

Growing Opportunities (GO) Summer Program



4-H Education Center at Auerfarm in Bloomfield, is excited to offer Greater Hartford transition students (ages 18-22) a unique summer educational opportunity to gain power and technical skills for workforce development. The Growing Opportunities (GO) program is designed to increase workforce training opportunities while helping prepare students for future self-sufficiency and hire-ability.

Auerfarm's unique approach provides special needs students access to workforce development on the farm. Students are exposed to four industry pathways of; agriculture, facilities management, hospitality, and food service on our remarkable 120-acre farm campus.

The GO summer transition students will:

- Gain exposure to a variety of careers/employment pathways
- Develop hard skills in the four industry pillars, while gaining soft skills in personal presentation and confidence
- Prepare for certifications, such as ServSafe
- Earn a weekly monetary stipend
- Build a personal resume and network of career-related professionals
- Cultivate skills to create a path towards independence and securing meaningful employment with the help of our GO job coaches

For the past **seven** years, Auerfarm has built successful collaborations with eight Greater Hartford school district special education programs and community organizations.

The GO program opens new windows to vocational possibilities after graduation, while participating in an educational, unique, outdoor worksite opportunity.

Summer Program: July – August • School-Year Program: September – June

For more information, please contact: Simone Upsey, Program & Community Advancement Manager
email: supsey@auerfarm.org, phone: 860-242-7144

Why Support GO?

Young adults with special needs have more societal risks of living below the poverty line. Research shows that only 1 in 5 working age individuals with a disability are successfully employed. An Accenture study found 29% of Americans with a disability between ages 16 and 64 were employed compared to 75% of non-disabled Americans in the same age bracket. A 2018 study found businesses that seek to employ people with special needs outperform businesses that do not. Furthermore, such businesses saw a 90% increase in overall employee retention.

Auerfarm offers a paid summer opportunity for educational and workforce training to students who need it the most, as well as to students who are interested in helping as Mentors. This experience will also count toward high school/college volunteer hours.

Auerfarm GO Summer Program Opportunity for Greater Hartford High School Students

When preparation meets opportunity, you grow and GO!

Who?

The GO summer program consists of transition students (18-22), high school/college-age Mentors, Job Coaches, and Auerfarm staff. The program is a unique opportunity that not only serves as exposure to career opportunities, but increases student confidence, socio-emotional learning, and interpersonal skills. The GO students and mentors build skills for unique, self-directed career choices.

GO transition students should be verbal to articulate their basic needs, accept direction and feedback, as well as planning to transition to live independently. Students should not have a BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan) nor a history of aggression or elopement.



What?

Our GO students will be immersed in a unique worksite opportunity to learn new career paths, make real friendships, and sharpen power and technical skills, while preparing for their own independence. The GO students and Mentors will be compensated with a weekly stipend.

The GO workforce development method consists of the following industry pathway activities that build competitive skills in workforce aptitude during the year-round program. The GO program workforce career pillars are agriculture, facilities management, food service and hospitality.

- Agricultural workforce activities include greenhouse, livestock, gardening, and fruit management, animal husbandry, and fiber and vegetable harvesting. Students work with the UConn Master's Gardeners who manage the Connecticut Foodshare garden.
- Facilities Management and workforce activities include: grounds keeping, landscaping, and indoor building/janitorial maintenance & repair.

- Food Service workforce activities include access to a certified commercial kitchen to learn best practices for food safety, preparation, budgeting and to prepare for ServSafe certification. Students harvest and prepare farm-fresh food, learn recipes, supply ordering, and food preservation techniques with a nutritional chef.
- The Hospitality pathway is in sync with Auerfarm receiving over 17,000 visitors annually. The workforce activities include cleaning, customer service, administrative assistance, and access to Auerfarm's farm store and FarmStay hosting initiative.



One of the unique program approaches is the GO participants will engage with prospective employers from the four career fields. Additionally, employers engage as speakers, tour guides, and provide interviewing insights.

Furthermore, students and mentors will have opportunities to engage with statewide trade associations and employers for new career pathways. A GO Program Manager will help connect students with potential employers.

Where?

4-H Education Center at Auerfarm, (Auerfarm), 158 Auer Farm Road, Bloomfield, CT 06002. We are a 120 acre, non-profit historic educational farm campus.

When?

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