Summer Program Report
Academic Secondary Enrichment
Wildcat Catering and Bistro

Student: 
Dates: June 17-July 4, 2013
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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.
Class Description: Wildcat Catering and Bistro
Students in Wildcat Catering and Bistro class developed and managed a small but highly successful Catering and Bistro business on the TSBVI campus. The students participated in planning, designing, and executing all aspects of the business.

Early in the program, students took community trips in order to research and learn about different ideas related to the food and restaurant business. We toured Farm to Table (a local distributor of locally grown foods) and Austin’s famous food trailers. Health and Food was a topic that was introduced early and continued to be of considerable focus. Students were exposed to the concepts of “buying local” and the advantages of organic foods when they toured Farm to Table.

Students also learned adapted kitchen strategies and tools for persons who are visually impaired or blind. In addition to using the “Safe Slice” tool for safe cutting, students were taught to use a “claw” hand shape when using knives, to protect their hands and fingers. A talking microwave allowed easy and quick access for students. Students also practiced using an adapted egg cracker, Braille measuring cups and spoons and various other kitchen appliances: George Foreman’s lean mean grilling machine, food processor, hand blender, oven, and stove. The stove and oven dials have been modified with puff paint dots to indicate settings. When using a cutting board and knife, students were instructed to always return the knife to the top of the board with the blade facing away, when setting it down. This allowed them to find it easily and safely.

In developing their catering business, the students developed menus, researched recipes, dealt with culinary math concepts, advertised, purchased the food, determined the pricing, prepared the food, took phone orders, managed cash payments and change, and kept a budget. Time management, personal communication, and traveling the campus independently or semi-independently to deliver food were important skills. The students worked as a team to create a positive work environment that ran as efficiently and productively as possible in such a short time.

Expanded Core Curriculum
Independent Living Skills
This area of the ECC is often referred to as “daily living skills.” These skills are essential for individuals to lead lives as independently as possible. Areas addressed include personal hygiene and grooming, food preparation, eating and table manners, money management, grocery shopping, and time monitoring.

Students had ample opportunity to practice skills in this area during the catering class. There were strict rules about cleanliness in the kitchen that had to be observed; for example students were required to wash hands if they touched their face or body and before handling food. They also needed to be well groomed and presentable to others when making deliveries and speaking with customers. They were able to participate in making many different kinds of foods such as steel cut oats in a jar, breakfast tacos, mini quiche, Greek pasta salads, strawberry spinach salad, raspberry poppy seed salad dressing, strawberry mango salsa, strawberry lemonade, watermelon mint sun tea, Irish cream pudding, and salted caramel chocolate cookies, and chocolate dipped pretzels. It was crucial that students organized their work environment and stockroom. They helped to create systems that they could access quickly and safely to allow them easier access to food and supplies.

Social Interaction Skills
Many social skills used by sighted children are learned by visually observing other people interacting in work and social settings. Children with visual impairments typically have fewer opportunities to learn these skills incidentally, because they may miss visual information.
Students in this class had many opportunities to develop or refine their social skills, in order to enhance interactions with peers and adults. Role-play situations were set up to practice taking phone orders, greeting customers, and thanking customers for their business. Realistic situations were practiced and discussed daily. Students also practiced these skills when the roles were reversed and they were taking in information from speakers and guests. During such times, they were great listeners, focusing on refraining from interrupting the speakers and being appreciative of the information they received.

Students also worked closely together. The kitchen is a natural place to strive to work as a team. Students practiced accomplishing common goals, turn taking, listening, sharing, helping others in the kitchen, and volunteering for less desirable chores. At times disagreements naturally arose, giving us opportunities to improve our ability to handle disagreements constructively. Students all worked on contributing positively to the group.

**Self-Determination**
Self-Determination highlights the importance of believing in and advocating for oneself while understanding personal abilities and limitations. Skills include making decisions and setting goals to determine what will happen in one’s day.

Students were encouraged to self-advocate for their needs, including being able to discuss modifications and accommodations they needed to participate in various activities.

Opportunities to practice self-determination arose on a daily basis as students were expected to contribute to the group in a positive manner, communicate effectively and respectfully, accept the group decision, and generally work to the best of their ability.

**INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS**
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