

Employment Newsletter



Technology First
Americans with Disabilities Act
STABLE
Employment First
Transportation

Supports Matter

Housing
Direct Support Professionals
Early Intervention
Intermediate Care Facilities
Waivers



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

PLEDGE to advocate and accept my responsibility to be respectful to the individual...
We are people
Call me by my name
Developmental Disability Awareness Month

March has been recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM) since 1987. Every year, DD agencies, provider agencies, advocacy groups, and individual advocates hold events and campaigns to increase public awareness of the needs and potential of Americans with developmental disabilities.

Here are a few things **YOU** can do to recognize DDAM:

- Take the [People First Language pledge!](#)
- Find out where your company stands with the [NOD Employment Tracker](#)[™] which ranks organizations in six key disability and veterans' inclusion focus areas: Strategy, Talent Outcome Metrics, Climate & Culture, Talent Sourcing, People Practices, Workplace Tools & Accessibility.
- Share your DD awareness story on social media with the hashtags #DDAwareness2023, #BeyondtheConversation, #DDAM2023 & #DDAM.

Take the pledge.



DDS.CT.Gov/AdvocatesCorner

- Join the Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC) and partners from the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) in celebrating Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month! The webinar will cover the role of state DD Councils and share innovative employment initiatives from DD Councils in California and South Carolina. The Webinar is Tuesday, March 14th, 2023 from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Register for the webinar [here](#).



Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month 2023
Beyond the Conversation
#DDAM2023

EDS Updates

The Employment & Day Services (EDS) Division was created in 2018 to oversee DDS employment and day service options. EDS works with individuals, families, providers, community partners, and businesses to prepare individuals for competitive employment. The division currently offers a variety of day and employment services to individuals with intellectual disability and other developmental disabilities (IDD) across Connecticut, learn more below:

Fourth Tuesday Forums on Innovative Options

Each month a different topic is discussed by DDS staff from the content area. These meetings will be informational listening sessions to allow stakeholders to learn more about different DDS services.



Meetings take place on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm and are held on Microsoft Teams. Meeting links and past meeting recordings are posted [here](#).

March 28, 2023
Employment Transformation/ARPA

April 25, 2023
Technology for Optimal Independence

May 23, 2023
Individual and Family Supports/Respite

June 28, 2023
Children's Services & Transition Age Youth

DDS Innovative Employment Opportunity (IEO) Grant Awardee Sarah Kelly creator of West Hartford Soapy Foam

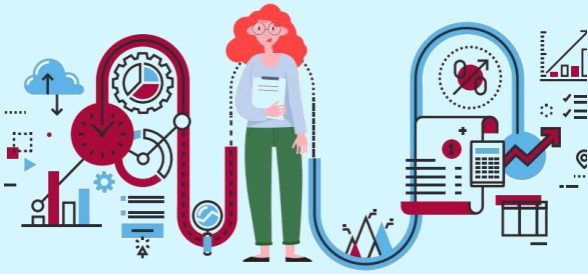
In January 2023, West Hartford resident Sarah Kelly celebrated the launch of her business West Hartford Soapy Foam at Good Cause Gifts in West Hartford. Sarah is a 20-year-old with disabilities who creates and sells dog-shaped soaps through her business West Hartford Soapy Foam. West Hartford Mayor Shari Cantor attended the January ribbon cutting to celebrate the sale of Sarah's dog shaped soaps at Good Cause Gifts.



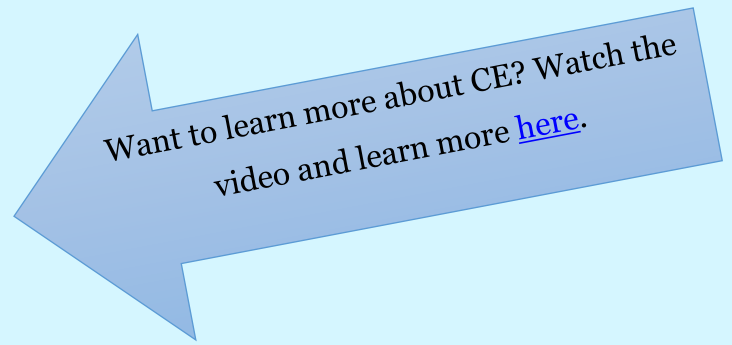
Customized Employment (CE) Services

JOB SEEKERS

During the customized employment process, you are always at the center of the planning and job development activities and is always included. Employment outcomes are always in competitive, integrated settings with a wage that is equal to other employees in the same position.



