

GIANT EAGLE AND UPMC

Pittsburgh Area, PA

INVESTING IN YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES



Giant Eagle and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center face different types of challenges in recruiting, training and retaining workers, but both have found young adults with disabilities to be a key, and often overlooked, source of talent. Both employers have developed strategies for hiring and retaining young adults with disabilities which have helped their organizations tackle these challenges and thrive.

In 2016, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions recognized Giant Eagle and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) as Young Adult Employer Champions. Both Pittsburgh-based employers have demonstrated exemplary leadership in creating opportunities for young adults with disabilities to prepare for and succeed in good jobs with self-sustaining wages.

As a result of hiring young employees and providing career-building opportunities, Giant Eagle and UPMC have seen a multitude of company-wide successes, from improving retention to minimizing recruitment costs.

Since 2015, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions has recognized businesses as Young Adult Employer Champions. These organizations have made substantial commitments toward helping to create well-paying, market-driven careers for young adult workers in their regions.

Giant Eagle: Taking a Pilot Program to the Next Level

Operating close to 400 retail locations in five states, Giant Eagle employs 34,000 people in the retail/grocery industry. In an industry where many different retailers, large and small, are competing for highly productive and customer service oriented workers, Giant Eagle has found that actively engaging and recruiting individuals with disabilities is a winning proposition. Supported by the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania and County of Allegheny,

in 2013 Giant Eagle partnered with the Pittsburgh Office of Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services for a pilot program to facilitate the hiring of young adults with visual or other disabilities. The key component of the pilot was placing a professional job coach at five selected Giant Eagle stores to serve as a Career Transition Liaison, who would learn the responsibilities of store employees, and then identify particular assignments which could be performed by young adults with disabilities.

The liaison spent her entire first month training and learning about all the various jobs at Giant Eagle, immersing herself in the culture and working closely with the recruiting team. This investment paid off as the program began recruiting and hiring. The liaison was invaluable in identifying candidates; managing intake and screening; assisting with pre-employment requirements and obstacles; coaching young adults for interviews; and working with department managers, human resources staff, and recruiters throughout the hiring and on-boarding process to make for a smooth and mutually beneficial transition.

The program quickly exceeded its initial recruitment and hiring goals.

Tasked with hiring and retaining 12 new hires in each of the two years of the program, **Giant Eagle hired 65 people with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21.**

At the end of the two-year pilot, the program continued and expanded. The Pittsburgh region now has two Career Transition Liaisons, funded by The Giant Eagle Foundation and the Pittsburgh Office of Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services. In addition, Giant Eagle Foundation supported expansion of the program to stores in Cleveland and Columbus.

UPMC Tackles Talent Development: Internships Provide Skills and Experience

UPMC, Pittsburgh's largest employer, has more than 60,000 employees at 20 hospitals, 500 doctors offices and outpatient sites, as well as an insurance division. Given the breadth and depth of its employment needs, UPMC requires a robust talent pipeline encompassing a range of education and skill levels. To address this need, UPMC takes a multi-faceted approach to talent development, with several workforce and college-based programs, and offers multiple internship opportunities.

Project Search is an important component in UPMC's talent pipeline which creates opportunities for high school students with disabilities to prepare for and enter a variety of in-demand jobs in healthcare.

To support these efforts, UPMC partners with Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Office of Intellectual Disabilities, and local school districts. Through Project Search, students with disabilities are identified and recruited, typically in their senior year of high school, and then receive behaviorally-based training provided by Goodwill. UPMC provides a paid internship which includes on-the-job and classroom training on site at the hospitals.

Of the 80 participants since the inception of the program, 40 have gone on to employment at UPMC. The obvious benefit to UPMC is access to a pool of talent in an industry that continues to be in need of workers.



One Participant's Success

Tim McGivern says that the best part of his job is the people he works with. Referred to Giant Eagle Supermarket at age 17 while still a senior at Fox Chapel High School, Tim has now been a Team

Member -employed as a Front End Clerk working 35-40 hours per week for more than 3 years.

Tim is on the autism spectrum and remembers feeling like he would be too shy and nervous to get through a job interview. Career Transition Liaison Barb Graham worked with Tim to prepare for the interview, to know what to expect, and helped with the on-boarding process once he was hired. Tim feels that the job at Giant Eagle has helped him grow personally and admits that he is a favorite of a lot of the customers. His goal is to keep working at Giant Eagle for as long as possible, a goal that is undoubtedly supported by his fellow Team Members and customers.

THE EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Pam Arroyo, HR Program Director for UPMC says, "Through Project Search, we get great talent, expertly trained by Goodwill, and have developed partnerships with schools throughout our community. Students make important contributions to our operations while also building their own skills. In addition, Project Search gives us access to excellent employees whom we might not find through traditional channels."

|| One of the biggest challenges to getting people with disabilities employed and retained is that the provider community didn't have a good way of understanding a company's corporate culture, HR process, or the nature of the work. Having the liaison embedded at the company, learning all the jobs and spending time with the recruiting team, once the community figured out she was a resource to the schools to get students jobs, the floodgates opened. ||

- Pam Arroyo, HR Program Director for UPMC



UPMC LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE



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