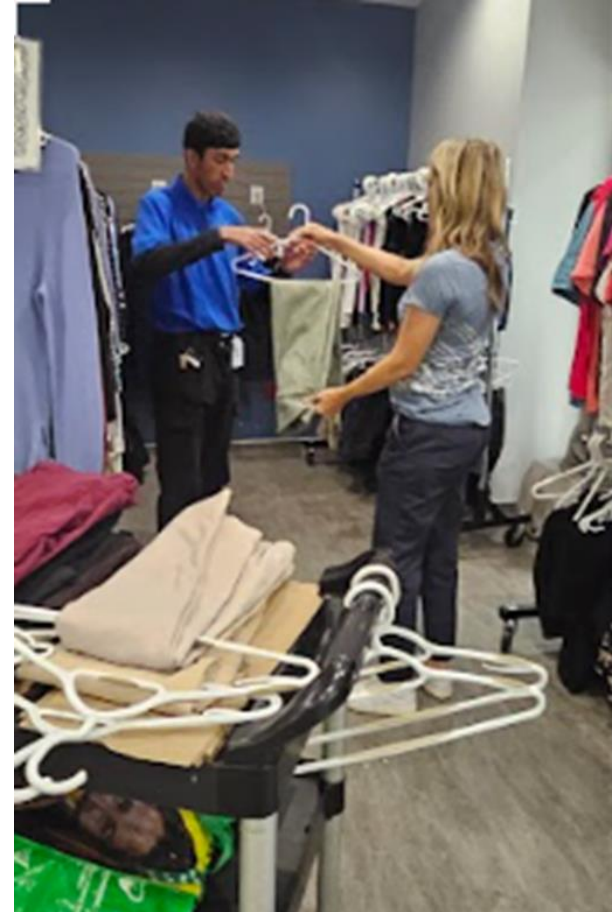
Goals for Employment

The Project SEARCH definition of a successful outcome:

- Competitive employment in an integrated setting
- Year-round work
- 20 hours each week or more
- Typical/prevaling wage or higher



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St. Joseph's Health Care London, Project SEARCH

- Located at **Parkwood Institute**
- One school year (Sept-June)
- Maximum of 10 Interns with developmental disabilities (qualify for DSO)
- Interns are totally immersed in the St. Joseph's Health Care culture with a certified instructor and skills trainers on-site
- Interns participate in **3 Internships** (Work Experience Placements) with continual feedback and support
- Focus is **preparing for and finding employment** in the community



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Project SEARCH Year

- Follows the TVDSB secondary calendar
- First 3 weeks in Sept. are orientation to the program and hospital environment
- Orange days are internship days



Project SEARCH Day

9:30 am-2 pm
Internship Sites

8:15-9:30 am

Training Room

Employability Skills Curriculum

Topics Include:

- Team Building
- Workplace Safety
- Technology
- Self-Advocacy
- Maintaining Employment
- Financial Literacy
- Health and Wellness
- Preparing for Employment

😊 Dept. 1

😊 Dept. 2

😊 Dept. 3

😊 Dept. 4

😊 Dept. 5

😊 Dept. 6

😊 Dept. 7

😊 Dept. 8

2-2:30 pm

Training Room

Debrief of the Day

Employment Planning Meetings



- Intern-led presentation of their skill development in their internship and employment goals
- Parents, managers, mentors, Project SEARCH staff attend and provide feedback
- 2 per Internship, 6 in total

St. Joseph's Health Care and March of Dimes Canada

Partner information



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St. Joseph's Health Care London

Project SEARCH
Information Night

Sandy Jansen and Susan Vuylsteke



St. Joseph's Health Care London

Five Main Locations

- St. Joseph's Hospital
- Mt. Hope Centre for Long Term Care
- Parkwood Main Building
- Finch Family Mental Health Care Building
- Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care

Facts and Stats

- Staff: **4,569**
- Physicians/Dentists/Midwives: **1,370**
- Medical Students Trained (Residents/Fellows/Med Students) Volunteers: **896**
- Geographic Locations: **17**
- Total Beds: **992**

Parkwood Institute: Parkwood Main Building Finch Family Mental Health Care Building



