

Postsecondary Transition Companion Film:

Untapped Discussion Guide



Anthony Canty, 21, speaks with co-workers at Rochester (NY) General Hospital. He was hired as an Environmental Services Assistant after completing his Project SEARCH work rotations.

At the Medtronic Corporation in Tempe, Arizona, and the city government in Rochester, New York, executives and supervisors describe how mentoring and hiring young people with disabilities (through hosting [Project SEARCH](#) sites) has a positive impact on their corporate efficiency and culture. This film features Anthony Canty of Rochester, a young man with high expectations for himself who is finding his stride in a community where the graduation rate for students with disabilities is just 22 percent.



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to view
Untapped.

Employment skills

“Soft skills, employability skills...those are huge. We’ve found that students are more likely to lose a job not because they can’t do the task, but because they are unable to get along with co-workers, or problem solve. So we want to practice those things every day.”

—Colleen Brind’Amour, Project SEARCH Instructor, Rochester, NY

- What do you think are the most important skills needed to be a good employee?
- How and where do you think these skills can best be taught during high school?
- Are “soft skills” important for every job? Why or why not?

Disability and interconnected issues of race and poverty

“Almost all of the students in Project SEARCH face socio-economic challenges, along with their disability. It’s hard to get a job if you don’t have the money for an interview outfit. But how can you get the money for an interview outfit if you don’t have a job?”

—Colleen Brind’Amour, Project SEARCH Instructor, Rochester, NY

- Do you think it is the responsibility of public schools to prepare students with disabilities for the workforce?
- How can schools support student needs such as clothing for interviews, transportation, and other challenges connected to their socio-economic status?
- What knowledge and skills do high school educators need in order to support postsecondary transition for students who are diverse in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic status, and abilities?
- What postsecondary education and career opportunities would be available to Anthony if he lived in your town?
- Are there other partners that might be engaged in solving these challenges?

Competitive, integrated, paid employment

“Anthony kept everything spotless and looking great for our patrons and just was really conscientious about doing that.”

—Cheri Crist, Librarian, Rochester Public Library

- Frequently jobs for people with disabilities have involved food or cleaning. Historically, people with disabilities may have also been employed with other people with disabilities. How did this film challenge that expectation? Or reinforce it?
- Do our societal expectations of people with disabilities influence the outcomes young adults with disabilities experience?



Kevin Cao (right) of the Medtronic Engineering Team mentors Project SEARCH intern Christian Evans at the Medtronic campus in Tempe, AZ.

- Project SEARCH interns are not paid for their job rotations, but they are learning valuable workplace skills. Do you think they should be paid, or is the work experience a sufficient reward on its own?
- The students in the two Project SEARCH sites featured in the film had mild to moderate disabilities. Are you familiar with transition programs that support students with the most significant disabilities to find and maintain meaningful employment?
- Do you think there are students whose disabilities are too complex to allow them to work? Why or why not?

Low employment rates vs. high benefits to businesses

“How would you like to have an employee whose productivity is above average, whose attendance is above the norm, whose rate of retention is greater than the norm? All of which are characteristics of people with disabilities.”

—Bob Enderle, Director of Diversity and Community Relations, Medtronic Tempe (AZ) campus

- Why do you think the profiles of people with disabilities are so positive, yet the

employment rate for people with disabilities is so low?

- What can be done in our families, school, and communities to increase the employment rate for people with disabilities?
- Do you know employers who have hired someone with a disability? What was their experience?
- How do you think hiring individuals with disabilities in the workplace can enhance the experience for all workers in a company?
- How can the positive message of employing people with disabilities message be better promoted within business communities?
- What is your role in promoting this message?

Goals for the future

“I want to make my own money so I can buy myself nice stuff...and learn how to pay bills, and so I can pay my rent when I get my own place one day. I just want to be successful. I want to be like a leader for my community and a role model. I would like a partner—he’ll have to have a job, too, just like me, and I would like a nice house one day in the future for me and him.”

—Anthony Canty, Rochester, NY



Anthony Canty holds his Project SEARCH certificate after graduating from the program.

- Anthony’s goals include traveling the world, buying a house, having a partner and two dogs. How is participation in Project SEARCH helping him achieve these goals?
- What other supports might help Anthony achieve his goals? How do you think his family and friends can be involved?
- Do you think it is problematic for students to have goals/dreams that might be unrealistic? Why or why not?
- What is your role in supporting young people like Anthony in your community achieve their goals?
- Who else in your community might need or want to be part of these efforts?

Writer

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