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News Release

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Community Hospital to Host Ribbon Cutting Ceremony To Commemorate Project SEARCH

Mesa County, CO - Community Hospital is proud to host a ribbon cutting ceremony to honor the successful implementation of Project SEARCH, a program recognized as a best practice model for building employment opportunities for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Community members are invited to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony on November 2, 2023 at Community Hospital, 2351 G Road, at 11:00 a.m. outside of the main entrance.

Community Hospital implemented the Project SEARCH program for the 2023-2024 school year. Project SEARCH interns gain access to high quality internship experiences in a variety of departments throughout the hospital. Each intern participates in two full semesters of internship rotations as well as onsite training in topics such as team building, workplace safety, technology, self-advocacy and financial literacy.

“Project SEARCH has addressed a significant need in our community and we are extremely proud of our team at Community Hospital for stepping up to the plate,” said Christina O’Dell, Director of Volunteer Services for Community Hospital. “This year we have five interns participating in the program and anticipate doubling the program size in the 2024-2025 school year,” added O’Dell.

Project SEARCH at Community Hospital is the first on the Western Slope and one of only nine sites in Colorado. Community Hospital worked in collaboration with Mesa County Valley School District 51, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, STRiVE, Mesa County Workforce Center and many other community partners to bring this program to fruition in the Grand Valley.

“We are steadfast in our commitment to support our community, and that includes fostering young talent,” said Chris Thomas, President & CEO for Community Hospital. “It’s an honor to trailblaze this program on the Western Slope and help prepare students for future success,” Thomas added.

About Community Hospital: Community Hospital in Grand Junction, Colorado, is a full-service, acute care hospital licensed for 60 beds. As part of the Colorado West Healthcare System, we are a Level III Trauma Center that offers full outpatient diagnostic services and inpatient care for the Western Slope region of Colorado and eastern Utah.

About Project SEARCH: Project SEARCH was developed at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, which is still the administrative headquarters for the organization. The focus of the program is on serving young adults, ages 18-21, with intellectual and developmental disabilities who can benefit from personalized support in an intensive year of career development and internship experience. It is targeted for individuals whose goal is competitive employment. Interns participate in two internships to explore a variety of career paths. The interns work with a team that includes their family, an instructor, and local and state agencies to create an employment goal. The hallmark of Project SEARCH’s primary objective is to secure competitive employment for every program participant. For more information about Project SEARCH, please visit www.projectsearch.us.

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