Interns at Work



Food and Nutrition Services



Environmental Services



Veterans Care Program

Interns at Work



Parkwood Children's Centre



Specialized Geriatric Services



Infection Prevention and Control

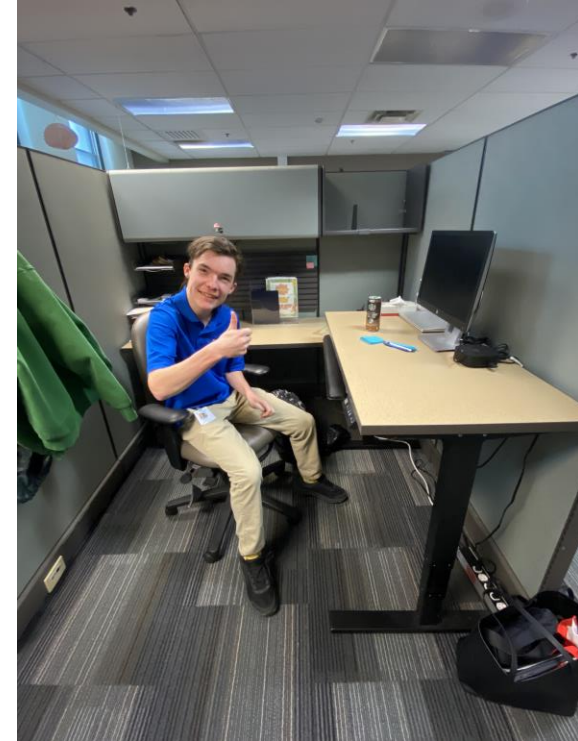
Interns at Work



Volunteer Services



Clintar

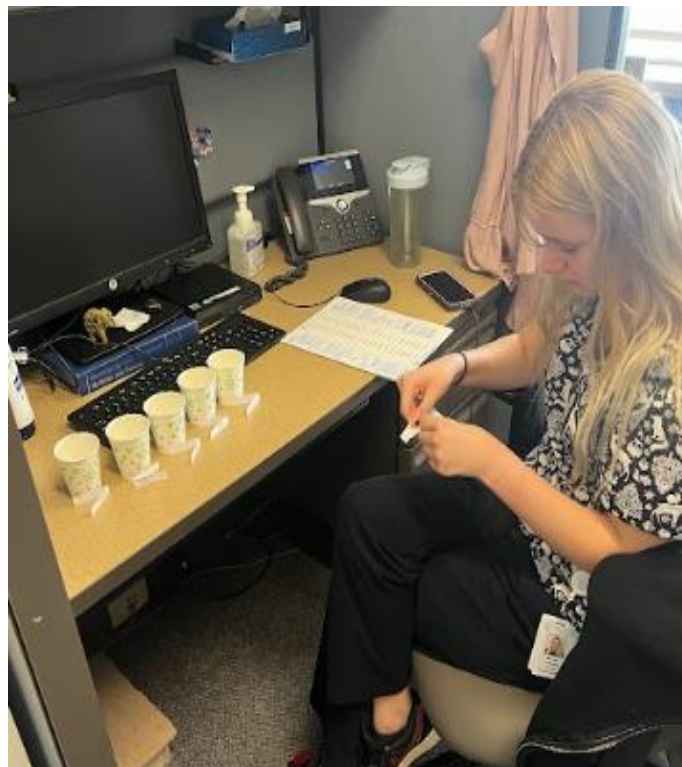


Facilities

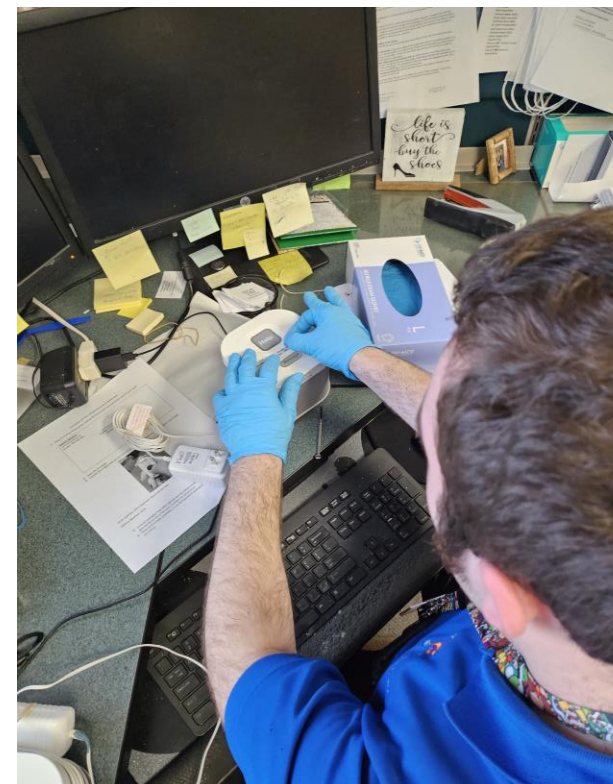
Interns at Work



Health Information Management



Day Hospital



Connect Care

Interviews

- Interns prepare resumes and interview for their Internship placements with department leaders



Intern Feedback: What I've Learned in Project SEARCH

- How to be organized
- How to ride the bus by myself
- How to do laundry, keep the hospital clean, food prep skills
- To work in a team
- To be confident in myself
- I've learned leadership and independence
- How to follow directions
- Asking for help/not afraid to ask questions
- How to communicate

Intern Feedback: What I'm most proud of

- I made it into Project SEARCH
- The jobs I'm doing
- Learning new skills
- My self-confidence
- Independence
- Chance to be heard
- Talking to co-workers and Residents
- Figuring out I like working in a kitchen
- Not being so shy
- Knowing it's okay to not like everything

Program Coordinator Feedback

- Residents appreciate assistance to go off the unit
- Best part is seeing the interns grow throughout the placement and improve their skills
- Our intern was punctual and ready to work
- A "joy" to witness the interns come out of their shell and become part of the team
- We see their confidence and self-esteem grow
- I would recommend Project SEARCH to any individual who is eligible as it offers a hands-on opportunity to develop skills with support through the entire journey

Coordinator Feedback Continued

- Improved team engagement with the intern and among staff as they mentor the student through their development
- Enhanced sense of empathy and learning to be responsive to the needs of a new team member
- Increased leadership roles for staff who stepped up to provide mentorship
- Appreciate the support to get the work completed

Health Review Requirements