Customized Employment (CE) is an alternative method of finding **competitive integrated employment** that focuses on the strengths, skills and abilities of individuals with significant disabilities and the unmet needs of employers. It is a **highly structured, person-centered process, carried out over time in three separate phases**. It serves as a separate service model with more intensive creative and specifically modified supports to help the individual achieve their self-directed employment option. The service is **job seeker driven**.



CT CE Technical Assistance Community of Practice

The first meeting of the 2023 Customized Employment Technical Assistance Community of Practice was on Monday, January 9th, 2023 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. There CoP will meet quarterly, and all provider agencies are welcome to join: those curious about CE, those currently in a CE Certification Course, and those currently providing CE Services.

What is a Community of Practice?



The first half of the CT CE Technical Assistance CoP meetings is informational, and the second half is time for questions, answers, and discussion. The ADS-DDS team is working to invite subject matter experts and professionals from other states to present during the first half of the CoP meetings. More information and the RSVP link can be found in the attached one-pager found [here](#).

Quarter 2 – [RSVP](#)

April 17th, 2023 | 9:00AM to 12:00PM

Job Discovery

Quarter 3 – [RSVP](#)

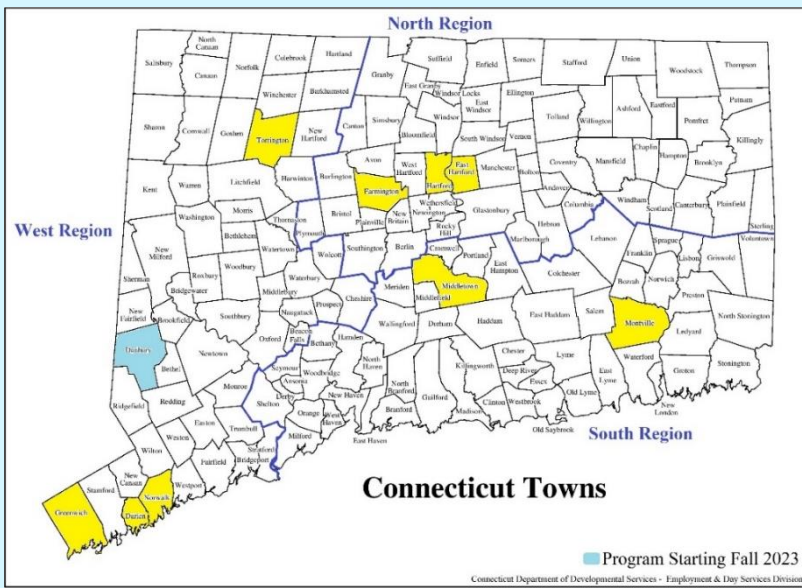
August 14th, 2023 | 9:00AM to 12:00PM

Job Development, Negotiation & Placement

Quarter 4 – [RSVP](#)

November 13th, 2023 | 9:00AM to 12:00PM

Post-Employment Supports



Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH (PS) is a nine-month internship training program, available to school transition age students and young adults eligible for DDS services, who need more intensive employment skills training. There are **10** Project SEARCH programs across Connecticut and more to come in 2023-2024!

Learn more about Project SEARCH [here](#). View the CT PS Contact List [here](#).

Abilis, Darien YMCA, & Greenwich Hospital

Abilis will be holding a Project SEARCH Information Night on Thursday, March 30th, 2023 from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Nobel Conference Room at Greenwich Hospital located at 5 Perryridge Road, Greenwich, CT 06830.

Abilis collaborates with local school districts and DDS to run two different Project SEARCH programs at Greenwich Hospital and Darien YMCA.

Registration is required, register [here](#).

