

Programs Overview

Have Dreams' employment training programs combine internship experiences in a retail, light manufacturing, or office-based setting and soft skills training to support adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in developing the transferable skills needed to be successful in competitive employment.

Have Dreams Academy

Paired with hands-on training in internships in retail, light manufacturing, or office settings, Have Dreams Academy's job readiness curriculum supports adults with ASD in developing the skills needed to be successful in competitive employment. The training room curriculum covers a wide range of transferable job skills, including time management,



problem-solving, appropriately asking for help, accepting feedback, goal setting, building teamwork and leadership skills, as well as developing resumes and practicing interview skills. Additionally, interns participate in community job site tours and practice interview opportunities, which allow them to explore potential career paths and develop greater confidence in the interview skills needed to secure employment.

Academy Overview:

- High school graduates
- 16-weeks
- Retail, light manufacturing, or office-based internships
- Transferrable job skills
- Soft skills training

Job Development

The goal of Have Dreams' Employment Training Programs is for each graduate to secure competitive employment upon successful completion of the program. As each intern nears the end of the program, they are supported in evaluating which companies and positions would be a good match with their employment skills. Interns receive support in identifying job leads, submitting applications, preparing for interviews, and following up with employers, in order to facilitate the hiring process. Once employed, Have Dreams provides support during the onboarding and training processes, ensuring that each adult has a smooth transition into employment. The degree of support provided varies from intern to intern, but can involve:

1. supporting the employer in better understanding ASD and developing effective ways to communicate with the employee;
2. on-site job coaching services; and
3. assistance in developing visual aids (to-do lists, schedules or other resources).

This support gradually fades, in order to allow each employee to work independently.

Success Stories

Steve began interning at a commercial bakery with the **Have Dreams Academy** in 2015. His supervisor was so pleased with his speed and work ethic, that she hired him for a seasonal position before he graduated from the program. Upon completion of this seasonal role, Steve transitioned to a part-time position at a company that manufactures alternators. He continued to receive positive feedback from his supervisors and was soon offered a full-time, permanent position. He has been employed with this company for over a year.

Through the **Have Dreams Employment Training program**, **Michael** interned at a bank in downtown Chicago, where he was



responsible for filing and scanning documents, and completing a range of data entry and quality control projects. Throughout the program he completed two different internship rotations, allowing him to work with multiple teams at the bank. Michael received very positive feedback from his supervisors regarding his attention to detail, accuracy, and professionalism. He gained confidence in problem-solving skills, his ability to establish social connections in the workplace, and utilizing supervisors' feedback to improve his performance. Since completing the program, Michael has been offered a data entry position.