

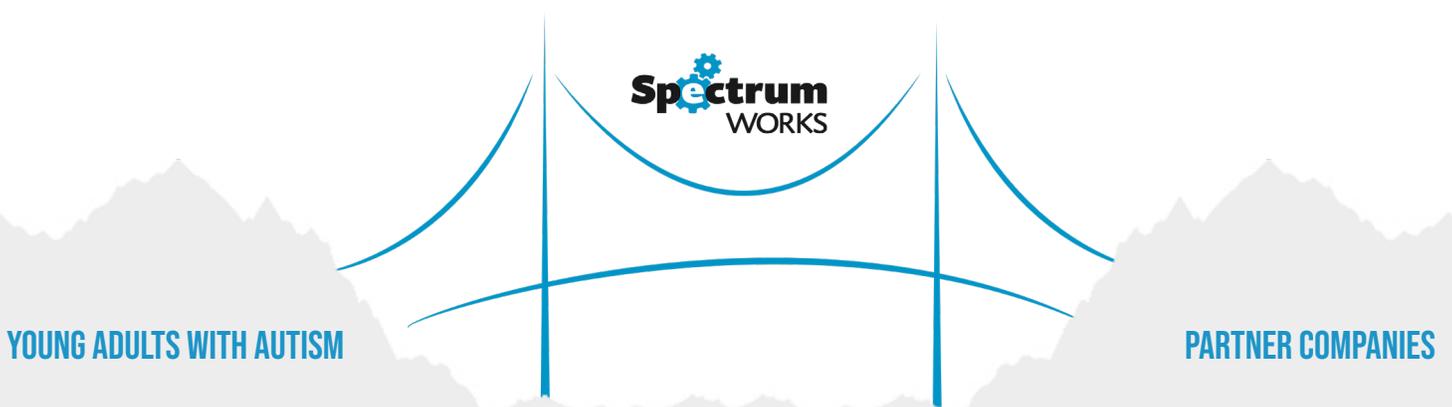
THE SPECTRUM BRIDGE

Spectrum Works School Newsletter, Issue 1

500,000 young adults with autism in the U.S. are graduating in the next ten years.

Many have the desire to be employed but lack the skills, opportunity, or experience in an integrated workplace. At the same time, companies lack the knowledge of how to implement and manage an inclusive workforce but are interested in employing individuals with autism and other disabilities.

The Spectrum Works Solution is the bridge



DOES YOUR SCHOOL HAVE STUDENTS WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM PARTICIPATION IN MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT?

See how our SLE program can be your solution.

LETTER FROM CEO



Ann Marie Sullivan, Founder & CEO

“CHANGING THE PARADIGM FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM”

Spectrum Works’ journey began in 2011 after seeing first-hand that individuals with autism have the ability to work in corporate America and hearing the amazing stories of how having a job changed their lives. I researched “autism and employment” and found an imbalance between the growing population of individuals with autism and the low percentage of those individuals that are employed and decided to do something about it.

The organization has made great strides since launching a pilot program at Green Distribution in 2013, proving that people with autism can be integrated into the workforce through education and opportunity. Our unique model not only improved the lives of individuals with autism, but it also had a noticeably positive effect on the employees at Green. After seeing the impact of the pilot program, we began implementation at other companies including Rent the Runway.

Spectrum Works’ model is driving social change! It helps young adults with autism live up to their potential for stable, successful, economically self-sufficient lives and, at the same time, helps companies create neuro-diverse workforces. Our vision is to change society’s perception, work with corporations to employ and integrate people with autism into their workplace, and to become the trusted advisor.

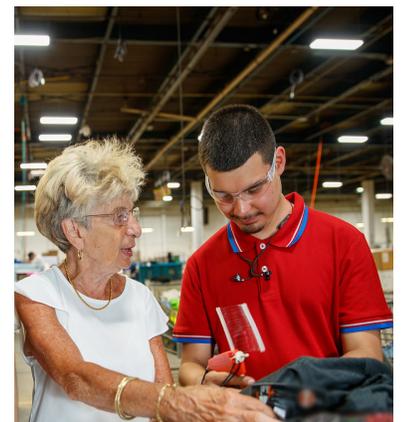
Spectrum Works has grown to a point where the future looks strong and the impact opportunity significant and broad. I am truly grateful for the support of our partner companies, donors, schools, parents, staff, and most importantly for all of our students who have profoundly impacted my life and inspire me every day.

“The staff at Spectrum Works has worked to ensure the success of my students, guiding them through the many intricacies of gaining and maintaining employment in a community-based setting. Each Spectrum Works employee takes the time to cultivate a strong working relationship with each individual student.”

