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ABSTRACT

This document describes the activities at John Wood Community College in Quincy, Illinois, to recruit and train special needs students in academic and vocational programs. The final objective of the activities, begun in June 1988 and funded by a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) grant, was that the students would leave the educational program and enter employment or full-time college enrollment. The document describes the target population and supportive activities offered as a collaborative effort by staff members from JTPA, Public Aid/Project Chance, the Illinois Department of Rehabilitative Services, and Catholic Social Services; these activities included self-improvement sessions, the loan of clothing suitable for wearing to job interviews, a newsletter, and a fitness club. By December 1989, 80 disabled students had participated in the program, been referred to the employment development specialist on staff, or been referred to a program more appropriate from them. The document tips on how to begin similar programs, and concludes with descriptions of projects for special needs students at John Wood Community College and copies of project promotional materials.  
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JOHN WOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSITION INITIATIVE

1988 - 1990

ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD  
JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT  
8% GRANT

PRESENTERS:

JIM BURNS, SPECIAL NEEDS COORDINATOR  
SANDRA HUTTON THOMAS, TRANSITION INITIATIVE DIRECTOR

PRESENTED AT THE  
AMERICAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 3, 1989

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

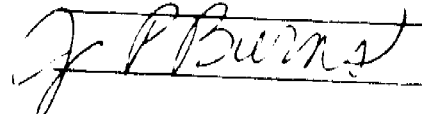
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## Needs Addressed

In January of 1988, John Wood Community College had virtually no program of service for disabled students. This is not to say that there was nothing being done to help a student that had a disability, but support services were minimal when it came to addressing the specific needs of the disabled population of John Wood Community College.

To address that situation, the College hired a Special Needs Coordinator to facilitate services to all handicapped and disadvantaged students. Initially, 55 students out of 4,000 were identified as having a handicap of any kind. It was obvious that the college would have to actively get the word out to disabled people in the district that John Wood Community College was a viable educational option for them. Also, the college recognized that it was going to be necessary to put in place the special support services and adaptive equipment needed to meet the needs of these students.

The cost of some of the special services such as vocational assessment, tutors, and interpreters was provided by the Carl Perkins Act through the Illinois Board of Education, Department of Adult Vocational and Technical Education. However, a recruitment effort was required to find the disabled people in need of the training that we could provide. Many eligible people either did not know about John Wood or felt their disability would prohibit their participation in a community college.

The need to increase services to people with disabilities prompted Jim Burns, Special Needs Coordinator, to write a grant proposal called the Special Needs Transition Initiative (SNTI). In June, 1988, the Illinois Community College Board, in cooperation with the local Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), awarded John Wood Community College a \$32,000 grant to recruit and train disabled students in academic and vocational programs. The final objective of this initiative was to transition the disabled student from the educational program into employment or into a full-time college program.

### Target Population

The Special Needs Transition Initiative is designed to serve any disabled individual as defined by J.T.P.A.: "one who has a physical or mental disability that constitutes a substantial barrier to employment." With this broad definition, the program has the capability of serving people with a learning, emotional, or medical disability. This flexibility allows the Special Needs Transition Initiative to serve a wide spectrum of individuals with a variety of individual circumstances.

The participants are selected for the program if they express a desire to make changes in their circumstances regarding their employment status; a status of being either unemployed or underemployed. They are also expected to have a desire to make educational gains. John Wood Community College offers literacy, GED, vocational, and academic programs. The intake process also requires the individual to qualify for J.T.P.A. services. However, all handicapped individuals generally qualify for JTPA programs.

The Special Needs Transition goal was to serve at least 30 individuals during the first year, adding 15 participants during the '89-90 year. As we complete the first quarter of the program's second year, we find over 80 individuals have been referred. Seventy-seven percent have enrolled in or completed training. Sixty-one percent have obtained employment. All participants are or have been involved in career counseling which includes job seeking and job keeping skills.

### Practice Description

The Special Needs Transition Initiative is now in its second year of operation. It is staffed by Sandy Thomas, the Employment Development Specialist and Project Director. Her objective is to work with at least 15 new disabled students each semester. The validity and success of the transition program is reflective of four specific projects that were created as a result of a collaborative effort with various agencies throughout the community. Staff members from J.T.P.A., Public Aid/Project Chance, Department of Rehabilitation Services, and Catholic Social Services have collaborated in the development and implementation of these projects:

Getting It All Together:

Self-improvement sessions offered weekly for 2-hour sessions at the Quincy YWCA where child care is provided. Topics of the sessions included: \* Building Self-Concept/Esteem \* Wardrobe, Hair Care \* Use of Agencies - Breaking Free \* Child Care & Transportation \* Relationships & Resources \* Budget \* Nutrition \* Goal Setting \* Job Seeking Skills (Applications, resumes, interviews) \* Dealing with Anger \* Stress Management \* Communication \* Assertiveness \* Relationships \* Wellness (food habits, physical fitness) \* Value Clarification \* Decision Making.

Experts on these topics from the community were contacted to present the workshops. Evaluation forms were filled out by students at the end of each two-hour session with very positive comments. Dayna Brogdon, a student involved in the Special Needs Initiative Grant at John Wood, commented at the end of the first session:

"I don't want the workshops to end. I really look forward to Tuesday. It's what gets me through the rest of the week with a good attitude."

Comments such as this emphasize that this team approach is effective in meeting the needs of the students and clients from the various agencies within the community.

