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UNIQUE SUMMER WORK PROGRAM FOR YOUTHS WITH DISABILITIES



*Participants in NMDVR's summer program tend to the backyard farm at Gutiérrez Hubbell House in Pajarito Village, Albuquerque.
(Photo credit: NMDVR/Anthony Harkness)*

ALBUQUERQUE (June 16, 2022) – Nine young people from the Albuquerque area are taking part this summer in a work-based program supporting youths with disabilities, sponsored by The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR). The eight-week learning experience involves working at both a farm/garden and a Habitat for Humanity Neighborhood Revitalization project.

“The program was developed to give the youth a practical experience of work and place them in an environment that will encourage community ownership and responsibility,” NMDVR Program Manager Anthony Harkness says.

The participants—all with various cognitive disabilities—are working from 8 a.m. to noon, four days a week, through the end of July. They are being paid a stipend for their efforts. Ranging in age from 15 to their early 20s, they are split into two groups. One group started at a community farm/garden and the other with the Habitat site. They will switch halfway through.

“One day, if I am driving by this place, I can say I was part of that!” Sean Hinzman, 17, says of his work on a community garden project.

This is the second year of the program, which served four kids with disabilities last year. All four of them are back for a second summer, along with five new participants.

“It is really like ‘good-awesome’ to be in the community and to socialize with other community members,” adds 21-year-old Michael Bruening.

Community Partners for this program:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Mandy’s Farm
- ABC Community School Partnership/
Polk Middle School
- AgraAbility
- Youth Conservation Corps
- Feed the Hood Project
- Gutiérrez Hubbell House
- TreeNM.org
- Bernalillo County Grow the Growers
- Rio Grande HS 20/50 Project

To participate in this or any NMDVR program, New Mexico residents with a disability (of any age) should visit www.dvr.state.nm.us and then make an appointment at one of the agency's [two dozen offices](#) around the state.

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) helps eligible individuals with documented disabilities find suitable employment. To do so, NMDVR partners with companies and agencies seeking opportunities to enhance and diversify their workforce. Vocational rehabilitation is a voluntary program supporting people who want to work. With a long history of success and proven methodology for making the best fits, NMDVR is committed to helping participants thrive in their communities.

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