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One of Our Projects



Floral Arrangement



→ Welcome

Welcome to our first ADEC Day Habilitation Newsletter designed for professionals.

We have had a lot of interest in our program over the last several years from other providers. We have learned from some of you and also developed some things unique to ADEC. As we develop a new standard of service for people with disabilities we want to partner with you in sharing ideas.

We hope this newsletter will serve as a venue for sharing information, help us be more transparent in our purpose and open up lines of communication between other programs providing day habilitation services.

→ A New Standard of Service

Day programs have clearly evolved over the decades. We have gone from simply caretaking, to introducing academic curriculum, to becoming social and recreational facilities to a combination of all the above. While all this is good and sometimes necessary we contend the capstone to this is vocational in nature.



We're not referring to vocational in the sense of "simulated work" or even in terms of paid employment. The idea is to provide a daily opportunity to be productive for people who have long been viewed as unemployable. In the end this is what leads those we serve to go home having a sense of purpose and a feeling of self-worth regardless of their limitations. In our program at ADEC we work with people who have some fairly significant needs and therefore have not had the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of having a job.

To us, achieving this for each individual we serve is the Holy Grail of day habilitation. It's great for people to learn, socialize and have recreation but this is not a complete life. For most people, living as just a "consumer" would be depressing. We have seen in the faces of those we serve the feeling of inferiority and low self-worth. To consume and never contribute with a unique skill or ability is to not fully live. But what if we can take people from being just consumers and help them become producers as well? What if we offer such a wide variety of "vocational" opportunities that everyone is able to develop skills that focus on their natural abilities and interest?

Our experience has been significant. As we have put this into practice we have seen a marked decrease in antisocial behaviors, an increase in confidence and social skills but more importantly people

with disabilities begin to see themselves as equals to us and we begin to see them the same way. The gap between us and them begins to fade and becomes ambiguous. We need to care less if someone can write her name and care more if she can create a canvas painting or create jewelry or do something she is interested in that others look at and really, truly appreciate. To see someone's face light up when he shows you a floral arrangement he made it becomes clearer of what our mission needs to be.

This has not come without its difficulties. Our direct support professionals have been stretched and tested. All of us have been challenged and feel the discomfort of growth. But in many ways the process is as beneficial as the end result. The growth of our employees is amazing and we could not be more proud of them. People step up when challenged. That's as true for employees as it is for those we serve.

By all means we are not where we want to be but we do want to get there. We currently have around 10 different vocationally based activities developed or in the process of being developed. We are not alone in this pursuit either. There are other programs around the state that share our vision, share our goals and strive to meet the desire of everyone to be productive regardless of their disability.

What we know is this: people with disabilities have the same needs, desires and potential for growth as everyone else.

We want to hear from others who share this view, are pursuing this goal or would like to.

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Please give us your feedback. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Let us know if you have a productive activity you would like highlighted in an upcoming issue.

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