

THE SPECTRUM BRIDGE

Spectrum Works School Newsletter, Issue 5

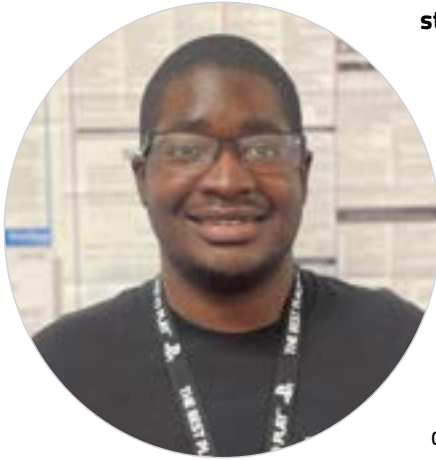
BRIDGE TO SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT



Spectrum Works is proud to announce that we have been approved as a vendor for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). This approval will allow us to reach more schools and students while continuing to make a difference in their lives.

**Bergen
Logistics**

SPOTLIGHT: EVERTON



Everton is a STAR employee at Bergen Logistics and a former Spectrum Works student. Although he started his internship in the middle of the pandemic in 2020, it hasn't stopped him from succeeding in the workforce. He is currently working as one of the newest additions to the Bergen Logistics VAS team.

Everton has always been a go-getter being a former Special Olympics athlete in Bowling, 100m Dash, Long Jump, and Javelin. In his free time, he loves playing video games and spending quality time with his family.

He's a bit shy, but his actions speak louder than words. Everton values everything the perfect employee should: patience, respect, organization, creativity, time management, and efficiency. Attendance is his strong suit, given he was awarded Perfect Attendance for four straight years at S.T.A.R.S. Academy. With his values and experiences, he hopes to continue to build his career at Bergen Logistics.

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“Everton started in Receiving, learned quickly, hit his metrics, and moved to the VAS department. He has learned every process remarkably fast and done phenomenally well at every level. He is very focused and very detailed. Everton is loved by his coworkers, and they are very protective of him. I see no difference between Everton and the other employees; he is 100% Bergen.”

- Kaleena Garcia
General Manager of Bergen Logistics

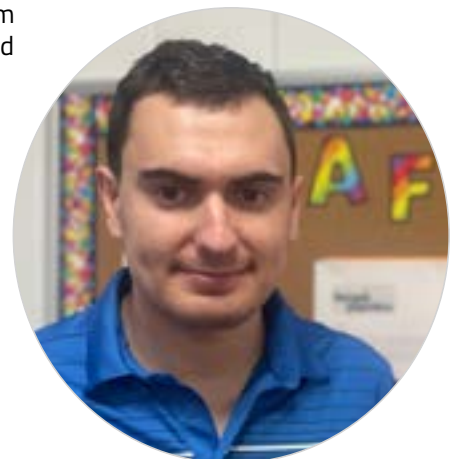
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SPOTLIGHT: JAKE

Jake is a creative powerhouse at Spectrum Works. Jake started interning in July 2021 and has already surpassed expectations. With a BA in Media Studies from William Paterson University, Jake's passion continues for video editing as a freelancer and learning graphic design at Spectrum Works.

Jake, who currently interns with Spectrum Works' partner company Bergen Logistics, has already taken the training in distribution and secured a job as a Productions Associate at Corporate Communications Group. Jake is very content and appreciative of all the services that Spectrum Works and Bergen Logistics have given.

Jake continually strives to learn more with additional college courses at Bergen Community College, such as politics, philosophy, art, video game development, and animation. With continued work and intern experiences, Jake hopes to become a notable figure in content creation and media.



CURRENT PARTNER COMPANIES



Spectrum Works is a unique nonprofit that provides job training and employment to high school students and post high school individuals with autism by building inclusive workforces at partner companies.

The program combines on-the-job training with workplace readiness training and job exploration. As working paid employees, young adults with autism cooperate with Spectrum Works job coaches and partner company mentors to develop professional skills. Students work in positions with a range of low to high-skilled tasks.

Spectrum Works builds inclusive workforces at actual companies by implementing its employment program, allowing students to work alongside neurotypical coworkers daily. Job Coaches help students to develop and advance their skills while partner companies commit to our integrated model and become supportive, inclusive environments for young adults with autism.

