

What They're Saying About The Able Trust



Testimonials on The Able Trust's High School High Tech Program

My son Richard was diagnosed with high-functioning autism at the end of his kindergarten year, and our life changed. His slow language development and shyness had a new name. I received help from the local school system, and Richard was able to leave a fully self-contained classroom into a "fully-included" normal class by middle school. Academically, Richard did very well and never was a behavior problem in class. Socially, he had difficulty in forming peer friendships. I tried to encourage him to join a club so that he could develop friendships, but he was strongly opposed.

As Richard entered high school, I encouraged him to look for a school activity to enjoy. At the end of his freshman year, I found out about The Able Trust's High School High Tech program (HSHT). I was delighted that Richard had a group to feel affiliated with, and the training that would occur during the after school activities. The topics included many discussions of career and personal development, preparing for a job interview, writing a resume, time and attendance, interpersonal relationships among coworkers – all things that Richard needed to learn. Richard finally had a reason to stay "after school" like the other kids! There were fundraising drives and volunteer events. Richard learned the value of helping others less fortunate. He got to know others with various disabilities and their worth. Each year the program offered Richard job shadowing opportunities, local and out-of-town field trips and guest speakers during workshops.

Richard was able to work three different summers at paid internships. These experiences gave him some real world experience, with bosses who had expectations! It was wonderful for him to form work relationships, have a time card, list of daily duties and another adult mentor. Richard was delighted to receive a real paycheck! This really boosted his confidence and increased his self-esteem. He was proud of his success and I was thrilled!

Richard chose to pursue a career based on his love of zoos and aquariums in the zoology program at Santa Fe College. Richard earned a 3.8 GPA in college and was hired as a team member at the Florida Aquarium in Tampa. Many thanks to the High School High Tech program for such a great start to a wonderful, satisfying career!

Sincerely,
Wendy Van Duyne



Richard (right) with his supervisor, Jim Faubel

About The Able Trust's High School High Tech Program

The Able Trust HSHT program provides high school students with various types of disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to successful careers.

The program is designed to: 1) improve participation in education, vocational and employment-related activities for youths with disabilities; 2) increase their enrollment in postsecondary education and training; and 3) help them identify and pursue a successful career path. During the 2017-2018 school year, The Able Trust HSHT program served 1,336 students with disabilities at 43 sites in 40 counties and achieved a graduation rate of 99% for all participating seniors.