Professional Image Lenders:

For the job seeking phase of the program, it was found that some of our students did not have the clothes necessary to look appropriate for interviews. The Employment Development Specialist worked with J.T.P.A. to answer this need. They developed Professional Image Lenders. New and used clothing was donated to the group by service agencies and business employees. The J.T.P.A. office is the site for this clothing shop where students from John Wood Community College and clients from various public agencies can go and pick out clothes to wear during job seeking activities.

Newsletter - Special Addition:

The team of area agencies, lead by the Employment Development Specialist also created an effective means of communicating with many people and agencies throughout the community. A newsletter was needed to reach a wide audience within the community. It was necessary to let our unemployed and underemployed citizens know what help was available. This newsletter is published once a month, reaching 300 people and agencies throughout the community.

Walk & Talk Club:

On February 7, 1989, the Employment Development Specialist organized a walking club which meets at an indoor shopping mall twice a week. The objectives of the project is to give students an opportunity to participate in a healthful activity and to demonstrate the importance of fitness as it relates to the physical, emotional, and spiritual balance of one's wellness.

The Special Needs Transition program has proven to be a real help to the individuals who need support in removing obstacles that exist as a result of their disability. The Employment Development Specialist acts as a coordinator when it comes to setting up vocational and academic assessment, registration procedures, training in job-seeking skills and directing a job search. Once the student has obtained employment, she monitors the progress of the student by initiating a cooperative rapport with the employers and instructors, enhancing the students ability to maintain involvement

Evaluation Results

In the first 15 months of this initiative, the results were significant:

Number of Participants	Types of Disabilities	Attending/ Completed Courses	Obtained Employment
14	Learning Disabled	9	10
31	Medical/Physical	25	18
2	Culturally Disadv.	2	1
1	Educable Mentally Handicapped	1	1
8	Emotionally Disabled	6	1
	<u>Totals</u>		
<u>56</u>		<u>43</u>	<u>34</u>

It is important to note that to date, a total of 80 disabled people have been referred to the Employment Development Specialist and are either participating in this program or have been referred to a more appropriate program or agency.



The Special Needs Transition Initiative has made a significant impact upon the disabled population of our district. Specifically, we have discovered a group of people who have literally languished in their homes for the past four or five years. This group typically has a family that is supportive enough to continue to provide them care and shelter, but who have minimal job skills and training and little hope for the future. Entrance into this program gives them new hope and the skills to become a valuable resource to the community. Their self-esteem is enhanced by successfully completing their training and securing employment.

In an article appearing in the Chicago Tribune on December 26, 1988, entitled Special Education's Bottom Line, it was reported that it cost approximately \$3,200 per year to educate a learning disabled student in comparison to students educated in the regular curriculum at the \$1,500 expense level. These figures refer to the programs offered to handicapped students during their years of high school. As valuable as this effort is to our handicapped population, we are seeing that it is not enough. We are finding disabled people who have marketable abilities but lack the skill training to obtain gainful employment. The Special Needs Transition Initiative Program provides intensive job counseling with real hope of leading to at least entry level job placement.

As seen during the 89-90 fiscal year, the cost effectiveness of this program is impressive. We are able to meet the specific educational and vocational goals of 30 disabled people for approximately \$1,060 per person for one year. In terms of education, John Wood Community College can meet the educational needs of the disabled at many levels, which include: Literacy training, GED training, general education, adult education, Certificate programs, Associate Degrees, and transfer programs leading to a Bachelor Degree.

### Transportability

A program with the elements of the Special Needs Transition Initiative at John Wood Community College has great potential for success in other areas of the state. We at John Wood Community College feel that the heartbeat of the program, as with any program, lies with the high motivation and positive attitude demonstrated by the personnel operating the program. The collaborative efforts of the college staff and public agency personnel is reflected in the projects which were discussed in this document. It is also essential that the staff, particularly the college personnel, have a background in special education and the experience of working directly with people with disabilities.

The interagency cooperation found in this program could be a problem for schools in rural areas. It is a benefit to have these agencies and their services within close proximity of the disabled students and readily available. This too can be overcome if key personnel are highly motivated to meet the individual needs of those disabled people living in rural areas of the state.

### Conclusion

The Special Needs Transition Initiative Program has been the recipient of both State and National Honors for assistance to the disabled.

On May 23, 1989, as a result of the work done for disabled students, Jim Burns accepted an award from the Illinois State Board of Education, Department of Special Education, for Innovative Practices in Transition Services.

On March 30, 1989, the Special Needs Transition Initiative Program received the National Organization on Disability (NOD) J.C. Penney award at the 69th annual conference of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, in Washington, D.C. Former White House Press Secretary James Brady presented the award to the John Wood Community College President, Dr. Robert C. Keys. Mr. Brady, who was shot in the head in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Reagan, had returned to the scene of the crime, the Washington Hilton, to present this award.



James Brady cited John Wood Community College for the work it has accomplished through the Special Needs Transition Initiative in helping individuals that are physically, emotionally and mentally handicapped. In part, he said, "...As I salute you on your accomplishments, I am calling on you to do more. You, as educators, have an expecially important role in making the American mainstream of life accessable to persons with disabilities. You must make education accessable. That means more than removing physical barriers and building wheelchair ramps. It means removing other barriers that disabled persons face in education; the attitudinal barriers that keep people who cannot see, people who cannot hear, people who cannot read, those among us who have a physical or emotional disability from being a full participant in the education of America's students."

John Wood Community College has responded to this call. More than that, we recognize that this transition effort is just a beginning. John Wood is committed to helping people with special needs, not just getting started but through the "long haul."

