



NEWS RELEASE

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Butler Tech’s Project LIFE® Special Education Work Based Learning Program Receives an Additional \$200,000 Grant from Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

Grant to support replication of Project LIFE® in rural school districts across the Nation

Fairfield Township, Ohio (May 2, 2022) – The Friends of Butler Tech Foundation, along with Butler Tech’s Project LIFE® special education transition-to-work department, is pleased to announce that it has received a \$200,000 grant from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation to support Butler Tech’s Project LIFE® national replication initiative. This second provision of grant funding from Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation will focus specifically on “Bringing Project LIFE to Rural Communities” and will include the development of a Project LIFE Micro-enterprise Implementation Guide and Curriculum. This guide will be developed via a collaboration with Celebrate EDU, an organization in Colorado specializing in empowering people with disabilities through online business and entrepreneurship education.

“This unique collaboration will combine the innovative approaches of two extremely skilled and passionate organizations with proven success for supporting youth with disabilities on their journey to greater independence and community employment,” said Reena Fish, Butler Tech Project LIFE® Replication Coordinator.

The combination of Butler Tech’s highly qualified special education transition specialists and Celebrate EDU’s national leadership in business and entrepreneurship education for youth with disabilities will result in the opportunity for all current and future Project LIFE® programs to develop their own quality, student-led Micro-enterprise business. This will provide students with disabilities a chance to practice leadership, customer service, marketing, financial literacy and a variety of other skill sets.



The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation awarded \$225,000 in grant funds to Butler Tech in 2018 that was utilized to assist in the launch of their Project LIFE® national replication initiative. These funds aided the start of 22 new programs. Today, Butler Tech boasts a total of 34 Project LIFE sites with two of those licenses purchased by the River East School Division in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. A large portion of this recent grant award will continue to enable Butler Tech to offer a much-reduced licensing cost for 10 school districts in rural regions of the United States.

Reena Fish, Project LIFE® Replication Coordinator, states that research shows: “The employment opportunities available to people with disabilities in these regions are severely lacking and there is a desperate need for education and training to garner the skills necessary for jobs and self-employment. An additional barrier preventing people from gaining employment is the lack of education and training they receive (Kessler 2015). School districts in rural areas often lack funds due to smaller populations of students. This greatly impacts their ability to develop quality, research-based learning opportunities for their youth with disabilities. This is why we want to offer a reduced Project LIFE® replication cost for school districts in rural areas.”

Students participating in Project LIFE® programs generally have a diagnosis of a significant learning limitation that presents a barrier to their goal of gaining and maintaining inclusive, competitive employment in their communities.

For more information about Project LIFE® National Replication, our current locations and specifics about the program, please visit our website at: www.btprojectlife.org.

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About Project LIFE®

Developed by Butler Tech staff in 2007, Project LIFE is a comprehensive, multi-year transition program in which students with disabilities develop, practice and strengthen skills that are high predictors of increased adult independence and successful, integrated employment in the community. In addition to Butler Tech’s own Project LIFE program offerings, this program can now be found in several states across the U.S. due to their opportunity to replicate this research-based program. (www.btprojectlife.org)





About Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, based in the Washington, D.C. area, was established in 1991 by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation and the Mitsubishi Electric U.S. companies, which produce, sell and distribute a wide range of consumer, industrial, commercial and professional electronics products. The Foundation has contributed more than \$21.5 million to organizations that are empowering young people with disabilities to lead more inclusive and productive lives. To learn more, visit www.MEAF.org.



About Celebrate EDU

Celebrate EDU is the leader in entrepreneurship and business education for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. (www.celebrateedu.org)



About Butler Tech

Butler Tech is one of the largest career technical schools in Ohio. Its passionate educators are on a shared mission of transforming lives to make our students career-ready and college-prepared.

We serve more than 18,000 high school and adult education students daily on Butler Tech's five campuses and in classrooms within 11 associate school districts. The Butler Tech staff strives to create an educational environment with equity, access, inclusion and diversity through student voice and choice. Offering a variety of programs from healthcare and public safety, to manufacturing and commercial trucking, Butler Tech provides a purpose for every passion.