



SEARCH LIGHTS

If you ask Pope Dyer what he likes about his job at Children's, he'll tell you he loves learning new things about medicine, enjoys the way his co-workers celebrate his birthday and—most importantly—feels like he does a good job. His co-workers say he reignites their own passion for working at Children's. Here's why.

By all accounts, Jackson "Pope" Dyer is a model Children's employee. In his 18 months as a Stocking Technician in the Emergency department at Scottish Rite, he's taken on new responsibilities and frequently earns kudos for meticulously organizing the unit's patient rooms.

"I'd hire a thousand more Popes if I could," said Jennifer Berdis, Manager, Clinical Operations, ED, Scottish Rite. "His smile is a ray of sunshine. There's something about the way he gets excited about the little things, like the slightest acknowledgement of a job well done, that reignites your own passion for working at Children's."

Pope came to Children's by way of Project SEARCH, a program that helps young adults with intellectual disabilities make successful transitions from school to adult life. Project SEARCH was developed by a nurse at Cincinnati Children's Hospital as a solution for stocking supplies accurately and consistently. Briggs & Associates, a supported employment agency, brought the program to Georgia, and Children's became one of its first hospital partners. After a one-year training program, Project SEARCH graduates earn employment in technical roles for healthcare organizations, where they undertake jobs such as stocking carts, moderating refrigerator

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temperatures and running lab tests. When a partner organization, like Children's, hires a Project SEARCH employee, the employee receives a job coach with whom he or she frequently meets to track progress and identify new goals.

When he started at Children's in January 2011, Pope worked four-hour shifts five days a week. He enjoyed his work so much that he soon asked for more hours. Jennifer and her team gladly obliged. Today, Pope clocks in just before 7 a.m., and clocks out at exactly 11:53 a.m. Monday through Friday. He stocks as many as 50 patient rooms, as well as the triage area, with supplies like monitor leads, baby wipes, bandages and air speculums.

He's also a great team player. During ED Spirit Week last October, Pope used some of his Children's earnings to buy clothes for all five theme days, including a pink, collared shirt for Breast Cancer Awareness

Day. ED staff unanimously voted Pope "Most Spirited" that week. And after a photo of Pope volunteering at a community event appeared in a local newspaper, he hung the clip on the unit's staff announcement board.

"We love having him as a part of our team," said Jennifer. "I love that he enjoys being here as much as we enjoy having him here."

Children's hired our first Project SEARCH employee in February 2007. With 20 employees in 16 departments across Egleston and Scottish Rite, including three in the ED at Scottish Rite, we are now the program's second-largest employer in Georgia. Our Project SEARCH employees are individuals with a broad range of developmental diagnoses, such as Down syndrome, traumatic brain injuries and autism. Many take MARTA to work, with some requiring multiple buses each way. Nicole Williams, Environmental Services Technician, Egleston,

and Melvin Heard, Stocking Technician, CICU, Egleston, are our most tenured Project SEARCH employees, having started in April 2007 and July 2007, respectively.

Michael Landis, Manager, Human Resources, Scottish Rite, launched the program at Children's and continues to lead the hiring and placement of all of our Project SEARCH employees.

"It's been incredible to watch teams, from the CICU to general patient care, embrace this program," said Landis. "It's a win-win for everyone. The employees are excited to be here, and we're grateful to have them. In many cases, Project SEARCH employees provide a tremendous boost in productivity and efficiency."

A great example is Aaron Jones, who works in the Pharmacy department at Scottish Rite. His help filling syringes with liquid Tylenol in precise volumes allows the department to purchase large containers of liquid Tylenol in bulk, instead of more expensive, pre-filled syringes. Last year alone, Aaron helped save more than \$10,000.

"I like being around the nurses and getting to see the patients and learning medical terms," said Pope. "I love my job because it's fun. I do a good job." ■

*If you'd like to have an employee like Pope or Aaron join your team, reach out to Michael at ext. 56975.



► Pope stocks up on supplies in an Omnicell in the Scottish Rite Emergency department before making deliveries to patient exam rooms.