If there are other educational agencies that are interested in more information on design or implementation of this program, contact:

Jim Burns  
Special Needs Coordinator

or

Sandy Thomas  
Transition Initiative Director

at  
John Wood Community College  
150 South 48th Street  
Quincy, Illinois 62301  
(217) 224-6500

### JWCC Special Projects

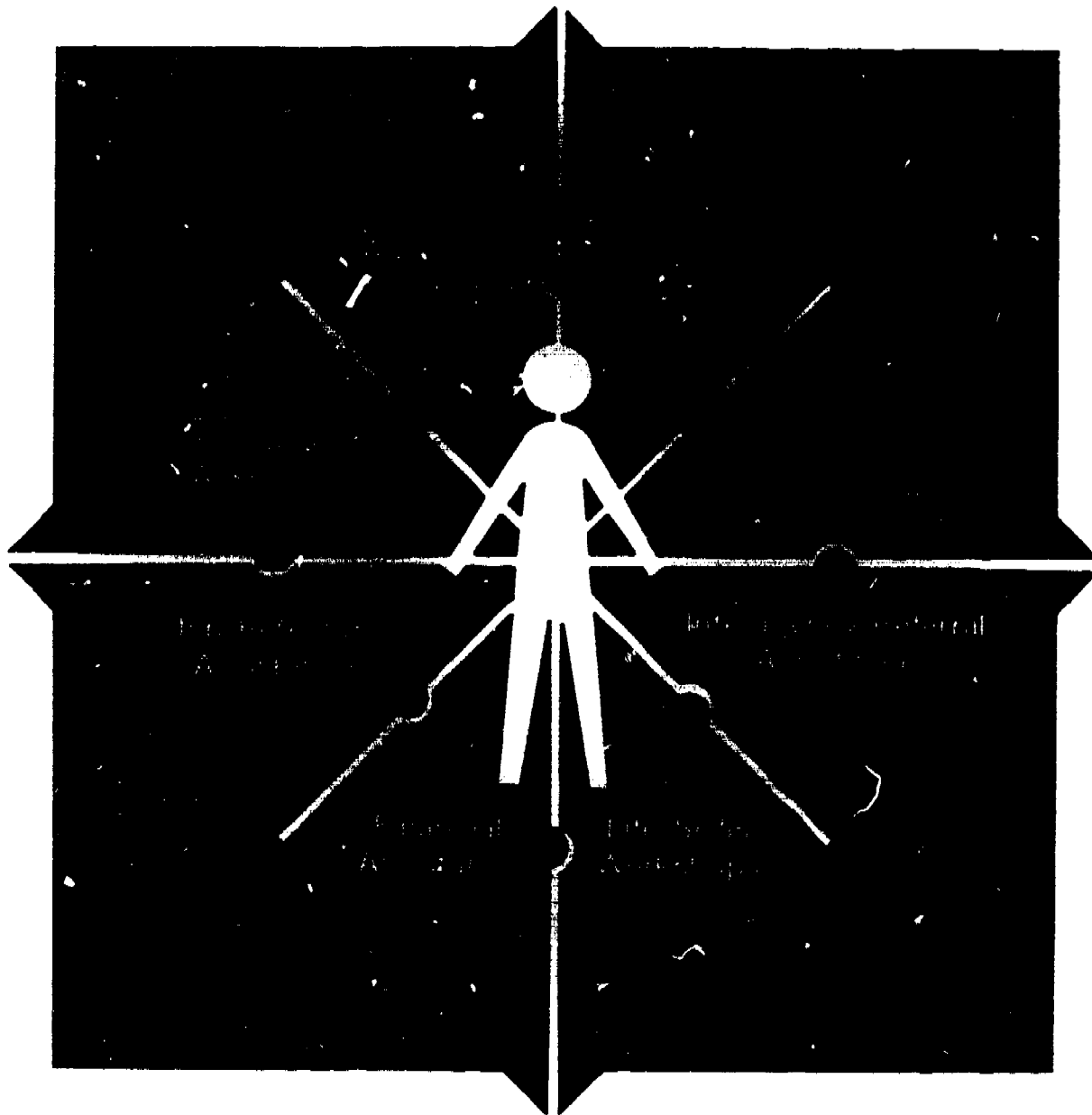
Project Name Contact Person Phone	Student Characteristics/ Expectations	Types of Assistance
Single Parent/Homemaker Rita Buddemeyer 224-6500 x 199	Must be single parent <u>or</u> homemaker; un- or under- employed; interested in education for sake of employment (workshop, course, certificate, or degree)	Assessment; career exploration hook up with PELL, JTPA, F.A., etc.; SPH pays the difference on tuition, books, child care, transportation; assist with employment search
Vocational Special Needs Jim Burns 224-6500 x 120	Must be a <u>vocational</u> <u>student</u> and handicapped or economically disadvantaged or academically disadvantaged	Vocational assessment; Financial assistance (books, course fees, etc.); academic assistance (tutoring, interpreter, note takers, special classes); job placement assistance
Special Needs Initiative Program 224-6500 x 120	Disabled individual (physical, emotional environmental, learning, medical conditions); un- or under-employed; education goals (wants to take academic or vocational classes); JTPA eligibility required	Can cover tuition, books, fees, child care and/or trans- portation; tutoring, special equipment, etc.; individualized attention to meet educational and occupational goals
Special Student Services Linda Kuenzli 224-6500 x 122	Must be financially eligible <u>or</u> first generation college <u>or</u> physically disabled <u>or</u> learning disabled <u>or</u> minority <u>or</u> non- traditional <u>or</u> academically disadvantaged; can be full <u>or</u> part time; vocational <u>or</u> transfer students	Assessment; academic support; tutoring; study skills; developmental skills; counseling; advising; mentoring; peer counseling; disabled student services; F.A. assistance; post- graduation transfer and follow-up

