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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Students have a blast, explore future careers through VR program**

HOMEWOOD - To educate students with disabilities about their options after high school, rehabilitation counselors who serve transition students in Jefferson and Blount counties recently planned several activities as part of an initiative entitled "Career Explosion."

The program, developed with assistance from ADRS Lakeshore, targets 11th graders and exiting 12th graders who will be pursuing employment or post-secondary training after high school, said Yolanda Spencer, VR S supervisor in Homewood.

"We coordinate various transitional activities during the school year that are consumer-friendly, fun, interactive, realistic and informational," Spencer said.

The events include College Road Trip, Transition Fair, College Preparation Day, Financial Aid Workshop, Travel Training, and Reality Check/Money Management.

During the College Road Trip, students learn about financial aid, student support services, advocating for their accommodation needs, and how to apply for admission early.

At Transition Fair, counselors connect parents to the community resources that are available for their children. College Preparation Day is a one-day workshop that addresses the admissions process and introduces students to how to access their accommodation and apply for VR college sponsorships.

Financial Aid Workshop shows parents and students how to apply for a Pell grant and disability-related scholarships. At Travel Training, students learn how to access public transportation.

Conducted in collaboration with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Reality Check/Money Management is a financial program that shows young people what it is like to pay bills.

The Homewood VR S office started Career Explosion as an extension of the Career Prep session that the office holds in the summer.

"We realized we should be doing things in the Career Prep program all year," Spencer said.