- Kelly Le Strange, Morris Knolls High School

SPOTLIGHT: JESSE, SPECTRUM WORKS GRADUATE

Jesse came to the Spectrum Works program through West New York High School. While working with Green Distribution, a Spectrum Works partner company, Jesse gained the needed experience in a work-based setting as well as increasing his social interactions with his peers, job coaches, and Green employees. Jesse has a mild nature, so it is surprising to learn that he is an avid fan of WWE wrestling. He also likes the ability, with his newly found paid employment, to purchase video games, go to movies and exercise. Since Jesse now uses Access Link for transportation to work, he has gained an added feeling of independence. Carmen, a Green Distribution employee, says that “Jesse is responsible, has a great attitude, works diligently, and is all around ‘a good kid’. Everyone loves Jesse.”



SLE JOB TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

For high school students with autism



Spectrum Works is a unique nonprofit that provides job training and employment to high school students with autism by building inclusive workforces at partner companies. The program combines on-the-job training with workplace readiness training and job exploration. Young adults with autism enter a workplace as paid trainees. Students work alongside Spectrum Works job coaches and partner company mentors to develop professional skills. Students work in positions with a range of low to high skilled tasks.

“Students who have left Spectrum Works and placed in other worksites have been praised with their performance. Many business partners have cited considerable improvements in work disciplines like punctuality, time management, and the willingness to be a team player. Thanks to you—our business partner—vital skills were acquired during your time spent together with these students. They have gained transferable skills because of the opportunities you’ve created, and we thank you sincerely for that. You made a profound difference in the students’ futures. Together we’re carefully ushering our next generation toward a direction of success.”

- Danny Gareri, Teaneck High School Transition Coordinator

Spectrum Works builds inclusive workforces at real companies by implementing its employment program. Students work alongside neurotypical coworkers every day. Job Coaches help students to develop skills and advance. Partner companies commit to our integrated model and become supportive, inclusive environments for young adults with autism.

STUDENTS GAIN INDEPENDENCE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND PRIDE IN THEIR WORK.

The program is tiered to match an individual’s skill level and abilities. Spectrum Works meets all NJ state required safety standards, collaborates with schools to create learning plans, and provides periodic student evaluations.



Social Skills



Responsibility



Communication



Performance



Work Ethic

For more information about our program, contact beverly@spectrumworks.org or call us at (201) 552.2055.

IN THE NEWS



Autistic children more likely to be involved in bullying – study

“Children with autism are more likely to be bullied by both their siblings and their schoolmates, meaning time spent at home is no reprieve from victimization, according to a new study.”

The Guardian, Autism



Children on Autism spectrum getting set up for future STEM

The decrease in qualified workers in the technology industries has companies looking for individuals with above average cognitive and language skills.

WIVB.COM, News



Teenage Chef Living With Autism Inspires Legions of Online Fans

What started off as a creative outlet has grown into a road map towards independence for one 17-year-old living with autism.

Spectrum News One, Human Interest



Nine-Year Old Non-Speaking Boy Writes Bestseller Book About Autism For Educators, Parents, and Students

The young genius enjoys creative writing, telling sarcastic and witty jokes, and playing outdoors. In an interview, he says that his teacher told him to publish his project which was the best advice he was ever given.

The Art of Autism, Connecting Through the Arts



Q&A WITH GM OF GREEN DISTRIBUTION

Q: How many Spectrum Works students have participated in the program at Green Distribution?

A: Hundreds of individuals with autism have participated. As a result of the program, they learned skills that helped them gain employment at Green and other companies. Many graduated and are attending college.

Q: How long is the Spectrum Works employee onboarding and integration?

A: Students typically work at Green Distribution for over a year before graduating. At this point he/she has a good understanding of the company and expectations, so the onboarding/integration process is minimal. It works well because of the consistency of having Spectrum on site at our facility.

Q: Have you encountered any negative experiences?

A: No. However, some new neurotypical employees do not understand autism as they have never met anyone on the spectrum. Spectrum Works helped us by creating an onboarding presentation, autism seminars and an Autism Impact Day.

Q: What should other business owners expect from an engagement with Spectrum Works?

A: Well-trained students who have integrated with all employees and hands-on support from Spectrum Works staff during their employment. They should also expect an improved inclusive culture within their organization.

Q: What has been the Impact on Green's neurotypical employees?

A: They have truly accepted all the young adults on the spectrum and have willingly taken on mentorship roles.

Q: How has the Spectrum Works program personally affected you?

A: I am amazed by their productivity, work ethic, and social interaction. One student in particular, Darnell, a savant astounded me with his ability to figure out everyone's birthday day for years in the future and brightened my day with his cheery personal hello and kindness.

THIS WAS DESIGNED BY A SPECTRUM WORKS STUDENT: KYLE

Graphic designer, Video editor, Newsletter designer, Assistant project manager, and Mentor. Morris Knolls High Student and County College of Morris Student.



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