Questions? Please email Nick Stewart at Stewart@abilis.com

PATH TO EMPLOYMENT
For ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

INFORMATION SESSION:
Applications are open for an innovative job training internship for young adults with disabilities. Learn how to enroll for 2023.

DATE: THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023
TIME: 6:00PM - 7:00PM
LOCATION: Greenwich Hospital, Nobel Conference Room 5 Perryridge Road, Greenwich, CT

ABOUT ABILIS / PROJECT SEARCH:
Project SEARCH is a nine-month internship program for people with disabilities, between the ages of 18-30, including transitioning high school students, who seek competitive employment.

At this internship, interns will:

- Develop marketable skills to prepare for future employment
- Increase independence, self-confidence and self-esteem

Current Internship Partners:

- Darien YMCA
- Greenwich Hospital

Registration Required:
www.abilis.us/calendar

Questions, contact:
Nick Stewart
Program Manager, Abilis
stewa@abilis.us
www.abilis.us

Abilis collaborates with local school districts and the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services to run the Greenwich Hospital and Darien YMCA internship programs.

UConn Health & The Arc of Farmington Valley, Inc. (FAVARH)

The Arc of Farmington Valley, Inc. (FAVARH) will be holding two more information sessions about their Project SEARCH program at UConn Health throughout the beginning of 2023. Families can learn how young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities can become involved in this internationally recognized internship program, hear what it has to offer, and find out what will be expected of chosen interns. Come meet and mingle with the Project SEARCH staff and experience the impact this program had on those who have successfully completed the program. Learn more about FAVARH's Project Search Program [here](#).

Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Tuesday, March 21st, 2023 at 1:00 PM

RSVP To: ProjectSearch@favarh.org for link to Zoom Session.

An Opportunity to Change Outcomes

Families can learn how young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities can become involved in this internationally recognized internship program, **hear** what it has to offer, **find out** what will be expected of chosen interns. **Come meet and mingle** with the Project SEARCH staff and **experience** the impact this program had on those who have successfully completed the program.

Project SEARCH benefits include:

- Non-paid internships with UConn Health
- Competitive, transferable, and marketable job skills
- Increased independence, confidence and self-esteem
- Work-based individualized coaching instruction and feedback from the instructor, skills trainers and UConn Health mentors


Project SEARCH uses a combination of classroom instruction coupled with workplace internships to prepare individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for competitive employment.

Project SEARCH is a unique, school-to-work transition program for young adults with disabilities

Date: March 22, 2023
Time: 1:00 PM
Location: Zoom
RSVP By: March 21st
RSVP To: ProjectSearch@favarh.org for link to Zoom Session

Scan below for more information about Project SEARCH in Connecticut or contact Favarh at ProjectSearch@favarh.org

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital & The Arc of Litchfield County (LARC)



Project SEARCH is an exciting opportunity offered by LARC.

The Project SEARCH Program is a unique, business-led, on-site training program for students with disabilities.

Locations in the program will complete since openings at **Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington, CT**, with the main goal of gaining the necessary skills to obtain competitive, stable careers.

The Project SEARCH program involves an extensive period of training and career exploration, long-term job counseling and continued feedback from business, disability, and mentors.

Who is eligible to participate?

- Young adults with disabilities aged 18-35
- Reside in Northwestern CT
- In the process of completing or have already completed a high school education
- Receiving DDS funding for comprehensive services and/or have IEP
- Strong desire to work and demonstrate potential for on-site job employment

LARC is accepting applications until May 1, 2023

For more information and meeting link, please contact:

Kathy Riberdy
Project SEARCH
Special Educator/Coordinator
(860) 482-9364 Ext. 349
k.riberdy@litchfieldarc.org
www.litchfieldarc.org

The Arc of Litchfield County (LARC) will be holding two more information sessions about their Project SEARCH program at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington, CT.

Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 at 2:00 pm & Wednesday, April 5th, 2023 at 5:00 pm

**Individual meetings available*

To learn more about the Project SEARCH Program at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, review LARC's Project SEARCH Flyer [here](#).

