

There's
a place
for you.



Triton College

For immediate release: **Aug. 12, 2024**

Triton College S.E.E.D. Program Provides Students with Alternative Learning Opportunities



Pictured on the day of the S.E.E.D. Program Completion Ceremony are Triton College representatives with S.E.E.D. Program graduates.

RIVER GROVE, Ill. – One in five adult Americans identify as neurodiverse, meaning they simply learn differently. Statistics also show that 37% of students diagnosed with autism, ADHD, OCD and other neurodiverse conditions report not receiving the necessary accommodations to thrive academically, and neurodiverse individuals are frequently unemployed or underemployed at twice the rate of the rest of the U.S. population. Triton College is working to address these gaps.

Through its Skill Enhancement and Employee Development (S.E.E.D.) Program at the college's Center for Access and Accommodative Services (CAAS), Triton is providing neurodivergent students with opportunities to earn certificates through Triton's School of Continuing

Education. Through in-person instruction and employment experiences, and more, students are prepped for independent, competitive employment.

In July, Triton held a graduation to honor eight students who successfully completed the S.E.E.D. Program.

Graduate Zoe Phillpotts of River Forest, Illinois, said the S.E.E.D. Program boosted her confidence and productivity skills, along with realizing her passion for writing. Phillpotts, who will be attending Columbia College Chicago this fall to pursue a bachelor's degree in journalism, wrote an essay on Black women and mental health to be published by the University of Iowa.

"The S.E.E.D. Program assisted Zoe in finding her tribe," said Janet Pena-Davis, Phillpotts' grandmother. "She didn't feel different at Triton. Beyond the great camaraderie, Triton had so many resources for Zoe, from the Fitness Center to the counselors. It couldn't have been more positive."

Pena-Davis is also proud that the S.E.E.D. Program helped her granddaughter maneuver public transportation to Triton's campus, giving her a sense of independence.

"I want other S.E.E.D. students to know that they should always stay dedicated, focused and follow their dreams," said Phillpotts.

Graduate Daniel Rodriguez of Northlake, Illinois, said he learned many new skills during his time in Triton's S.E.E.D. Program, such as how to write a resume and how to implement standard etiquette into everyday life. He plans to continue his education at Triton to earn an associate degree.

"This program helped me find a new job," he said. "I have nothing but positive feelings about this experience."

Colleen V. Hayes-Malinowski, S.E.E.D. Program coordinator and instructor, said the small group of graduates became more familiar with each other and felt more like family.

"This group worked really hard," she said. "I'm really excited for them and proud of what they've accomplished."

The S.E.E.D. Program provides encouragement in a welcoming environment, according to Dominique Dial, director of CAAS.

“Our program imparts exposure to a college campus, as well as college courses. Their work skills develop immensely,” said Dial.

“The S.E.E.D. Program allows greater face-to-face instruction,” said Dial, adding that it provides employment skills, such as professionalism, social communication, coping skills, job

expectations and resume writing. Students have classroom instructions with lectures and hands-on, practical activities.

“S.E.E.D. is much more than an accommodative service. It’s a campus-wide program out of the School of Continuing Education,” explained Hilary Meyer, dean of Academic Success. “S.E.E.D. is a strategic priority and a part of Triton’s mission.”

The S.E.E.D. Program graduates included Kalem Hoppszallern, Daniel Rodriguez, Luis Avalos, Hayde Gonzalez, Ingred Betts, Alexandra Berryhill and Zoe Phillpotts.

For more information, please contact caas@triton.edu or (708) 456-0300, Ext. 3917.

###

Media Contact:

Melissa Ramirez Cooper | melissacooper@triton.edu | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3692

Maryann Pisano | maryannpisano@triton.edu | 708-456-0300, Ext. 3202

ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE Triton College is an institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs designed for students to realize their career aspirations and effectively compete in a global economy. The college campus spans 110 acres in River Grove, Illinois, holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton’s exemplary faculty and staff work to provide high-quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 10,000 students each year. Triton College is a member of The Community Colleges of Illinois and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at <http://triton.edu/>.