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News Release

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Community Hospital to Launch Project SEARCH, A Program Serving Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Mesa County, CO - Community Hospital is proud to announce the 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 learn more about this initiative during an open house at Community Hospital on January 31, 2023 from 4:30pm-5:30pm in the Legacy Conference Room.

“Over the past two years, we have worked collaboratively with Mesa County Valley School District 51 and many other community partners to help yield better preparation for our young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in crossing the bridge to successful adulthood,” said Christina O’Dell, Director of Volunteer Services for Community Hospital. “Community Hospital is proud to play an integral role in addressing a significant need on the Western Slope,” added O’Dell.

Project SEARCH at Community Hospital will be the first on the Western Slope and one of only nine sites in Colorado. Project SEARCH interns will gain access to high quality internship experiences in a variety of departments throughout the hospital. Each intern will have 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.

“Supporting our community is at the forefront of our mission,” said Chris Thomas, President & CEO for Community Hospital. “Project SEARCH is one more way Community Hospital can help foster young talent in our community and we are thrilled to help trailblaze this program on the Western Slope,” he added.

Program partners of Project SEARCH include Community Hospital, Mesa County Valley School District 51, STRiVE/Mesa Developmental Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Arc of Mesa County and Mesa County Workforce Center.

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.