



Connecting Individuals with Disabilities to Their Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 17, 2011

Contact: Cathy Donohue, Account Manager
Millennium Integrated Marketing
cdonohue@mill-im.com
877-873-7445 ext. 204

**Concord Hospital Receives 2011 Employment Leadership Award for Project SEARCH
Program Run in Conjunction with Community Bridges, Voc Rehab, and Concord Schools**

(Concord, New Hampshire) – Concord Hospital has received a 2011 Employment Leadership Award for its Project SEARCH program, a one-year high school transition program that provides training and education for individuals with disabilities. The program is run in conjunction with Community Bridges, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Concord School District. The award was handed out at an event this morning sponsored by the State of New Hampshire's Granite State Employment Project in conjunction with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation and the New Hampshire Division of Economics. This recognition honors Concord Hospital's demonstrated leadership, innovation, and commitment to adopting hiring practices that improve employment opportunities for workers with disabilities in New Hampshire.

"We are pleased to sponsor the Project SEARCH program and help prepare students for employment which in turn assists employers like Concord Hospital welcome people of all abilities into the workforce," said Robin Moore, SPHR, Concord Hospital Chief Human Resources Officer.

"We are thrilled that Concord Hospital is receiving this honor," said Roy Gerstenberger, Executive Director of Community Bridges. "They have been a great partner in exploring ways to help people who experience disabilities achieve real employment and career opportunities in the Concord community."

Students participating in Project SEARCH report to Concord Hospital five days a week to learn employable skills in the classroom then move to a variety of internship experiences. Students complete three to four internship rotations in the school year under the supervision of hospital managers. Internships can include data entry, computer applications, customer service, phone skills, mail sorting, money handling skills, and co-worker support. The end goal of the program is for the student to obtain gainful employment by utilizing the skills he or she learned during their internship.

The Project SEARCH program can accommodate up to 12 students per year. Students 18-21 years of age who are eligible for New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation and area agency services, and who are in their senior year of high school, are qualified to participate in the program. Additional eligibility requirements include meeting all academic requirements for graduation, basic communication skills, and the ability to access independent transportation.

-more-

About Project SEARCH

Established more than 13 years ago at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center by Erin J. Riehle, MSN, RN, Project SEARCH serves people with disabilities through innovative workforce and career development. Through this process, they educate employers about the potential of this underutilized workforce while meeting human resource needs. The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community, and workplace. The program can now be found in hospitals throughout the US and overseas.

About Community Bridges

Community Bridges connects individuals with disabilities and their families with resources that help them achieve positive growth and change. By managing a support network of community resources, Community Bridges matches individuals with disabilities to opportunities that help them realize their greatest potential through an individualized plan.

Serving individuals with disabilities of all ages and financial backgrounds, Community Bridges is a not-for-profit organization that solidifies funding and fosters relationships with a trusted network of organizations throughout the community to ensure the best opportunities for individuals in the areas of Early Childhood Services, Residential and Day Services, Career Development, Homecare Services, Self-Directed Services, and Individual and Family Support. For more information call 603-225-4153 or visit www.communitybridgesnh.org.

###