STUDENTS GAIN INDEPENDENCE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND PRIDE IN THEIR WORK.

Bergen Logistics is a global third-party order fulfillment and logistics company. They serve industries varying from fashion, footwear, handbags, accessories and cosmetics to home goods, medical devices and supplements. Bergen Logistics President Charles Ickes, worked with Spectrum Works at his previous company Rent the Runway, and having seen the benefits for the autistic individuals and the company overall, spearheaded the launch of the program at Bergen Logistics. The program was quickly and successfully integrated into their operations, and then expanded from North Bergen into a second location in Rutherford, NJ. Bergen Logistics remains eager to expand the program further, hiring more former trainees to full time positions and promoting the value of hiring autistic employees to their four hundred retail customers!

Spectrum Works students, job training at Bergen Logistics, gain the skills to handle orders ranging from Wholesale, E-Commerce, Retail, and Marketplace with the latest consumer technology. Bergen Logistics strives for diversity and encourages professional development for employees at all levels.

STUDENTS IN TRAINING

From Left to Right: Deon, Kiernan, Sarah (all Hudson County students)
Camera Shy: Gabe (Bergen County student)

These are some of our current Spectrum Works students in training at Bergen Logistics at the North Bergen location.



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“It’s been an absolute pleasure working with Spectrum Works. Our employees have integrated with the students, and they all work side by side. The students have achieved above and beyond our expectations, we are thrilled to continue with Spectrum Works.”

-Luz Toro
HR Manager East Rutherford Branch

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Q&A WITH MARJORIE RAMOS, BERGEN LOGISTICS CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

Q: How many Spectrum Works students have participated in programs at Bergen Logistics?

A: We have had about 15 students train at Bergen Logistics since the program began. We started small, slowly expanded, and have filled a handful of positions. The students have performed very well, and they've also been quite reliable in doing the work.

Q: How does Spectrum Works help onboard and integrate their interns?

A: Spectrum Works has done a great job preparing Bergen Logistics for the students and interns. They made recommendations on the kinds of work that the students could do. They came onsite, and they offered job coaches. Spectrum Works did a lot of prep work.

Q: Have there been any negative experiences involving the students and staff?

A: Nothing has gone awry. I had concerns about safety, the time to be able to coach, and individuals that needed more attention. There were maybe some inconsistencies in terms of the students' availability. As I reflect on all of that, those are the same challenges we have with any associates or temps coming to work here at Bergen.

Q: What can other business owners expect from an engagement with Spectrum Works?

A: You don't know unless you try. If you want a company where you value diversity that includes developmental disabilities or individuals on the autism spectrum, why not try and see what happens? You'll be walked through the process and given the tools and knowledge to make it work, so give it a shot.

Q: What has been the impact on Bergen Logistics' neurotypical employees?

A: We were passionate about making the program with Spectrum Works work. We had sent a message to the organization that this was important and that we had a commitment. And it has touched people's lives, and the employees feel good about the program.

Q: How has the Spectrum Works program personally affected you?

A: You're dealing with people; we're all challenging. We all bring our unique selves to the workplace. I feel good that Bergen is taking the time to invest in this kind of program. It's easy for companies to say no. On a personal level, I have a connection to individuals on the spectrum, so I want to be a part of a world and community that says yes because I think it's the right thing to do.

IN THE NEWS



Why You Should Consider Hiring Autistic Individuals For Creative Careers

A creative mind is a creative mind, regardless of any diagnosis. As a result, neurodivergent people are welcomed and invited into the art world.

[forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)



For Disabled Workers, a Tight Labor Market Opens New Doors

With Covid prompting more employers to consider remote arrangements, employment has soared among adults with disabilities.

[nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)



MGM Resorts International Makes \$1 Million Pledge to Grant A Gift

MGM Resorts has partnered with Grant a Gift Autism Foundation-Ackerman Center on a new vocational job placement program and providing training and employment opportunities to individuals with autism.

[prnewswire.com](https://www.prnewswire.com)



West Babylon Empanada Spot Offers Job Training to Adults with Autism

Nelly's Artisan Argentinian Empanadas is special to the store's owner because she loves to cook and now is inspired to take that love and give adults with autism an opportunity to work.

[newjersey.news12.com](https://www.newjersey.news12.com)

This newsletter template was designed by a former Spectrum Works graduate student and current employee of our partner company Green Light Development: Kyle



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