



ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2024- JUNE 2025

A YEAR THAT ASKED US TO STAY TRUE

The past year asked a lot of SEEC.

It was a year shaped by uncertainty across our industry. **Funding pressures, changes in employment opportunities, and a shifting community climate affected the people we support, and the broader disability community.** These challenges were not theoretical. They showed up in **lost jobs, disrupted routines, difficult transitions,** and real questions about **what stability looks like when systems feel fragile.**

And yet, this year also reminded us who we are.

Again, I watched SEEC respond not by pulling back, but **by leaning in.** We stayed **focused on people.** We stayed focused on **relationships.** And we stayed focused on the belief that **everyone deserves to belong in their community,** even when the conditions make that harder to achieve.

2025 was a year marked by challenge, creativity, and community strength. It was not easy. But it was meaningful. It **pushed us to think differently, listen more closely, and trust the wisdom of the people closest to our work.**

When traditional employment pathways became less predictable, SEEC expanded approaches that focused on **skills, confidence, and self-advocacy.** Programs like **Learn to Earn** reflect a simple truth. Belonging at work is not just about having a job. It is about having the tools to navigate change, speak for oneself, and be seen for one's contributions. In a tough job market, we chose to be proactive and not fearful.

When the people we support faced **increased complexity in their lives,** including increased **mental health needs, isolation,** and challenging **transitions,** SEEC responded by **strengthening the role of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), as thoughtful, adaptive partners.** We know that support is not just about tasks and activities. It is about relationships. It is about being present through change. And it is about trusting our colleagues providing direct support as professionals who know how to **listen, adjust, and lead.**

This belief showed up most clearly through the **Innovation Fund.** For years, I have heard the same messages from staff across our organization. The ideas are here. Creativity is there. What is often missing are the resources to act. This year, we worked to change that by **putting trust and support directly into the hands of our DSP colleagues** and people with lived experience. The result was not just new projects, but **renewed energy and shared ownership** of our **mission.**

Throughout the past year, we also stayed focused on connections. We invested in initiatives that addressed loneliness, created space for friendships, and strengthened community ties. In moments when systems felt uncertain, belonging became something we built together, day by day.

This annual report highlights **three** stories from the past year. Each one reflects **a choice SEEC made under pressure.** To adapt instead of retreating. To listen instead of assuming. And to keep inclusion grounded in action, not language alone.

None of this work happened in isolation. It was **made possible by the people we support, the Direct Support Professionals who showed up every day with care and creativity, families and caregivers, partners, donors, and community members** who continued to believe in what SEEC stands for.

Last year reminded us that our values are not tested when things are easy. They are tested when things are difficult.

Thank you for standing with us during a year that asked us to stay true.





Learn to Earn:

Building Skills and Confidence in a Changing Job Landscape

Last year brought real change to the employment landscape for the people SEEC supports. Jobs that once were stable became uncertain. Hours were reduced. Roles shifted. For some, employment ended altogether. These changes were felt not only financially, but emotionally, as routines were disrupted and confidence was tested.

SEEC met this moment by asking a simple but important question.

What does meaningful employment support look like when the path forward is no longer predictable?



Give today. Your gift strengthens employment supports, mental health-informed services, and belonging-focused connection.

Donate at www.seeonline.org/donate.

Learn to Earn:

Building Skills and Confidence in a Changing Job Landscape

Last year brought real change to the employment landscape for the people SEEC supports. **Jobs that once were stable became uncertain. Hours were reduced. Roles shifted.** For some, employment ended altogether. These changes were felt not only financially, but emotionally, as routines were disrupted and confidence was tested.

SEEC met this moment by asking a simple but important question. What does meaningful employment support look like when the path forward is no longer predictable?

Learn to Earn was created to support people who were not ready to move directly into employment and those who needed time to rebuild after a job ended. What began as a pilot is now a core part of SEEC's pathway to employment.

Learn to Earn is a structured, 7-month community-based program that runs throughout the week.

Participants attend on a regular schedule and build consistent routines. Each week includes small group sessions, one-on-one support, and time in the community where skills are practiced in real situations.

The program focuses on **skills that are used every day at work.** Participants practice communication, such as asking for help, following instructions, and interacting with supervisors. They learn **workplace expectations, including being on time, staying on task, and responding to feedback.** They also build skills in managing stress, navigating challenges, and maintaining daily routines like transportation and time management.

Participants spend time in community settings where they can apply these skills. This may include volunteer activities or work-like experiences that help build confidence and independence. These experiences allow people to try new tasks and understand what kind of work feels like a good fit.

A key part of Learn to Earn is getting to know each person's strengths and interests. **Staff work closely with participants to explore preferences, build**

resumes, and identify next steps. This process helps create a clearer picture of what support each person needs to move forward.

This work connects directly to job development and customized employment. By the time someone is ready to pursue a job, there is a stronger understanding of their skills, goals, and support needs.

Learn to Earn focuses on helping people keep a job, not just get one. **Skills like communication, consistency, and confidence are built into daily routines.** Instead of starting over after a setback, people continue building on what they already know.

For participants, the impact is practical. **People learn how to describe their strengths, handle challenges, and build relationships with coworkers.** They gain experience in real environments that prepares them for employment.

For Direct Support Professionals, Learn to Earn provides a clear structure for supporting people through transitions. It shifts the focus from completing tasks to building skills that support long-term success.

Over the past year, Learn to Earn has shown why this approach matters. **When employment is uncertain, people still need structure, consistency, and opportunities to grow.** Learn to Earn provides that foundation so people are ready to move forward when opportunities arise.





Supporting the Whole Person

Strengthening Support for People with Behavioral Health Support Needs

Mental health is essential for everyone, especially the people SEEC supports.

