Summer Short-Term Programs Report
Practical Academic Secondary Enrichment
Culinary Arts

Student:
Dates: June 23 – July 4, 2013
Teacher:
Teaching Assistant:

PROGRAM OVERVIEW
All individuals learn best when they have the opportunity to practice and apply what they are learning in real life situations. Because students with visual impairments may be less able to pick up information and related concepts that sighted children see as they casually go through their day, they have an even greater need for real life learning experiences.

Students in the Practical Academic Summer Enrichment (PASE) program also benefit from learning and practicing skills in comfortable, enjoyable contexts that support their unique learning needs. Therefore, a primary goal of this program is to ensure that learning takes place within enjoyable activities.

Summer learning at TSBVI focuses on skills related to the Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (ECC): compensatory academic skills, orientation and mobility, career education, assistive technology, visual efficiency skills, independent living, recreation and leisure, social interaction, and self determination skills. Functional applications of these skill areas include activities such as practicing academic skills like math (making a budget) and literacy (writing a thank you letter), recreational and domestic activities (community outings including travel skills, physical activities, meal planning, cooking, grocery shopping); communication (using appropriate language in various contexts, giving and following directions); planning, organizing, sequencing (planning and giving a party). Specific activities provided for individual students are described below.

DESCRIPTION OF CLASS: Culinary Arts: “Restaurant Wars”
In this 2-week class, students explored various aspects of the culinary arts. Students explored recipes and participated in numerous cooking activities, visited and toured a local restaurant and a coffee roasting business, and learned about organic gardening. The students explored various foods and participated in cooking activities including making pizza dough, homemade pasta sauces, chocolate chip cookies, salsa, pickles, garlic bread, enchiladas, and fresh lemonade. The students also participated in a “Restaurant Wars” competition. In preparation for the competition, the students were asked to work as a team in creating a menu, preparing a
simple meal, and assigning the roles of chefs, host, and waiter in a head-to-head competition for summer school restaurant supremacy.

During classroom instructional time students had numerous opportunities to engage in activities that challenged their independence skills and assisted them with gaining new ones. Many of the activities were group activities that required the use of teamwork, choice making, decision making, and self advocacy. Students were encouraged to be as independent as possible in all the activities. When they needed assistance, they were encouraged to be assertive and solicit it from a peer, staff member, or an employee (when in the community), rather than waiting for others to help them. It was emphasized numerous times that this is a skill that is crucial in becoming an independent adult.

To enhance the students’ knowledge base and provide hands-on experience within the realm of culinary arts, the students’ visited the following places of business and participated in the following culinary activities:

**El Chile Restaurant**
El Chile is a local restaurant lead by executive chef Jeff Martinez. The restaurant celebrated its tenth birthday this year and recently re-located from east Austin to south Austin. The restaurant specializes in Mexico City-style street food served in a cool and casual environment just off the shores of Ladybird Lake. The students met with executive chef Jeff Martinez and general manager Israel Prado and had the opportunity to ask questions about the restaurant industry.

**Texas Coffee Traders**
Students visited Texas Coffee Traders, a locally owned and operated East Austin artisanal coffee roaster. They learned about the process of how coffee is roasted and how the business fills orders for local restaurants, cafes, and individuals in the Austin area. Our tour guide shared the company’s philosophy of worker empowerment, where employees are allowed to create a work environment that provides room for individual growth. During the tour, students were taught the difference between fair and direct trade and organic and conventional coffee beans. Students learned the duties and roles of a coffee roaster and what types of skills are necessary to be successful in this field.

**Natural Gardener**
The Natural Gardener is a wonderful tour site for all ages. They are situated on eight acres of land, featuring vegetable and herb gardens, an orchard, a butterfly garden, native and adapted plant gardens, a native grasses display garden, a labyrinth, a tipi, three waterfalls, and a wildflower meadow, and also house donkeys, chickens, and goats. The Natural Gardener is a full-scale plant nursery specializing in native and well-adapted trees, shrubs, vines, xeric plants, antique roses, and perennials, and offers a fabulous selection of herbs and vegetables, too. They are a nationally recognized gardening destination and teaching facility, dedicated to promoting organic gardening practices. Students were able to learn from Natural Gardener staff what goes into the practice of organic gardening. They were able to touch and smell different vegetables and herbs and learned about free-range eggs. Students also learned about the current trend of restaurants using locally sourced, organic food when creating a menu.
Culinary Olympics
After learning many skills in the kitchen, the students participated in our version of Culinary Olympics. The culinary games included chopping an onion, squeezing lemons, grating cheese, and peeling garlic. The competition provided the students with the opportunity to gain experience in teamwork and sportsmanship.

