



THE GATEWAY SCHOOL VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND TRANSITION PLANNING NEWSLETTER.

1/2009

For most young people in the general population, the transition to adult life is characterized by less parental control and involvement in the child's life. When mainstream learners exit high school, it is an exciting experience for them and their families as they enter a more independent life. However, when learners with intellectual disabilities consider what will happen next, their possibilities are limited and in reality they may rely on their parents for the rest of their lives.

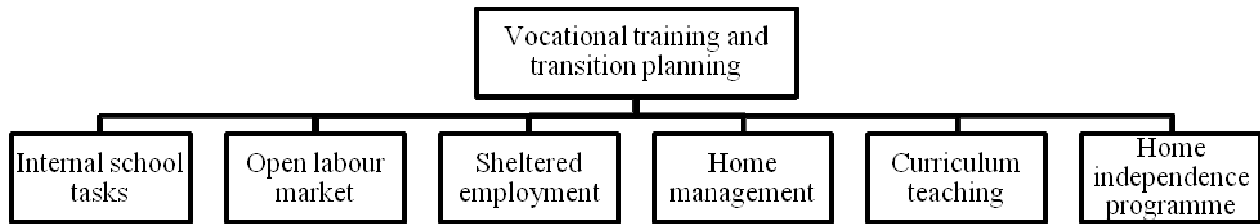
At The Gateway School we are very aware of this dilemma and decided on starting a vocational training and transition plan for intellectually disabled learners at the school. We also realise that keeping parents informed about our programme will not only help parents in making very important decisions on their child's future, but set their and their child's minds at ease knowing about various future possibilities. Our goal with the aspects of the programme is to teach learners to become more

responsible, more independent and to acquire more skills in order to make their adult life as independent as possible.

A vocational training and transition planning newsletter will be published once per term with the objective to share information regarding the Vocational Training and Transition Planning process at our school and to guide parents and their children in taking responsible decisions regarding the future. We would like feedback on the newsletter as well as any suggestions on articles you would like to read. Parents are invited to write about their own experiences with their child's vocational training programme and send the articles to school for publication in this newsletter.

The vocational training and transition planning programme at our school consists of various elements, as indicated in the figure below.

The Gateway school vocational training and transition planning programme



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Internal School Tasks

We would like to give you more background on two of the internal school tasks currently performed by the 17 and 18 year old learners, namely the coffee shop and assisting learners to and from the buses.

Every Thursday morning a coffee shop is run by Ms Carina Vlachos and specific learners are taught to be waiters / waitresses. They are expected to take orders, make food and drinks, and serve their “customers” who are often learners from other classes within the school. The learners are supervised daily to ensure that tasks are been carried out correctly. We are proud to inform you that our learners have shown a great improvement in their performance over the past few weeks. Well done!



At The Gateway School we try to teach our learners the most important values in life. Most of the senior learners have a junior learner allocated to them, for whom they are responsible. They must take these learners to their classes from the buses in the morning, and back to the buses in the afternoon. If the learner is in a wheelchair, they must also see that the wheelchair is in a good condition and report any faults or damage to the therapist in charge. It does not sound like a very important job but it teaches them a lot of skills they will need in future, e.g. punctuality, diligence, responsibility, etc. These learners play a vital role in the basic functionality of the school as it eases the burden of the educators a little.

Are you wondering what future employment may lie in wheelchair pushing?

In hospitals patients are transported on mobile beds to and from theater and pushed in wheelchairs to their cars. In centers for the aged, porters are responsible for many old people’s mobility either in a wheelchair or assisting them in walking with a walker.

Open Labour Market

As with the internal school tasks, we would like to give you more information on work being done in the open labour market.

Ms Louise Burger approaches businesses near the school and after giving them background information on our school and the learners, ask them if they will be prepared to give our 18 year old learners the opportunity to work in their businesses. The learners are then accompanied by Ms Louise Burger and introduced to the employer. Necessary written guidelines as well as indemnity forms are completed and given to the employers prior to the learners starting to work.

An activity analysis is performed by Ms Louise Burger to assist in identifying the tasks and demands that are placed on the learners to ensure that the work is within their interests and capabilities.



Collin Mokubetsi is working at Wimpy where he is responsible for washing and drying dishes and cutlery. He packs dishes on the shelves and is expected to keep his work area well organised and clean.

Katli Monnakgotla is working at Mugg & Bean where he started off washing dishes and has progressed to cooking breakfast with supervision. He is learning to follow instructions from his supervisors and work as part of a team.



Hardus Vos has been working at Butler's Butchery where he assists in packing meat, weighing and labeling packages.

More information on the other learners in the open labour market will be given in the next vocational training and transition planning newsletter

Sheltered Employment

The school leavers have previously gone on a weekly basis to The Gateway Village to experience sheltered employment. Unfortunately, The Gateway Village is struggling to acquire contracts to maintain their own workers, we have therefore not been able to continue with this tradition. The visits to

the Village will now change to a social event once a term between our school leavers and the workers there. We are hoping that it will have a positive influence for our school leavers to see and socialize with their old friends working at The Village and enjoying it.

Home management program

A home management program was been started in 2007, to teach our 17 and 18-year-old learners how to clean and manage their own homes. We try and teach the learners how to clean different areas in and around the house and which cleaning products to use. They come for a practical cleaning class once a week where they clean the bathroom, foyer and staff room. They will complete an exam at the end of the program and depending on the results they will get a certificate at the prize giving.

Some of our learners are very lucky and have a housekeeper at home who maintains the home. Having a housekeeper is very

lucky as it makes our lives easier. However, “learned helplessness” is the main internal barrier a intellectually disabled child has that later on makes them believe that they cannot complete even the most simple household task themselves. Their experience of not being able to control their environment (e.g. cleaning, cooking, locking doors, setting alarms, feeding pets, watering the garden), leads to a psychological state of helplessness and makes them disinterested in life around them. Therefore we rely on our parents to assist us in teaching their child as many home management tasks as possible.

Seta Program

The learners are making good progress in the Seta horticultural training program, provided by *BC Landscape Training and Consultancy CC*. The learners have started their own gardens at the school where they are responsible for caring and watering it daily. They proudly harvested their first crops last week. Specific outcomes of the learnership include:

- Mowing lawns, applying water and controlling weeds in landscaped areas
- Planting and establishing ornamental plants from containers into open ground
- Identifying and reporting common pests and disease and applying health and safety in horticulture
- Pruning and shaping ornamental shrubs
- Understanding basic plant structure and Identifying the major categories of ornamental plants
- Applying fertilizer manually to ornamental plants and landscapes

We do hope you have found this newsletter informative and look forward to hearing your feedback!

Regards

Mrs ME Kempen