For more information and meeting link, please contact Kathy Riberdy at kriberdy@litchfieldarc.org

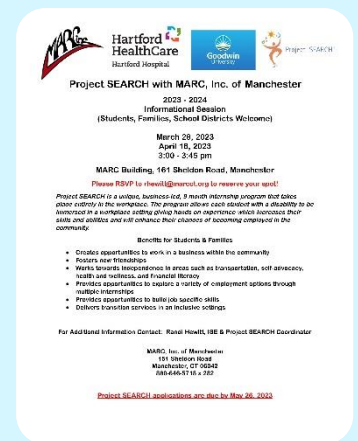
Hartford Hospital & MARC, Inc. of Manchester

Marc of Manchester will be holding two information sessions for students, families, and school districts about their Project SEARCH program Hartford Hospital.

Information Sessions are in person at 161 Sheldon Road, Manchester, CT from 3:00 PM to 3:45 PM. Please RSVP rhewitt@marcct.org to reserve your spot!

Tuesday, March 28th, 2023

Tuesday, April 18th, 2023



Project SEARCH with MARC, Inc. of Manchester

2023 - 2024
Informational Session
(Students, Families, School Districts Welcome)

March 28, 2023
April 18, 2023
3:00 - 3:45 pm

MARC Building, 161 Sheldon Road, Manchester
Please RSVP to rhewitt@marcct.org to reserve your spot!

Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led, 9-month intensive program that takes place entirely in the workplace. The program allows each student with a disability to be successful in a competitive setting through hands-on experiential, which increases their skills and confidence and will enhance their chances of becoming employed in the community.

Benefits for Students & Families

- Creates opportunities to work in a business within the community
- Foster new friendships
- Work beyond stereotypes in areas such as transportation, self-advocacy, health and wellness, and financial literacy
- Provides opportunities to explore a variety of careerment options through hands-on experience
- Provides opportunities to better job seeking skills
- Delivers transition services in an inclusive setting

For Additional Information Contact: Rhewitt, IRE & Project SEARCH Coordinator

MARC Inc. of Manchester
161 Sheldon Road
Manchester, CT 06105
860.444.5116 x.387

Project SEARCH applications are due by May 30, 2023

Self-Advocacy

State Advisory Council for Special Education

The State Advisory Council for Special Education (SAC) Membership Committee is actively seeking student/transition age representatives. The SAC is a committee that is a representative group of students, parents, education professionals, and stakeholders collaborating on issues related to special education in Connecticut. This is a great leadership opportunity for high school or transition age students who are currently eligible for special education.

The SAC typically meets five to nine times per year and student representatives attend as their school and other extracurricular activities permit. It is perfectly acceptable to attend a portion of a council meeting, or even miss a meeting due to other commitments. Members may attend meetings in person or via phone/Zoom.

If you and/or your student are interested in learning more about the State Advisory Council for Special Education, you are most welcome to attend a future Council meeting to learn more about what the Council does. You may also contact Catherine Summ, Membership Committee Chairperson, at Catherine.summ@ct.gov or Jolie Medina, Assistant to the Council at Yolanda.medina@ct.gov with any questions you may have.

Liam's Success Story

Liam is a young gentleman who is participating in Project Search at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington. Project Search is a volunteer program where Liam is training to do different types of jobs at the hospital. Before Covid-19 Liam worked at Dottie's Diner. Some of his responsibilities were cracking eggs, cooking bacon, frosting donuts, and squeezing lemons.



While volunteering at Project Search, Liam has worked in the cafeteria, in the ENT Department, the Cardiac Rehab, and the Storeroom. His duties in the cafeteria have been food prep, where he has made sandwiches and salads as well as draining the canned fruits and vegetables. Liam's duties also include putting away the clean dishes.

Soon Liam will be trying his hand at Wheelchair Transport, which he seemed excited to be trying! I asked Liam what his dream job is. He said, "To have a paying job again!"

- Written by Natasha Cole, DDS Self-Advocate Coordinator

To read more employment success stories, visit the DDS Self-Advocate Corner [here!](#)



Check out the DDS Self-Advocate Coordinator's (SAC) video to raise awareness for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month!

