

VALENTINA: STILL ENJOYING HER JOB, FIVE YEARS LATER

by Sharon Torres, Project SEARCH Program Assistant, and Annette Martinez, Skills Trainer



Valentina Hosteen is a former Project SEARCH intern through Gallup-McKinley County Schools. She completed her stint as an intern at the Hilton Garden Inn Gallup about five years ago, did her three rotations, and found that housekeeping was her favorite.

When the program was finished, the Hilton Garden Inn hired her as a housekeeper. At that time, she was able to clean five rooms in a day, with each room taking roughly 30 minutes to complete. At the time, five was her lucky number.

Fast forward to today, the Gallup resident's lucky number has changed to 22—because that's the number of rooms she can now clean in one day! When asked, Valentina is more than happy to help train new Project SEARCH interns and is always willing to step up and take on extra hours or days.

“Valentina is an amazing person, quiet, but she can do her job,” Housekeeping Supervisor Carmelita Miller says. “She is here every day at work. Shows up early, never late, and always on time. Valentina always has a smile on her face.”

Miller adds that Valentina has proven to be a dedicated and reliable asset to the Hilton team.

Project SEARCH is an international school-to-work transition internship program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants gain transferable work skills and receive wraparound supports for gaining competitive, integrated employment upon completion of the program.

Project SEARCH in New Mexico is an interagency collaboration between the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, The Department of Health's Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and the UNM Center for Development and Disability-Partners for Employment.

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps individuals with documented disabilities find suitable employment. To do so, NMDVR partners with companies and agencies seeking opportunities to enhance and diversify their workforce. With a long history of success and proven methodology for making the best fits, NMDVR is committed to helping participants thrive in their communities. For more information, visit dvr.state.nm.us or call 505-954-8500.