

TRANSITION CAMPS

TRANSITION SERVICES

SERRC provided secondary transition services to districts, oversaw the Alaska Transition Outcome Project grant, and trained educators at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. SERRC partnered with the State of Alaska to offer expanded transition services to youth in juvenile justice facilities.



Providing students a **VISION** of what their **FUTURE** can be!

A Success Story



Transition Camps were developed for students with disabilities from rural school districts, students in juvenile justice facilities, and those in state foster care. "Transition Camps," as the name suggests, provide support for students who are beginning the process of transitioning from school to community life. These three-to-five-day camps connect youth to resources that will help them get a job, continue with postsecondary education or vocational training, or simply learn more life skills, such as financial literacy. SERRC has been conducting transition camps for more than a decade, but recently they have significantly expanded due to a growing partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and their Youth Transition Coordinator Jim Kreatschman, a long-time fan of the program. "I really thought wow, this program is really fantastic, I wish I could be part of it, so I proposed to SERRC that my program could fund half, which would allow us to have 12 Transition Camps per year, instead of six," Kreatschman remembers. He couldn't be happier with the result. "We want

kids to have a vision for their future, and that's exactly what Transition Camp is. We bring businesses, education providers, programming, and activities to kids in predominately rural school districts to help kids make a plan for their future. More than 100 businesses participated in transitions camps last year. We are bringing those resources to kids, oftentimes in areas where there are limited resources."

Incarcerated Youth

Part of the expansion process included incarcerated kids. Mr. Kreatschman continues, "We approached the Alaska Mental Health Trust to propose going into Department of Juvenile Justice youth facilities. It took a couple of months to talk Juvenile Justice into letting our team come in to do a camp, but when it finally did happen, everyone was so impressed. The kids were captivated and totally engaged. These kids all have suffered trauma in their lives, and we are trying to give them a future." Last year Transition Camps were put on for incarcerated youth in Bethel, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Anchorage. "This program has

allowed incredible bridges to be built between these centers and the community," Mr. Kreatschman explains.

The Power of Partnerships

The Transition Camps also highlight the importance of partnerships. Camps are funded through the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment and Training Services, the Department of Education and Early Development, and the Mental Health Trust, along with many groups outside the public sector. "Among others, the Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium and Wells Fargo are big supporters," says Mr. Kreatschman.

Reaching out to Rural Alaska

"The other cool thing about it," Mr. Kreatschman adds, "is that anyone can have a Transition Camp. It doesn't matter how big or how small. The work that we are doing with Transition Camps gives us a mechanism to reach out to more rural places and to start a conversation regarding what else we can do. The camps have been able to change the way that people think about DVR and lead to more opportunities to additional services."

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