



ALBERTINA  
**KERR**

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## **ALBERTINA KERR BEGINS PROJECT SEARCH PROGRAM WITH EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON PORTLAND AIRPORT**

PORTLAND, Ore. (May 23, 2016) – Albertina Kerr and Embassy Suites, by Hilton at the Portland Airport, are partnering on Project SEARCH, a business-led program that allows young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience total immersion in the workplace. Eight to twelve individuals from Albertina Kerr are participating in the internship program for nine months with rotations in the housekeeping, banquets, sales and administrative departments.

The nationally recognized Project SEARCH model not only exposes interns to an integrated work setting, but it also teaches competitive, transferable and marketable job skills and increases independence, confidence and self-esteem. The program directly addresses the critical unemployment rates among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, 75 percent of which do not work in their communities.

“Embassy Suites has been a wonderful partner in this program, in fact, seeking us out for this opportunity,” said Erin Cochrun-Weston, Assistant Director of Day and Employment Services. “They are providing our young adults with invaluable job and life skills of a recognized business.”

Although national youth transition employment outcomes range from 13 to 30 percent, Project SEARCH aims to secure competitive jobs in the community for all participants by the end of the internship period. Albertina Kerr introduced its first Project SEARCH in 2015 in partnership with Kaiser Permanente, resulting in a 73 percent successful employment rate.

“I think I’ve learned a lot from the interns because of their focus on the job and their positivity. They show respect for the job and they earn respect here,” said Brad Bott, Embassy Suites Building Engineer. “I think a lot of businesses could learn from our experience.”

Albertina Kerr is making a change in helping young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities achieve meaningful employment. To learn more about Project SEARCH, contact Steve Zeiden at 503.408.4721 or SteveZ@AlbertinaKerr.org

### **About Albertina Kerr**

Since 1907, Albertina Kerr has strengthened Oregon families and communities. Today, we provide programs and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges, empowering them to live richer lives. For more information about Albertina Kerr, call 503.239.8101 or visit [www.albertinakerr.org](http://www.albertinakerr.org)

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