

# Improving Transition Outcomes

An Innovative State Alignment Grant for Improving Transition Outcomes  
for Youth with Disabilities Through the Use of Intermediaries

## CASE Prototype: Preparing Youth for Adulthood

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is proud to share highlights from the award-winning Career and Self Exploration (CASE) prototype developed by Hope Haven, Inc. and West Sioux Community School with assistance from local partners; Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Workforce Development Center, Hawarden Area Partnership for Progress, Youth and Parents, Northwest AEA, and Northwest Transition Advisory Board. Funding has been provided through the Improving Transition Outcomes (ITO) grant administered by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) with oversight provided by the Governance Group.

### Background

In applying for ITO funding, this northwest Iowa team's goal was to demonstrate that "Youth with disabilities will make empowered and well-informed career choices that result in employment consistent with their vocational goals." The strategic plan was two-fold: 1) modify and implement a person-centered curriculum and 2) compliment the curriculum with a real-world work experience, an in-school coffee shop (Falcon Joe's) staffed and run by the students themselves.

In January 2005 juniors and seniors in West Sioux's Resource Room began using the CASE curriculum adapted from an Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation (IPR) service model. Melanie Pottebaum, IPR Practitioner with Hope Haven and Arlys Cauwels, Special Education Teacher with West Sioux were instrumental in modifying the course to aid students' self awareness as to their strengths and interests, especially in terms of future careers, and to give them a practical knowledge-base of occupations. The coffee shop provides a work opportunity that had not previously existed in the small, rural community and working in the coffee shop accounts for one-third of their CASE grade.

### Outcomes

CASE team member and local IVRS counselor, Randy Van Zee introduced the youth to VR. As a result, referrals to VR increased and youth with disabilities leave high school with a plan that includes IVRS. Prior to CASE, youth with disabilities often spent 12-18 months after graduation going nowhere; now they leave with a plan to pursue post-secondary education, move into employment, or both.

Due to the positive outcomes, the West Sioux school administration opened enrollment to the general student population, however, youth with disabilities have priority status should CASE enrollment exceed capacity. Falcon Joe's is a viable, self-sustaining business, with revenues averaging \$30-\$75 per day and will sustain after grant funds end this fall.

### Replication

Hope Haven, Inc. and West Sioux Community School District are marketing the CASE curriculum; purchase includes a 2-day training. The Maurice, Orange City, Floyd Valley (MOC/FV) School District is currently replicating CASE; their entrepreneurship component is an in-school smoothie shop.

Iowa Department  
for the Blind

Iowa Department  
of Education

Iowa Department  
of Human Services

Iowa Division  
of Persons with  
Disabilities

Iowa Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
Services

Iowa Governor's  
Developmental  
Disabilities Council

Iowa Workforce  
Development