



RELEASE

**"A ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE" EXAMINES INNOVATIVE COLLEGE PROGRAM FOR
DISABLED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

WPSU-TV production follows a group of students with disabilities as they attend classes at a local university.

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA (August 1, 2006) - The process of transitioning from high school to life in the "real world" can be a challenging experience for anyone. The transition can be even more overwhelming for high school students coping with physical, social or learning disabilities. **"A Road to Independence,"** a new documentary produced by Penn State Public Broadcasting, explores an innovative program, LifeLink, designed to ease the transition for students with disabilities from high school to collegiate life and adulthood. The documentary follows a group of students as they cope with taking college courses, living independently, interviewing for jobs and more.

The LifeLink program gives students with special educational needs the opportunity to live life as an average college student, relying largely on volunteer student mentors. The program offers assistance with situations that any college student would experience—classes, social interactions, independent living, and job training.

"LifeLink provides opportunities for students with disabilities that they would not otherwise experience," said Teri Lindner, the award-winning special education teacher who runs the LifeLink program. "Because of LifeLink, education for our older students is with age-appropriate peers and allows us to add a very innovative and exciting component to their curriculum."

The documentary introduces viewers to eight students participating in the program including Matt Porter, a twenty-year-old high school graduate. Matt began attending freshman level classes with the aid of his student mentor. Viewers will also meet Katy Rommel who participated in extracurricular activities and college courses. Other students featured in the program take ballroom dancing classes, move into apartments, and interview for jobs. The production traces the students' difficulties, triumphs, and personal growth as they work toward independence.

"A Road to Independence" is a production of Penn State Public Broadcasting with funding by The Pennsylvania Department of Education and Bureau of Special Education. Joe Myers served as producer/director; Tom Keiter is the executive producer. WPSU-TV broadcasts a 24-hour program schedule to 29 counties throughout Pennsylvania and southern New York.

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Photos Available