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

**TRANSITION**

**PROGRAM**

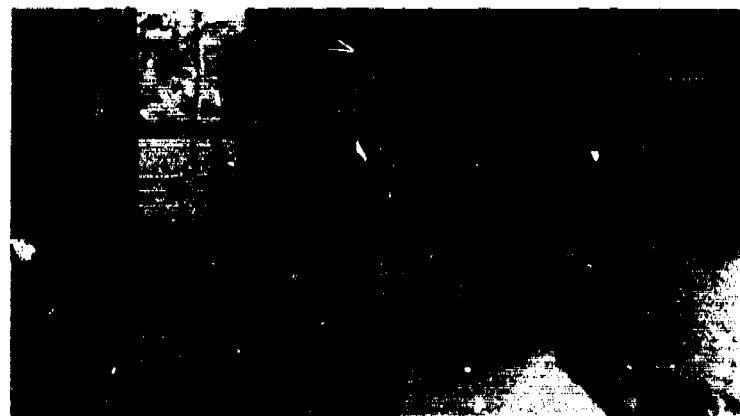
**National Award-Winning Program**



**Meeting the Needs of  
Students with ~~dis~~Abilities**

**JOHN WOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

*THE COLLEGE OF CHOICE!*



## If YOU . . .

- possess a physical, mental, learning, and/or medical limitation . . .
- want to know more about job and educational opportunities in your area . . .
- want to set goals and achieve them . . .

## Here's How We Can Help . . .

The Special Needs Transition Program at John Wood Community College can provide you with:

- **Academic Assistance**
  - More than 60 occupational programs from which to choose
  - Assessment and placement in classes
  - Tutoring: one-on-one tutoring sessions for all classes as needed, **at no charge**
  - Special equipment and personnel: Tape recorders, interpreters for the hearing impaired, computers, Braille books — any equipment you may need to ensure your success in the classroom
- **Cooperative Resources**
  - Coordination with other service agencies throughout the District
  - Number of participants in the program is limited, to ensure individualized, quality service



- **Financial Assistance**

- JTPA eligibility

- Assistance in applying for and obtaining state and federal financial assistance

- Financial assistance for tuition, books, fees, child care, transportation. **To date, all participants in this program have been able to attend JWCC with full financial assistance.**

- **Career Assistance**

- Resume writing services

- Job search activities: Help in assessing your interests and skills, job interview training, access to JWCC's Job Placement Office

- Specialized training in job skills and communication skills

- Job retention assistance: JWCC's program director makes frequent contacts with both the student/employee and the employer, to ensure the student's success

*For more information contact:*

Special Needs Transition Program Director  
John Wood Community College  
(217) 224-6500



I came to John Wood because I needed direction on what job I would be most suited for in my future. Right now I am taking remedial math and reading classes and a secretarial course. In reading, my level has improved a lot. Also, I worked at Long John Silver's for six months, the longest period of time I had worked anywhere. Now I work at Golden Corral. I really like it here at JWCC, especially the Open Learning Center and getting help from a tutor with my classes.

*Dayna Brogdon*



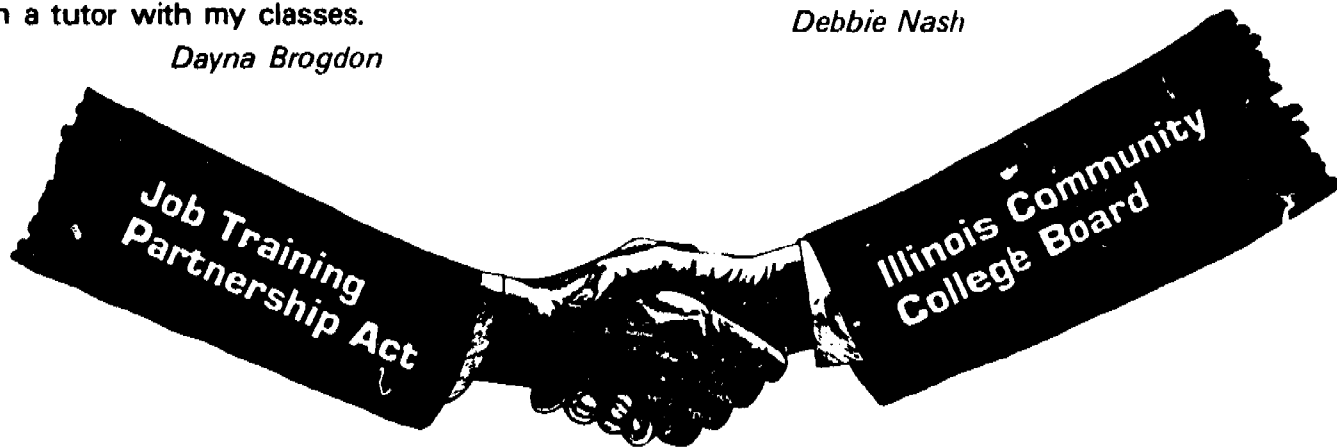
I left high school at the end of my sophomore year. Since then, I have married and have two young children. For the first time, I am able to work full-time. The program at John Wood provides money for child care. I am now receiving insurance benefits from my employer. That is so important to me and my family. Also, I am studying for my GED test in May. Having a GED is something I've wanted since I left school 8 years ago.

