



# Evolution of Success in Transition

Our students are assisted to succeed not only while they are at Pathways but also in making the transition to life after graduation. Pathways offers a comprehensive program that includes instruction for independent living, preparation for post-secondary education and training, career exploration, job training, employment experience and linkages to community agencies. Just as they do in the classroom, our educators and therapists approach each student as an individual and design a transition plan to meet specific needs: everything from guidance in choosing a college or career to pointers for completing a successful job interview to experience on a work crew or in a business internship.

## A Future to Bank On

One of the goals Pathways has for our students as they prepare for the future is that they gain experience in a field of employment that offers the possibility of a long-term career. This is the purpose of Pathways Apprenticeship Program launched this year (see box). A highlight of that program was the opening of a school-based branch of the Montgomery County Teachers Federal Credit Union (MCT) at The Pathways School-Edgewood. The in-school branch is staffed and run by students who have been trained in the responsibilities of being bank tellers by MCT staff.

The in-school branch was the result of a partnership between MCT and

Pathways that came about through a program offered by the credit union. MCT has branches in 18 schools in Montgomery County. The Pathways branch is the first in a nonpublic special education school.

Through the MCT program, selected students at Edgewood attended workshops and specialized classes and spent time job shadowing experienced tellers and bank personnel at MCT's central branch. Additionally, students throughout the school learned how to manage money and make solid choices with income they earn. Students at Edgewood who complete the bank training will graduate from Pathways with the possibility of embarking on a career

that offers long-term employment, advancement and professional growth.



A student teller assists a customer at the In-School Branch Credit Union.

## Apprenticeship Program: "A" for Career

Throughout the year foundational pieces of Pathways Apprenticeship Program fell into place:

- ★ Five Pathways students took part in a pilot education program sponsored by the Associated Builders and Contractors of Metro Washington. The students visited the construction site of the city's new baseball stadium and spoke with professionals there about the numerous trades and career opportunities presented by the **construction industry**. In the future, these students will participate in an intensive eight-week program that will offer them the option of beginning a track toward professional certification upon graduation.
- ★ The GAVA/GATE program in Greenbelt has received a grant to introduce Pathways students to the field of **animation and computer graphics**. This program will offer a twelve-week course taught by professional animators using state of the art equipment in the studios of a public television studio.
- ★ In a partnership with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Pathways students interned at a nature and recreation center in Mount Rainier, MD. In the future they will take part in a range of apprenticeships in the field of **public park management**, including horticulture, animal care, landscaping and clerical support, with the option of continuing their participation in the program after the school year through paid summer employment.
- ★ Plans were initiated this year for a **Career Fair** for Pathways students that will take place in January, 2008. More than 15 industries, businesses, colleges and organizations have committed to be represented at the Fair.

## In the Community: High School Happens

While students at The Pathways School-Anne Arundel earn academic credits and are awarded diplomas just like other Maryland students, their learning environment is nothing like a conventional high school. These Pathways students are rarely found sitting at desks in a classroom. They are researching history at the public library, practicing consumer math at the grocery store, or learning about government the real way—by studying their Social Security, state and local tax deductions on their paychecks.

The Pathways School-Anne Arundel is a community-based high school program. Each student at Anne Arundel works with a Pathways para-educator to reach their individual education goals, completing most of their academic assignments at local libraries and other public spaces. A large part

of student learning takes place literally on the job, since employment experience is a major part of the program. The students learn how to search for a job and are assisted to build their resumes. They are shown how to present themselves to a prospective

employer and they rehearse for a job interview. Once employed, the students are supported by a web of professional and therapeutic support provided by the Anne Arundel program. The result is that students acquire the job skills necessary for long-term employment.

Thanks to their unique education in the community, students at Anne Arundel graduate with a diploma or certificate that documents their academic achievements and the experience on the job and in society that will empower them to succeed in life.



*A Pathways-Anne Arundel student at his place of work*

## Positive Outcomes Continue

For 17 years The Pathways School-DuVal Re-Entry has been an example of progressive collaboration between an independent special education program and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). The program was the first of its kind when it opened in 1989 as a "school within a school" to meet the needs of students with emotional disabilities. DuVal Re-Entry students take mainstream classes and participate in extracurricular and sports programs at DuVal High School, a public high school in Lanham. They are assisted to reach their education goals through individualized academic instruction and therapeutic support

provided by the Pathways program, which is located within DuVal. The success of the DuVal Re-Entry program was a key motivator when PGCPS negotiated with The Pathways Schools to open a similar program at Crossland High School in Temple Hills (see page 4).

Students at DuVal Re-Entry are prepared for graduation by a program designed to challenge them to achieve their highest academic goal, whether that is enrollment at a four-year college, a community college, or a post-secondary training institution. At the same time, they are enabled to succeed in achieving independence and economic responsibility through a

comprehensive program of employment experience and career counseling that includes resume writing workshops and rehearsal job interviews. While at DuVal Re-Entry students interned as teacher's assistants and nurse's aides. They worked as administrative assistants and video equipment operators at the Visitors Center at NASA-Goddard. By the time the Pathways students walked across the stage to receive their diplomas with the graduating class of DuVal High School, they were able to step confidently, prepared to succeed in continuing education, independence and responsible citizenship.

## Community Partner of the Year

The Community Partner Award, given each year at the Appreciation Reception, went to **MCT Federal Credit Union** for their outstanding work and support in educating and training our students in financial literacy and money management and for enabling the opening of The Pathways Schools In-School Branch Credit Union.