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**PROVIDENCE HEALTH-NORTHEAST PARTNERS WITH RICHLAND COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT TWO AND PROJECT SEARCH****Helping Young Adults with Special Needs Develop Career Skills and Find Work**

COLUMBIA, SC – Securing employment can be a challenge for any young adult. It can be even more difficult for those with developmental disabilities. Project SEARCH is a collaborative partnership that provides students who want to work with a chance to explore careers and develop transferable job skills.

Providence Health-Northeast and Richland County School District Two are partnering under the Project SEARCH program to provide professional experience to six local high school students.

The national organization Project SEARCH collaborates with businesses to offer a one-year curriculum in which individuals with intellectual disabilities rotate through a variety of internships. The curriculum also includes educational sessions that help further develop skills for independence such as professional hygiene expectations, making nutritious meal choices, and communicating with co-workers and colleagues. Approximately, 75% of Project SEARCH students find competitive employment within a year after the program.

The valuable skills and contributions that individuals with intellectual disabilities can provide to the community can be overlooked or misjudged. “We are excited be able to help these young adults in our community to achieve a more independent, self-satisfying future,” says Lindy White, Chief Executive Officer of Providence Health-Northeast. “We are grateful for the assistance they will provide to Providence and the community going forward.”

Students in the program will be interning in areas such as dietary, environmental services, surgical services, and the Emergency Room. Internships may also be expanded into other areas such as IT and materials management. All positions and tasks to be performed by participants are thoroughly vetted to ensure they are appropriate for the students so that the young adults can achieve success and provide valuable assistance in a way that is safe for the students, staff, and patients.

For more information about Project SEARCH, visit: <https://www.projectsearch.us/>.

**About Providence Health:** Founded in 1938 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine and continuing today as a Catholic healthcare system, Providence Health is a full-service healthcare system serving the Midlands of South Carolina. A part of LifePoint Health, Providence consists of two hospitals and multiple physician practices, rehabilitation centers, sleep centers, imaging and diagnostics labs, and other services. Providence Health’s downtown Columbia hospital specializes in high acuity care, while its Northeast Columbia campus recently transitioned from a specialty facility to a full-service community hospital. Providence employs more than 1,600 dedicated staff. For more information, visit [YourProvidenceHealth.com](http://YourProvidenceHealth.com).

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