*Debbie Nash*



I am going into the field of child care. Right now I'm taking courses related to that field at JWCC. The Special Needs program has provided me with a tutor, which really helps a lot, especially in preparing for tests. I am using a bus pass provided by the program, which helps me get around Quincy while I'm looking for work.

*Lisa Dingerson*



John Wood Community College is committed to using all appropriate and available resources in the community to assist students in accomplishing learning objectives, recognizing that students often differ primarily in their rates of learning, not in their ability to learn. The Special Needs Transition Program is designed to help ENable individuals seeking assistance. The program has received both state and national awards for its innovative and cooperative approach in providing services — a program that truly ENables students to reach their highest potential. JWCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, handicap or other factors prohibited by law.

*For more information contact:*

Special Needs Transition Program Director  
John Wood Community College

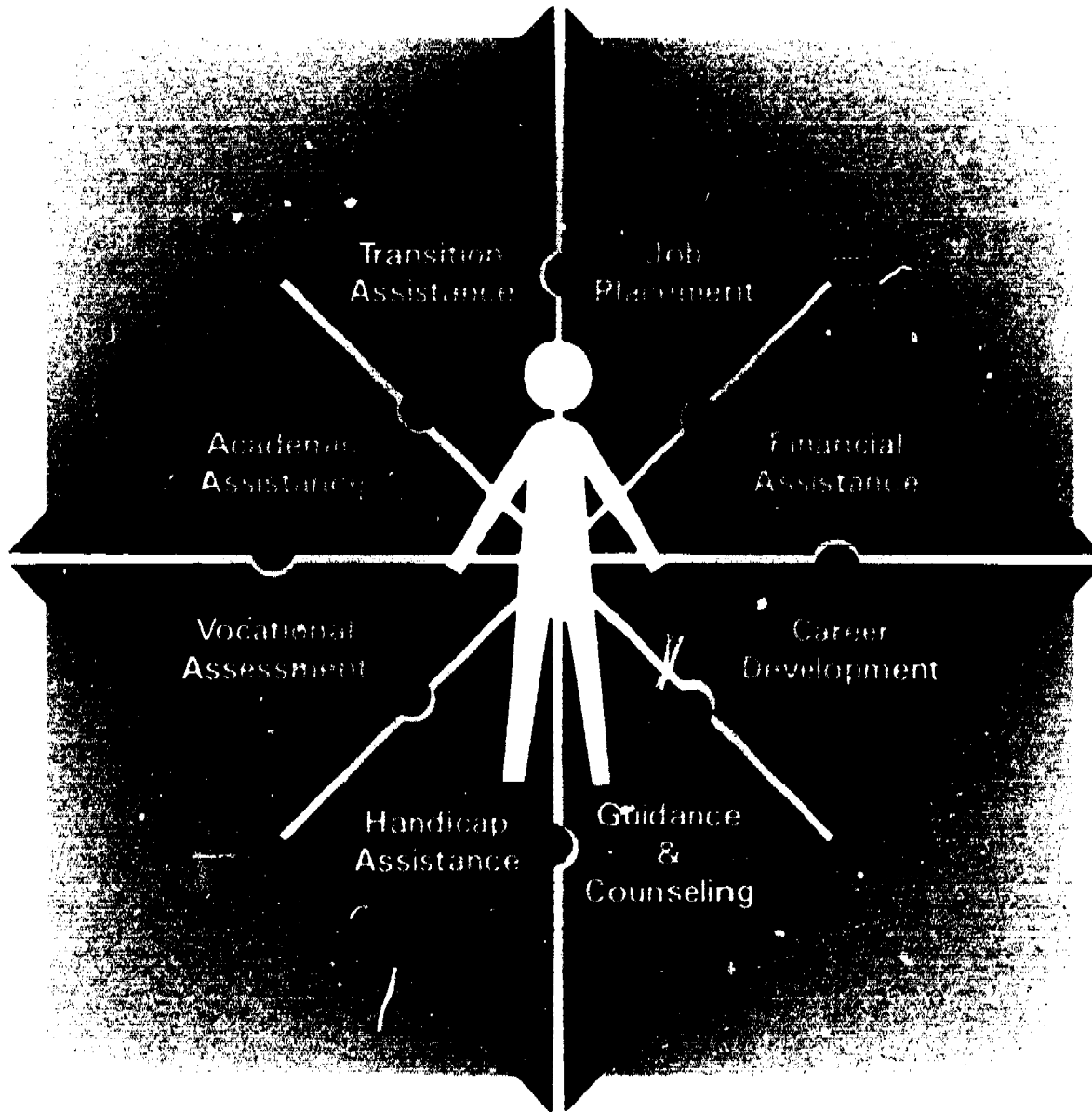
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**THE COLLEGE OF CHOICE!**



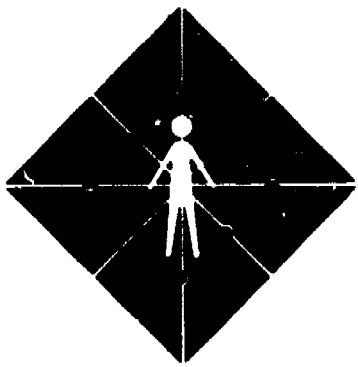
# CREDIT OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES



## PROJECT S.O.S.

JOHN WOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

*THE COLLEGE OF CHOICE!*



# PROJECT S.O.S.

## SPECIAL OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES

Project S.O.S. has been developed to assist anyone who is, or wants to be, a John Wood Community College student in any of the vocational/

occupational programs. A vocational/occupational program means training for employment, including hands-on experience, not just classroom theory.

