

PROGRAMS: hireAbility - IT Career Readiness

DATE RUN: June 22, 2020

SOURCE URL:

<https://northeasttimes.com/2020/06/22/jevs-it-career-readiness-program-now-recruiting/>

## NORTHEAST TIMES NEWSWEEKLY

# JEVS IT career readiness program now recruiting



*Tech whiz: Patrick Conroy (left) and other students in the JEVS IT Career Readiness program are learning the ins and outs of computers and digital literacy.*

Ever since Patrick Conroy joined the JEVS IT Career Readiness program, he hasn't missed a day of class. Conroy is a student at MaST Community Charter School and every day he would travel to Orleans Technical College for the program. There he earned his reputation as the "Google Drive expert," and learned more about computers and operating systems.

The six-month program helps young adults with disabilities in the city develop skills in IT to have success in the working world. Participants gain hands-on training in areas like digital literacy,

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installation and configuring operating systems, cloud-based computer, web design and entrepreneurship. Once work in the classroom concludes, participants are placed in a two-month paid internship.

“I liked the whole thing – making friends with the interns and all my teachers,” Conroy said.

Conroy is a member in the program’s second cohort, set to finish in June. Due to COVID-19, participants in this program were unfortunately unable to participate in an in-person internship, but the plan is for that to resume when the next cohort begins in August.

“The program is innovative, not traditional. It looks at each student individually and sees what they need to be successful in life,” said Regina Oakes, special education coordinator at MaST.

“In Patrick’s case, I’ve seen him flourish as a student and an individual, and saw his self-advocacy improve tremendously,” she said.

Once this cohort is finished with the program, 27 students total will have gone through the program. In the first cohort, students were sent to Drexel University, Peirce College, Philadelphia public schools and more for their hands-on learning.

Once the virus spread, the program had to pivot to online learning, but the students were more than willing to rise to the challenge, said Tara Mullen, executive director of JEVS hireAbility.

“All of our kids embraced online learning super quickly and really continued to thrive in an online environment,” she said.

The program is now recruiting for its third cohort. To learn more about the program or apply, visit [jevshumanservices.org/program/it-career-readiness/](http://jevshumanservices.org/program/it-career-readiness/).