



# NORWICH FREE ACADEMY

Thomas Dufort  
L.E.A.D. Director  
Norwich Free Academy

To whom it may concern:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter of commendation for the Mohegan Sun Casino for being an exemplar community partner. I write as the director of the L.E.A.D. (Life skills, Employment, and Adult Development) program based at the Norwich Free Academy in Norwich CT. The L.E.A.D. program serves young adults with disabilities ages eighteen through twenty-one. The goal of the program is to prepare the individuals for the transition to adult living. The learning of vocational skills is a huge part of the curriculum, both the varied tasks associated with employment and, perhaps more importantly, the interpersonal “soft” skills that apply to any vocational career.

One of my roles as director is to find sites of interest that provide meaningful, authentic vocational training opportunities for my students within their community. With this in mind I approached the Mohegan Sun Casino when developing the L.E.A.D. program one and a half years ago. Mohegan Sun is one of the largest employers in our area and has a tremendous amount of diversity in vocational opportunities. Further, Mohegan Sun has a history of hiring individuals with disabilities. Shortly after contacting Mohegan Sun I was invited to discuss how they could best help the individuals in my program. Mohegan Sun has gone above and beyond to accommodate my program’s goals. We are currently receiving vocational training in six different departments within the Casino learning a variety of vocational skill sets. Mohegan employees have been gracious and supportive in acclimating L.E.A.D. students into the various settings, truly making them feel a part of the team. It has become the preferred job site for my students not only because of the interesting, genuine employment training but also because of the warmth and respect with which they are treated while working there.

For myself, I can state that the folks at Mohegan have been wonderful to work with while developing this program. They have supplied detailed descriptions of each setting, allowing for systematic instruction and skill assessment as my students learn and develop new skills. The communication with all departments has been excellent and the support has been wonderful. I am looking forward to continuing our partnership with the Mohegan Sun. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or further clarification.

Sincerely,  
Tom Dufort  
L.E.A.D. Director  
[dufortt@nfaschool.org](mailto:dufortt@nfaschool.org)

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES... PREPARING LIVES