Summer Program Report
Academic Secondary Enrichment
Camp Fine Arts

Student: [Name]
Dates: June 16 – 21, 2013
Teachers: Robert Pierson, TVI, and Jane Rundquist, TVI
Teaching Assistants: John Castillo and Camille Smith

Program Overview
The Academic Secondary Enrichment (ASE) classes are designed for middle and high school academic students. These students work hard in school to learn regular core curriculum subjects such as language arts and math in classrooms with their sighted peers. In TSBVI summer programs, they have the opportunity to practice these academic skills within meaningful, high-interest activities. At the same time, they learn and practice skills in the Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (ECC). The ECC includes skills that are unique to the needs of students with visual impairments. ECC skills enhance an individual’s ability to access the regular core curriculum, live independently, and enjoy social and recreational activities. Skills in the ECC include compensatory academic skills (e.g., braille and tactile graphics), orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology skills, sensory efficiency skills, and self-determination skills.

Each ASE class has a unique theme, and students participate in a wide variety of activities related to the theme of their class. During these activities, students learn and practice specific ECC skills such as applying math and literacy skills when creating and following a budget, food shopping and preparation, managing and organizing their living area, planning and evaluating a project, using public transportation, keeping up with belongings, and using technology for various purposes including research and communication with family and friends.

An additional benefit of the program is the opportunity to interact with other students with visual impairments. For many, talking with other students about the challenges they face at home and school may both alleviate feelings of isolation and increase self-confidence.

The ASE classes taught during the summer of 2013 were: Camp Challenge, Camp Fine Arts, Catching Some Rays: Space Weather, Community Independence, Adventure/Outdoor Education, Middle School Enrichment, Performance Arts Intensive, Problem Busters, Video Production, Visual Arts and More, and Wildcat Catering and Bistro.
DESCRIPTION OF CLASS: Camp Fine Arts

The variety and richness of the activities in this week-long immersion into the performing arts makes this a popular class. Some students may never have wanted to try out the drums or a guitar, but discovered they enjoyed the experience. Students were willing to be invited out of their comfort zones, and they realized they could have fun and be successful doing something new. As always, friendships happened through working together, and the opportunity to interact with other students with visual impairments reminded them that they were not alone in the challenges faced in their lives.

Activities

On Sunday afternoon, the students, teachers and residential staff gathered to get to know one another and share ideas for the following Friday's performance. After that, each day was filled with activities in which everyone participated in working toward the Friday performance. The students concluded each school day with a full group meeting during which everyone contributed to a summary of the work so far, plans for the next day's work, and visions of the final performance.

On Monday and Tuesday, the students were divided into three groups, rotating through exploratory sessions of creative writing, music, and theater. Through these rotations, each student was able to explore different areas of creative expression and find out where their talents and interests lay. Several of the students found they had a natural affinity for an area they'd never before explored. By the end of the day, many groups had come up with ideas for their final performance.

From Tuesday afternoon through Thursday morning the students rehearsed in performance groups and continued work on their collaborative music, theater, and writing projects. On Thursday afternoon, the students ran through their entire show and pinned down areas that needed extra attention. Friday was devoted to a dress rehearsal in the morning and then the final performance for parents, students, and TSBVI staff at 1:00 p.m. Camp Fine Arts concluded with a reception and cast party during which students, families and staff visited with one another and celebrated the students' successes.

Breakout Sessions

Creative Writing

Each student participated in a creative writing workshop on Monday and Tuesday. On Monday, students were asked to free write on a variety of open-ended prompts. These prompts ranged from, “I am thankful for...” to “Write about one of the most difficult decisions you've made in your life,” and “Write for 10 minutes with, 'I used to think...' as a starter.” Students had the freedom to apply the writing prompts in any writing style they chose. Some students chose stories, while others preferred to write song lyrics and poems. On Tuesday, students continued work on the pieces they had started, or began new work. Several students worked on song lyrics they had developed in the music breakout session.

Focusing on subjects that were personally meaningful and working together as a group helped students see writing as a positive means of self expression rather than an unpleasant, required assignment. Several of the students went on to expand initial ideas—both individually and in collaboration with others—into stories, poems, and original lyrics for songs they performed on Friday. The students wrote using a variety of technology including Braille note-takers and computers equipped with Zoom Text, JAWS and Windows adaptations. The purposes of this breakout session included exposure to the creative writing process, increasing fluency of creative ideas, and exposure to technology and adaptations for people with visual impairments.

Musical Instrument/Ensemble/Songwriting

This group of Camp Fine Arts students had very eclectic musical tastes, and definite ideas about what they wanted to pursue musically during our week together. Students divided into small groups
on Monday and Tuesday, with each group spending about an hour and a half in the music room. Students were given the opportunity to explore several instruments, many of which they had never had a chance to play before. These included drums, piano, guitar, bass, French horn, tuba, xylophone, and a variety of percussive instruments. Everyone was invited to try new things musically, and to consider the feelings they wanted to convey via their music as they composed lyrics and tunes with an emphasis on creative emotional expression.

While some students chose to explore instruments they had never tried before, others were adamant about what they wished to do and began writing songs and musical pieces. They determined what pieces they wanted to perform early in the week. Some were original pieces, with the lyrics having been worked on in writing sessions. Students were encouraged to work cooperatively with one another and all of the students were supportive and respectful of each other’s musical efforts. They demonstrated curiosity, patience, a good sense of humor, and a willingness to listen to others.

The students were very good about using their time to practice their chosen instruments and songs. They all met the challenge of trying new activities, and surprised themselves with what they were able to do musically in a short time. The show on Friday reflected an abundance of creativity.

Theater/Performance
The students enjoyed a variety of theater and performance activities. They participated in group writing/scripting activities where they brainstormed and bounced ideas off of one another. This activity caused students to listen to each other and to themselves. They were also able to choose areas of interest on which to focus their energy—anything from writing songs to practicing the reading of their stories or poetry. In this creation, they learned about different types of theater and possible performance styles for Friday, and they engaged in voice and stage presence development.

On Wednesday, students developed a framework for their final performance and the order in which the songs and routines would play. In preparation for the performance on Friday, the students practiced the organizational and teamwork skills of “putting on a show.” This included stage set-up and take down, blocking, stage movement, and backstage skills. This was a cohesive group of students who grew to support each other.

EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM
Students in Camp Fine Arts participated in a wide variety of performance-related activities that are recreational, leisure and vocational skills for many adults. They all practiced skills which required choice making and independence, such as getting ready and being on time to workshops and rehearsals, planning individual and group projects, and working with others collaboratively while advocating for their ideas and needs within the group. They also practiced the skills of following directions, keeping up with belongings, working with others, writing, reading, negotiating a cafeteria line, clearing the tray at the end of each meal, following written and verbal schedules, and advocating for and communicating special needs and capabilities.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS
(Deleted)