Circle of Support Internship Program

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More than a dozen students from WKU’s Kelly Autism Program have just wrapped up a paid summer internship program at various places around Bowling Green.

It was a huge success for all involved as Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

Preparing for post college life can be intimidating enough, imagine what it’s like for students on the autism spectrum.

But a brand new summer internship program is giving students a big head start.

“Is everybody having a good week so far?”

“Over the six weeks I’ve learned that I need to stretch more often.

WKU senior Ian Pierce is one of sixteen students from the Kelly Autism Program taking part in the Circle of Support Internship program which also included a weekly yoga session.

“Once you get into the swing of things it’s really not bad and it’s actually enjoyable.”

Delayed one year by Covid, these students were placed in paid internships at various locations including Bowling Green Parks and Rec and WKU PBS.

“I think it’s been not only eye opening for us, eye opening for employers but even more important to me, eye opening to our students as to what they can contribute.”

The last few weeks was a mix of working at their assigned locations on Tuesdays and Thursdays…

“They gave us a list of options on what we can do.”

And coming to the CEC for workshops, career prep classes, yoga and other social gatherings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

“I’ve seen a lot of students here and just, you know, never really paid attention. I’ve been more focused on work and class. But actually getting to talk to them and socialize, that was really an interesting experience.”

“I think that’s been my favorite thing to watch, is to watch them develop those relationships with each other.”

Stretching muscles that will take them far in the future. Career skills, life skills and the critical soft skills employers crave.

“They have learned things like how to be on time and how important that is to an employer. You know the small skills we don’t think about that they have learned and you watch that progression.”

The Circle of Support Internship Program is looking to expand next summer.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Any business interested in having an intern is urged to contact the Kelly Autism Program at 745-4232.

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