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Arc Herkimer and Herkimer College Intern Program Graduates Receive Certificates at Ceremony

HERKIMER — Arc Herkimer and Herkimer College partnered together to provide the first Project SEARCH internship program for young adults with disabilities at a community college in the United States. The inaugural class of five interns participated in a graduation ceremony at the college on Thursday, May 18 and shared the moment with family and friends.

Graduates included: Dakotah Dunham of Ilion, Matthew Ingerham, Mohawk, William Jaquish and Clayton Reed, both of Herkimer, and Katherine Moore, Little Falls.

Project SEARCH is an international trademarked and copyrighted program model, which focuses solely on employment for participants. The local program is a 40-week partnership that has a sole objective and intensive focus on achieving competitive employment and maximum independence for each participant. Interns participated in daily classroom instruction and gained hands-on work experience by rotating among three unique, unpaid internships at various sites at Herkimer College throughout the academic year. Skills learned by the interns will be marketable in their search for community employment.

Arc Herkimer President/CEO Kevin Crosley, said, "This graduation ceremony is representative of the entire



Graduates of the Project SEARCH intern program, a partnership between Arc Herkimer and Herkimer College, include, from left, Katherine Moore, Matthew Ingerham, Dakotah Dunham, William Jaquish, and Clayton Reed. The group enjoyed a graduate ceremony, complete with certificates, with friends and family.



Nicole Knapp, right, employment services specialist at Arc Herkimer's Career Connections, helps Intern Katherine Moore put on her cap in preparation for the ceremony.

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Arc Herkimer/Project SEARCH Graduation/2-2-2

inaugural year. The program was a first class operation and our partnership with the college is second to none. The support of the staff at the college and the flexibility that has been shown to ensure the best outcomes for the participants is unparalleled. The opportunities that were presented for growth beyond the classroom have appropriately positioned our graduates for competitive employment in the community. This class has set the bar high. I am deeming this group the 'Fab Five.'"

Herkimer College Provost Michael Oriolo, said, "Project SEARCH is a truly exciting program. We are proud of our interns and the measurable success achieved in a short time. While the interns have grown—so have our staff members. Our mission to provide access to quality, affordable lifelong learning opportunities and to maintain an environment that fosters individual growth and development for all is not just a written declaration, but a call to action. We are an inclusive institution working for all to advance regardless of backgrounds, and our core values of community, excellence, integrity and opportunity have never been more evident."

The five graduates will now work with Career Connections, Arc Herkimer's employment division, to secure competitive employment in the community.

Career Connections is currently recruiting for the 2017-18 program, which is free for eligible young adults. Key dates include a simple application process, orientation, three internship rotations, and graduation in May. For more information or an application, contact Catherine Loomis, Career Connections, at (315) 574-7893 or email: cloomis@archerkimer.org or visit archerkimer.org.

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