- Immunization requirements are based on standards set by St. Joseph's Health Care
 - Up-to-date scheduled vaccines
 - 2-step TB tests
 - Covid vaccines recommended
 - Outstanding vaccines and TB tests can be completed at Parkwood if needed





March Of Dimes Canada

March of Dimes Canada is the employment support service provider who will assist with finding and maintaining employment after the Project SEARCH program.

Referral will take place in the Spring of your graduating year so that you can build rapport with the March of Dimes team with the support of your teacher and skills trainer.

Employer Connections

MODC builds relationships with local employers in the community to identify jobs that match your skills and interests.



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MODC Community Connections

Making connections in the community is a critical part of the wrap around services and support that MODC offers.

- Housing
- Mental Health
- Counselling
- Education
- ODSP/DSO Applications
- Budgeting/Credit Counselling



MODC

Maintaining a Job

- ✓ On the job supports
- ✓ Workplace accommodations
- ✓ Work start-up funding
- ✓ Regular follow ups with the employee and employer
- ✓ Referrals to other services and programs



Application and selection process:

- Links to the application documents will be sent out after this meeting
- Candidates can fill out the electronic application or request a printable copy
- In person Information Nights at TVDSB on **February 4, 2026**
- Applications are due on **March 6, 2026**
- Candidates will be invited by **March 20, 2026** to a skills assessment day
- Skills assessment day will be on **April 2, 2026 (9-11)** at Parkwood Institute
- Interns will be selected by a committee made up of the partner groups
- Decisions to be released by **April 10, 2026**





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London



Thames Valley
District School Board

[Project Search Website TVDSB site](#)



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Intern/Parent Question Period



Shyan- Current Intern



Adam- graduate



Jeffrey- Graduate



Meghan-
Graduate

Thank you!



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