PROJECT S.O.S. BEGINS WITH:

VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

A process that provides information about an individual's potential

WHEN IS IT GIVEN?

Usually before a student is placed in a vocational/occupational program

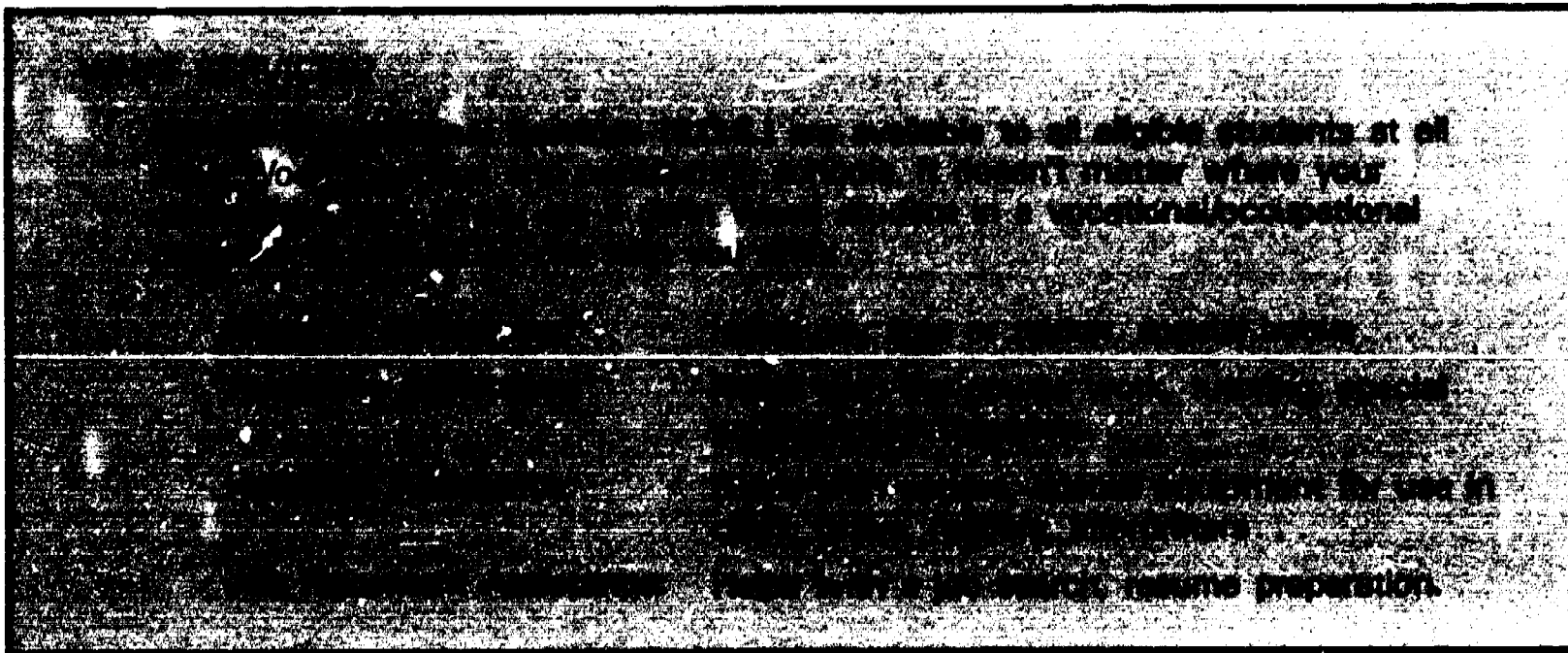
WHY IS VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT GIVEN?

To provide useful information concerning:

- aptitudes
- basic skills
- interests
- work habits
- work attitudes
- financial situation
- identifying barriers to success

WHAT THEN?

After the Vocational Assessment has been completed, the Vocational Special Needs Coordinator can determine what services will be available to each student



Cover page graphic adapted from: Illinois State Board of Education,  
Regional Vocational Special Needs Coordinator's Handbook, Springfield: Author, 1987.



## If YOU . . .

- think you might qualify for extra help but are not sure . . .
- feel your problems are too major right now and you simply cannot succeed in a college setting . . .
- think you are in the wrong field . . .
- don't know **what** you want . . .

## Then CONSIDER this . . .

Project S.O.S. can help you identify your strongest capabilities and interests, suggest the best area of training for you, and supply you with the extra help necessary for you to succeed.

*For more information contact:*

Project S.O.S.  
Special Needs Coordinator  
John Wood Community College  
(217) 224-6500

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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## If YOU . . .

- would like to enroll in a vocational/occupational program, but cannot afford the fees or the special tools and equipment that are required . . .
- are currently receiving a PELL grant, but it is not enough . . .
- earned less than \$5,700.00 last year (add \$2,000.00 for each dependent) . . .

## Then CONSIDER this . . .

Project S.O.S. will assess your financial situation and help you find new ways to cover the cost requirements. **Don't let lack of money be the reason you lack the training!**

*For more information contact:*

Project S.O.S.  
Special Needs Coordinator  
John Wood Community College  
(217) 224-6500



## If YOU . . .

- are having trouble understanding the assignments in your vocational classes . . .
- have a grade of "D" so far in your class and think you are going to fail . . .
- speak English as a **second** language and do not always understand what the instructor is saying . . .
- think you could pass the courses if you had some extra help . . .

