



We Bring the World to New Jersey

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NJSEA AND MEADOWLANDS ENVIRONMENT CENTER ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP WITH REED NEXT TO ASSIST ADULTS WITH AUTISM

The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority today announced an exciting new collaboration with REED Next in which the NJSEA and Meadowlands Environment Center will help fill a significant societal need by providing vocational opportunities for adults with autism.

The Franklin Lakes-based non-profit organization began occupying a satellite office for its REED Next Adult Day Program on the NJSEA campus in mid-December. The year-round program, for individuals with autism ages 21 and older, focuses on pre-vocational and vocational training, volunteer and paid employment opportunities, community integration, and assistance with daily life skills.

“The NJSEA is very pleased to partner with REED Next and to do its part in giving adults with autism the chance to live more independent, productive and fulfilling lives through this vital program,” said Vincent Prieto, President and CEO of the NJSEA. “REED is a tremendous organization that makes a great difference in so many lives and we are proud to work with them.”

REED Next participants will work in a variety of jobs throughout the NJSEA and Meadowlands Environment Center campus.

Adults with autism are in crisis; over the next decade, more than 500,000 individuals will age out of programs, leaving them with little to no guidance or resources at a pivotal time in their lives.

“Our mission is to ensure that every individual with autism has access to the best programs needed to lead meaningful and fulfilled lives,” said Jill Nadison, Executive Director, REED Foundation for Autism. “The REED Next Day Program is built upon our years of expertise and the support of our

community partners, who share our desire to address this very real problem facing adults with autism.”

In addition to its new partnership with the NJSEA, REED Next has an established relationship with Meadowlands Environment Center education programs offered through a partnership between the Authority and Ramapo College.

In 2018, the MEC obtained a Mobile Food Lab through a grant obtained from REED Next and other partners. The educational tool is housed in a converted school bus and includes an indoor growing system, a science lab with digital microscopes, a teaching kitchen and an art station. The 50-foot bus travels to school districts throughout the region and is designed to foster an interactive learning environment that engages students’ senses and curiosity around food science and encourages healthy eating habits. The Mobile Food Lab is an employment opportunity for REED Next participants.

“We are thrilled to use the Mobile Food Lab as a connection to our science education program,” said Angela Cristini, Director of the Meadowlands Environment Center. “It is a prime example of how we strive to provide students with comprehensive environmental education experiences that now include food. We are united in a mission to support learning, innovation and unique employment opportunities for adults with autism.”

For more information on REED Next, visit reedfoundationforautism.org.

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