March 2023 Virtual Recreation Calendar

Virtual Recreation for CT adults (20 + up) receiving DDS services. Meetings held online, a Zoom account is needed to participate, to join a session, use this [link](#) (Meeting ID: 222 399 8386, Passcode: 479813). Contact Corinne Jackson at corinne.jackson@ct.gov with any questions.

There are 10 DDS Self-Advocate Coordinators (SACs) across the state. Click [here](#) to meet the DDS Self-Advocates. Each SAC has a special focus area, with each supporting the Person-Centered Planning and Self-Determination for the individuals we serve. Check out the DDS Advocates' Corner [here](#) for information and resources on, self-advocacy, independent living, employment and health and safety for individuals

MARCH 2023 RECREATION CALENDAR

| TUESDAY 5:30 - 6:30 PM | WEDNESDAY 5:30 - 6:30 PM | THURSDAY 3 - 4 PM |
|---|--|---|
| 7 SING ALONG JUKEBOX with Ann Marie & Jason!! | (free) Zoom account needed to participate https://tinyurl.com/62rn5ujn Meeting ID: 222 399 8386 Passcode: 479813 | 2 HEALTHY EATING & MOVING WITH Natasasha! |
| 14 Yana's CRITTER CORNER | 8 CINEMA Movie Clips! THE GOOD LIFE SOCIAL GROUP | 9 ROCKING OUT with Rocker Girl |
| 21 Paige's Trivia & Video Dance Party | 22 Virtual Vacation With Yana | 16 TRIVIA with Kellie |
| 28 TIM'S JEOPARDY! VILLAINS with your host, Ali Smith | Virtual Recreation for CT adults (20+ up) receiving DDS services Contact Corinne Jackson with any questions corinne.jackson@ct.gov | 23 BINGO with Carol |

Links & Resources

DDS does not endorse or recommend any product, process, or service listed below.

4th Annual CT APSE Conference ReconnEcted, and Back on Track!



SAVE THE DATE
4th Annual CT APSE Conference:
ReconnEcted, and Back on Track!
May 10, 2023

Where: Sheraton Hartford South
Who should attend: Job developers, employment specialists, job coaches, school transition personnel, managers/directors; anyone interested in advancing employment for persons with disabilities!
Why attend: This conference will be a great educational and in person networking experience for professionals assisting individuals in advancing and securing employment.
Registration information coming soon!

Save the Date! The 4th Annual CT Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Conference is May 10th, 2023 at the Sheraton Hartford South. This in-person conference will be a great educational and networking experience for professionals assisting individuals in advancing and securing employment including: Job developers, employment specialists, job coaches, school transition personnel, managers/directors; anyone interested in advancing employment for persons with disabilities! Registration information coming soon.

The Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL)

The **Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL)** helps people with disabilities get connected to information about local community resources that support independent living. Launched in 2021, DIAL provides information about essential services such as transportation, housing support, disability rights, and more. DIAL's staff are trained to work with people of various communications abilities and will spend as much time as needed to ensure effective communication. DIAL staff can assist people in all languages and are trained to work with callers who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. Connect with a DIAL Information Specialist from Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.



888.677.1199
Disability Information & Access Line
Your primary vaccine access resource

Call, Text Message, or Videophone: 888-677-1199

The ADA Tax Credit

To assist businesses with complying with the ADA, the tax code allows a tax credit for businesses. The tax credit is available to businesses that have total revenues of \$1,000,000 or less in the previous tax year or 30 or fewer full-time employees. This credit can cover 50% of the eligible access expenditures in a year up to \$10,250

(maximum credit of \$5000). The tax credit can be used to offset the cost of undertaking barrier removal and alterations to improve accessibility; providing accessible formats such as Braille, large print and audio tape; making available a sign language interpreter or a reader for customers or employees, and for purchasing certain adaptive equipment. For more information, click [here](#).



Adult Technology & Computer Trainings

Introduction to Computer Literacy

This is a 10.5 hour in-person computer class held over 3 or 4 days. Classes are offered at multiple locations. Eligible participants may also receive a free refurbished computer after completing the class.