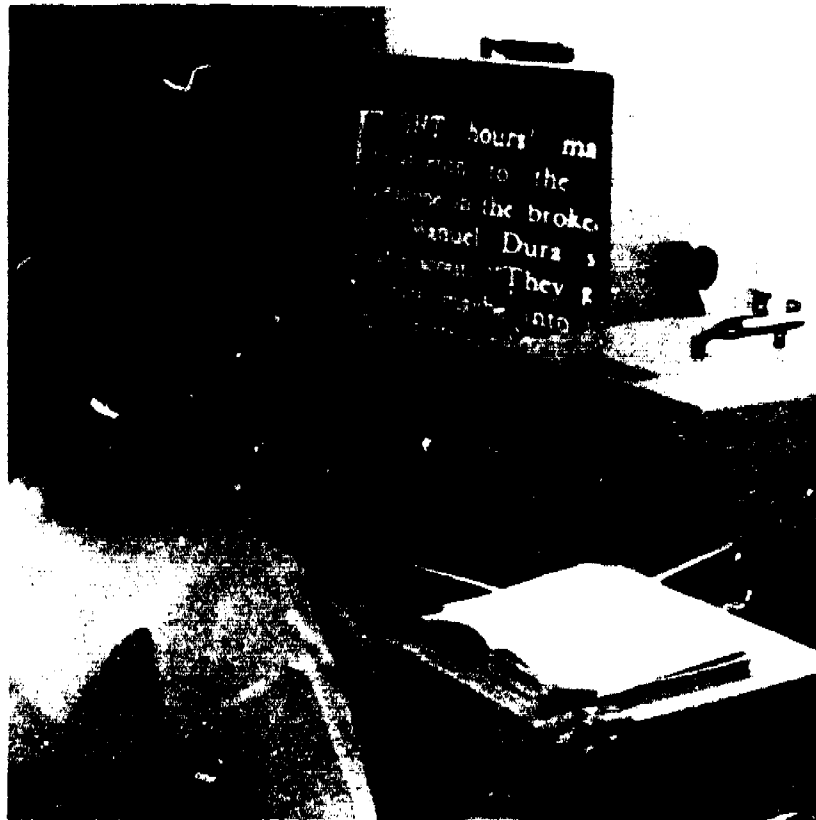
## Then CONSIDER this . . .

Project S.O.S. can help you with your coursework. **DON'T PANIC, AND DON'T PUT OFF GETTING HELP!** You may be eligible for instructional assistance; some special books or materials may help, or perhaps a tutor will be the help you need.

*For more information contact:*

Project S.O.S.  
Special Needs Coordinator  
John Wood Community College  
(217) 224-6500

# HANDICAP ASSISTANCE



## If YOU . . .

- are interested in a vocational/occupational program but think that you cannot do it because of your handicap . . .
- are already in a vocational class but you are failing your tests because of problems related to your handicap . . .
- are handicapped as a result of an accident and need retraining in a new field . . .

## Then CONSIDER this . . .

Project S.O.S. is designed to make sure that every handicapped person in the JWCC district has an equal opportunity to receive a college education.

This means that JWCC will provide extra help needed: financial, instructional, tutoring, special books and materials, special access, etc.

You may be eligible for help in overcoming the barriers to your education through Project S.O.S.

*For more information contact:*

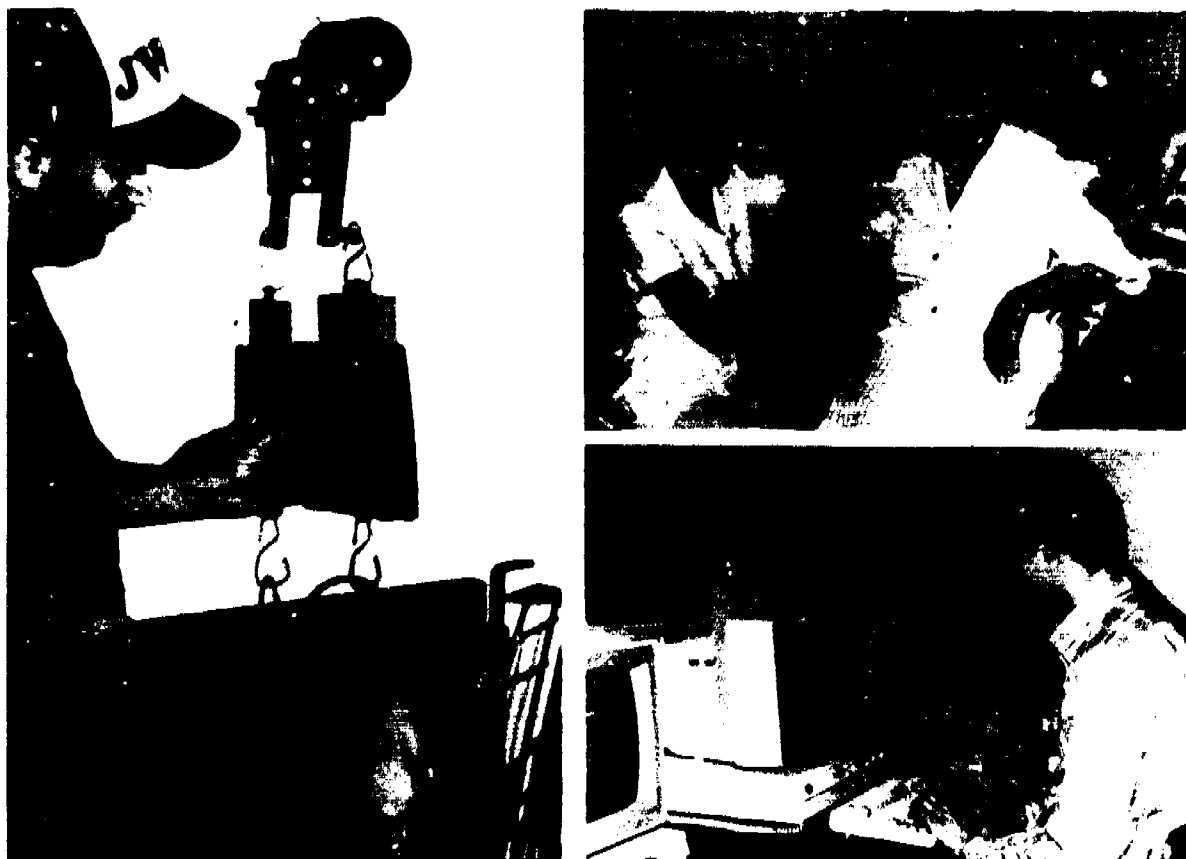
Project S.O.S.  
Special Needs Coordinator  
John Wood Community College  
(217) 224-6500



