



High School students at New Way Academy are enjoying a new state-of-the-art facility to help them prepare for independent living after high school. Thanks to the generosity of Rich and Wendy Schneider, students have a fully equipped Independent Living Lab. The curriculum developed and taught by New Way high school teacher, Kacey Bennett, is titled C.O.R.E. which stands for Community Service, Organization, Readiness, and Effective Time Management. Over the course of the year, the C.O.R.E curriculum walks students through the basics of managing a home and schedule, learning socially responsible behavior, interpersonal skills, building credit, managing their own budget and finances, and seeking employment.

The Independent Living Lab consists of five fully equipped kitchen areas, each outfitted with an oven-range, sink, and equipment for cooking and serving meals. A refrigerator, washer and dryer, and common area are shared by the group. During the first week of school, students are given boxes of kitchen supplies and are assigned the task of organizing their kitchen area in a way that makes most sense to them. All students take pride in how they have personally arranged their kitchen and quickly learn the role organization plays in getting a job done. The class has a laundry day each month and is responsible for washing all team uniforms. Students are also assigned the task of documenting (with photos) the steps they take when doing their own laundry at home.



Credit cards, bank accounts, budgets, insurance, and employment can be areas where many young people struggle. New Way students are taught skills to manage their finances and understand the importance of budgeting their time and resources, through a series of personal finance simulations. Each student has a virtual personal checking account and receives "pay checks" for coming to school. Students are also held responsible for creating a budget and paying their monthly rent and utilities, car payments, insurance, and other living expenses. They also learn the importance of good communication skills and socially responsible behavior so that they can develop strong relationships and have confidence when seeking job opportunities. The C.O.R.E. curriculum walks students through employment possibilities and choices by teaching them appropriate work habits and how to seek and maintain employment. Students role-play job interviews and gain confidence in their ability to effectively communicate their skills and abilities.



Life after high school can be both exciting and frightening for both students and parents. Thanks to the new Independent Living Lab and the C.O.R.E curriculum, knowledge replaces uncertainty, confidence replaces fear, and students are prepared for many of the challenges that young people will face when starting out in the 21st century.



NEW WAY ACADEMY