You must attend each day to be eligible.



Topics to be covered:

- Introduction to Computers
- Navigating Windows
- Introduction to Word
- Creating Professional Resumes
- Introduction to Excel and Creating a Personal Budget
- Introduction to Canva
- How to Maintain Your Computer System
- Online Job Searching

Classes are in person. To learn more, RSVP with the location links below.

April 10, 11, 12 & 13 – Meriden

May 8, 9, 10 & 11 - Middletown

June 5, 6, 7 & 8 – New Haven

This program runs in partnership with Workforce Alliance/American Job Center and New Haven Adult Education.

Travel Training Services



Since 1991, The Kennedy Collective has successfully taught more than 3,000 people with cognitive, sensory and physical disabilities to use local buses and trains. A qualified Mobility Instructor travels with each individual to train the person on specific techniques. There is no charge for Travel Training, except for the bus or train fare; there is no time limit for training; and instructors are available for follow-up services.

The Kennedy Collective Travel Training Program teaches the skills needed to take the bus/train and addresses:

Street crossing

Interacting with strangers

Being prepared for unexpected circumstances

What to do if lost

Proper wheelchair securement

Self-advocacy

Mobility, Choice, Independence



For more information contact the Kennedy Collective Director of Mobility Services at 203-365-8522 ext. 265

WEBINARS:



Applied

Self-Direction

Self-Direction Conference: Virtual Series

Applied Self-Direction hosts the only national conference dedicated to self-direction. The National Self-Direction Conference brings together state and federal government, managed care organizations, Financial Management Services entities, people and families who self-direct, support brokers, and other key stakeholders from across the country to collaborate on one goal: advancing self-direction.

Sessions for the 2023 Self-Direction Conference: Virtual Series will be offered twice a week throughout March and April from 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm (EST). To see the full schedule, learn more, and register [click here](#).

2023 Connecticut Manufacturing Summit for Educators

The 2023 Connecticut Manufacturing Summit for Educators invites all educators, administrators, counselors, and CTE teachers to join the online Summit Wednesday, April 5th from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. Get updates and engage with regional partners on current initiatives, upcoming events, and programs that can open doors for students interested in career opportunities within your community. Register [here](#).

CT Center for Advanced Technology 2nd Annual Career Connections Expo

The 2nd Annual Career Connections Expo will be held Friday, March 17th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at the CT Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT)'s Advanced Technology Center: 409 Silver Lane, East Hartford, CT.



This hiring event is open to anyone interested in a career in manufacturing and technology. No experience is required! Bring an updated resume and come prepared to learn more about opportunities in advanced manufacturing. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

The ADA and the K-12 Environment

Join Joe Zesski and Christopher Sweet of the Northeast ADA Center as they provide a broad overview of how the Americans with Disabilities Act applies in the elementary and secondary school setting. While the ADA does not provide funding for student services and supports like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, it has an essential role. The ADA is a civil rights law that prevents discrimination and ensures the rights of students with disabilities to equal access and equal opportunity, protects the rights of school employees with disabilities, and safeguards the rights of parents with disabilities to be engaged in their child's education.



K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan
Institute on Employment and Disability

The Webinar will be held on Wednesday, March 29, 2023 from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm, register [here](#).

Trauma Informed Care of Individuals with IDD

Free Training: Trauma informed support of individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities for direct support professionals led by national expert Dr. Karyn Harvey. Attend all 4 sessions & take an online quiz to receive certificate of training in Trauma Informed Care of Individuals with IDD. Click [here](#) for more info.



March 11th - 10am to 12pm

Sources of trauma for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)

April 8th - 10am to 12pm

Biological and psychological effects of trauma for people with IDD

May 13th - 10am to 12pm

Supporting individuals with IDD with the effects of trauma

June 10th - 10am to 12pm

Supporting individuals with IDD to build a positive identity

For more information or to register please contact Lucy Cordwell: lkcordwell@alaska.edu / (907) 264-6223

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460 Capitol Avenue Hartford, CT 06106

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CT Department of Developmental Services

Attn: Employment & Day Services Division

460 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06106-1308