SPECIFIC EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM AREAS ADDRESSED
Recreation and Leisure
Recreation and leisure skills are a very important part of teenagers’ and adults’ lives and often occupy a large percentage of time. Students participated in many recreation and leisure activities in the classroom such as playing games, making scrapbooks, using the computer, and listening to music and dancing as well as in the community to gain knowledge of activities they may want to pursue in the future. These activities were incorporated into the program to teach skills such as independent recreation and leisure, social leisure skills, taking turns, conversing with peers, and helping others.

Literacy
Each student kept a personal journal/scrapbook of her summer experience at TSBVI. The journals were created in the student’s personal literacy medium (e.g., Braille, large print, pictures). Weekly grocery shopping lists were created by each student and used within our shopping program. Recipes, cooking directions, and menus were read within our cooking program. Students reviewed and discussed information about the businesses that we toured prior to each field trip. Additionally, they prepared questions to ask the tour guides to learn additional information about the business. Students used cookbooks and the internet to explore recipes.

Math
Each student paid for the grocery items we purchased, using the concept of “a dollar more” system. Using this method, students are taught that whenever the cost of an item contains a certain number of dollars and a certain number of cents, they should pay the next higher dollar and receive the change (e.g., if the cost is $5.75, pay $6.00). This is a good method to use for students who have difficulty understanding how to pay the cents to the right of the decimal point. Money folding techniques and money identification were explored. Students participated in simple budgeting activities as we prepared for our grocery shopping trips and restaurant outings.

Social Skills/Self-Advocacy
Social skills were infused into every aspect of this unit. Skills such as proper greetings, interactions with strangers, requesting assistance, waiting, turn taking, as well as lessons on how to conduct oneself in a variety of public places, were discussed and practiced. Students also worked on sharing their ideas and giving input, which helped them increase their self esteem and self determination. They were encouraged to voice their opinion, listen to the opinion of others, and work on their decision-making skills.

Independent Living Skills
The students worked on greater independence in all aspects of their daily routines. Before grocery shopping and planning their meals, we discussed healthy food choices and the importance of incorporating the five basic food groups. The students then had to plan meals and use social skills to agree as a group. Each student created a shopping list and navigated the grocery store to find their items. During the cooking programs, students prepared their own
breakfasts every morning, as well as their lunch three times a week. Everyone practiced different skills throughout the program, such as using appliances, measuring, pouring, mixing, spreading, opening containers, and using proper table manners. The students learned and used social skills throughout these activities, such as taking turns, requesting help, and making judgments and decisions. Students also went out to eat at a restaurant two times during the session. They had an opportunity to make healthy choices, practice interacting with restaurant staff, practice budgeting skills, and learn appropriate restaurant etiquette.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

OTHER CLASSES, GROUPS, AND SERVICES

Yoga
Students with visual impairments often have difficulty finding recreation and leisure activities that they enjoy and in which they can participate. This Yoga class incorporated both exercise and relaxation techniques to relieve stress, release excess energy, and ultimately improve mental focus and physical health. Relaxation techniques help individuals bring some balance into their busy lives and assert some control while releasing stress. Yoga is a fun activity that is highly accessible and available to all people because all it requires is a mat, knowledge of a few physical movements (postures), and knowing how to breathe deeply. Participating in these postures helps students become more aware of their body and how it moves through space. This can be both challenging and rewarding for students, whether visually impaired or not. Yoga is an amazing way to develop strength, flexibility, better posture, knowledge of how to safely move through space, and self-confidence.

This summer, we explored a variety of yoga techniques in order to introduce ways that yoga can be used for both exercise and relaxation. These techniques included guided deep breathing, movement paired with music, held postures for stretching and flexibility, and guided relaxation techniques. Yoga concepts that were covered included the importance of good posture, balance, body awareness in space, and communication. The students were encouraged to do the positions slowly and gently and always listen to their body and not stretch too far. The class started with deep, slow breathing paired with warm-up activities that encouraged good posture while stretching, and slowly moving their body through postures. By the end of the program the students were encouraged to choose a posture and teach it to their classmates. This activity focused on communication, assertiveness, memory, self-determination, and ultimately leadership.

Skills infused from the Expanded Core Curriculum included:

- Sensory Efficiency Skills
- Orientation & Mobility
- Recreation and Leisure Skills
- Social Interaction Skills
- Self-Determination
- Compensatory Skills
- Independent Living Skills

Music
During the PASE music class, students were given many opportunities to explore the world of music. Class activities incorporated instrument exploration, singing, movement, listening, music appreciation, making choices, and creating music and dance with a group. Instruments explored during several different activities included drums, percussion instruments, and
microphone beat boxing. Several audio recordings were also made.

In addition to exploring a variety of musical instruments and techniques, students were able to perform on a small classroom stage, using a microphone while singing along to familiar songs, and creating unique songs. Movement activities included dancing with a partner, solo dancing, interpretive movement, and movement/dancing with a parachute, hoops and juggling props. Students chose a variety of songs and listened to many new genres of music during the music appreciation and choice-making activities.