# JOB PLACEMENT TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

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## If YOU . . .

- are having difficulty finding a job . . .
- have completed a vocational/occupational program but still cannot find a job . . .
- feel that your financial situation, academic performance, or some other handicap is preventing you from getting a job . . .
- think you want to change your program or your school because you no longer feel your current choice is meeting your needs . . .

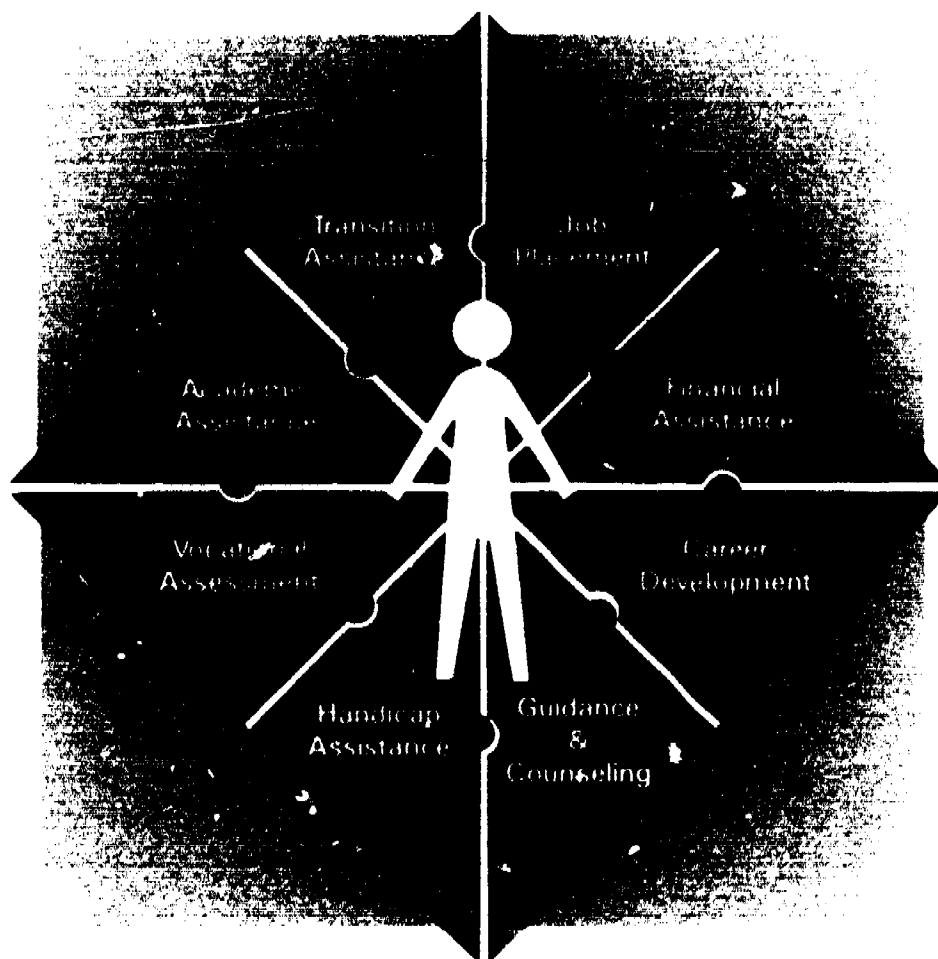
## Then CONSIDER this . . .

Through Project S.O.S., you can receive help with getting employed and staying employed. You can receive help with changing from one field to another. You can get help with finding special training for a particular job or occupation. There are many special problems associated with moving from school to school or school to work. Perhaps Project S.O.S. can help you.

*For more information contact:*

Project S.O.S.  
Special Needs Coordinator  
John Wood Community College  
(217) 224-6500

# PROJECT S.O.S. SPECIAL OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES



*For more information, contact:*  
**JOHN WOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
150 SOUTH 48TH STREET  
QUINCY, ILLINOIS 62301  
**[217] 224-6500**  
***THE COLLEGE OF CHOICE!***

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