Across our communities, many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities also experience mental health needs. This is often described as dual diagnosis. It is a widely recognized reality, and national data show that more than half of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have at least one co-occurring mental health condition.

What does meaningful support look like when mental health needs are part of everyday life?



**Give monthly. Reliable support helps SEEC respond when life changes fast.
Donate at www.seeonline.org/donate.**

Supporting the Whole Person:

Strengthening Support for People with Behavioral Health Support Needs

For the people SEEC supports, **mental health needs are a part of everyday life**. They influence how someone experiences **work, relationships, and community** life. They also shape how a person responds when routines **change**, when expectations **shift**, or when life requires **repositioning**. In those moments, support must be **steady, informed, and person-centered**.

Direct Support Professionals are central to making that consistency possible. Direct Support Professionals are often the first to notice when someone is unsettled, withdrawing, or overwhelmed. They are the ones helping people **regain footing, maintain routines, and stay connected** to what matters to them.

At the same time, the disability field has long faced a **gap between what DSPs are asked to do and the specialized training** available to them. **SEEC** has chosen to address that gap directly by **strengthening training, support, and internal capacity**.

Last year, a major step forward was SEEC's completion of the **National Association of Dually Diagnosed (NADD) accreditation process**, resulting in **seven accredited service areas: Behavior Supports, Nursing Services, Supported Living, Community Engagement, Transitions, Employment Services, and Assistive Technology**. This accreditation affirmed the quality of care provided every day and unlocked nationally recognized certification programs for both Direct Support Professionals and clinicians, **strengthening the workforce that supports people with complex needs**.

SEEC is using this foundation to equip Direct Support Professionals with **practical, relationship-based tools** that support stability. This includes training aligned with dual

diagnosis best practices, focused on trauma responsive care, positive behavioral supports, and person-centered mental health strategies, along with Mental Health First Aid to help teams recognize early signs of distress and respond effectively.

This work is about **supporting people to thrive, not just to get through hard moments**. Thriving includes creating connections, fostering friendships, and having meaningful participation in community life. SEEC's programs that center relationships and belonging, including opportunities to explore **friendships, boundaries, and healthy relationships**, are part of that whole person's approach.

Strengthening support for dual diagnosis is essential to SEEC's mission. It reflects a commitment to inclusion that keeps mental health where it belongs, at the center of a good life.





Building Belonging Together:

Connection, Mentorship, and Shared Leadership

Belonging does not happen automatically. It is built through relationships, shared effort, and opportunities to contribute. For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, belonging means more than being present in the community. It means being known, valued, and supported to participate fully in everyday life.

Throughout the year, SEEC focused on creating and strengthening the conditions that make belonging possible, especially as routines shifted and new paths emerged.

How do we partner with the people we support to create the conditions for belonging when routines shift and new paths emerge?



Open a door. Introduce an employer, a mentor, or a community partner who believes in inclusive opportunity. Contact us at www.seeonline.org.

Building Belonging Together:

Connection, Mentorship, and Shared Leadership

One way this work took shape was through **intentional spaces for connection**. Many people with disabilities experience loneliness, particularly during periods of change. **SEEC** responded by **creating opportunities for people to come together, build relationships, and practice social connection** in supportive environments.

The **Connection Collective** was developed to address this need directly. The initiative creates space for **people to meet, share experiences, and develop friendships**. By focusing on connection as a skill that can be learned and supported, the Connection Collective helps people build **confidence in forming and maintaining relationships** and reinforces that social belonging is essential to a good life.

Belonging also showed up through **mentorship**, particularly in SEEC's **self-employment work**. As traditional employment pathways shifted for many people, **SEEC expanded opportunities for entrepreneurship** as a meaningful way to **build income, independence, and purpose**.

At the heart of SEEC's Self-Employment Pilot Program is community mentorship. Participants are paired with experienced local entrepreneurs who provide **one-on-one guidance** as individuals develop business ideas, build skills, and navigate real world challenges. This mentorship model recognizes that starting a business is not something anyone does alone. It requires **encouragement, expertise, and relationships** that extend **beyond formal services**.

By drawing on **community partners, small business owners, and professional networks**, SEEC created a **collaborative ecosystem** where aspiring entrepreneurs could **learn, take risks, and grow** with support. Mentors did more than offer technical advice. They modeled **confidence, persistence, and problem solving**, helping participants see themselves as **capable contributors** within the broader **business community**.

Shared leadership was another critical dimension of belonging. Through SEEC's **Innovation Fund**, Direct Support Professionals and people with lived experience were invited to bring forward ideas and lead solutions. **The Innovation Fund was created in response to a common reality across the field: those closest to the work often see barriers first but rarely have the resources to address them.**

By providing funding, tools, and support for **staff-led projects**, the Innovation Fund created space for creativity and problem solving rooted in everyday experience. Selection committees that included people with disabilities and community members ensured that decisions reflected real needs and priorities. **The result was a set of projects focused on reducing isolation, strengthening connections, and improving daily life.**

Together, these efforts reflect a consistent approach. **Belonging is built through relationships, mentorship, and shared responsibility.** It grows when people are **supported** not only to receive services, but to **contribute ideas, skills, and leadership**.

This focus connects directly with SEEC's work in employment and mental health. Just as Learn to Earn emphasizes transferable skills and confidence, and dual diagnosis work strengthens stability and understanding, **SEEC's belonging-centered initiatives reinforce the importance of connection as essential** for a good life.

By investing in connection, mentorship, and shared leadership, SEEC continues to **build communities** where people with disabilities are not just included but **truly belong**.

Share this report.

Help someone else understand what belonging can look like when it is built on purpose.