

Wellness, Inclusion, and Nutrition

Adult Living Skills - Davis, CA



Introduction



- Adult Living Skills is a postsecondary program that services adults (ages 18-22) with moderate to severe disabilities.
- The primary goal of the program is to facilitate student transition from high school to adulthood by emphasizing skills related to vocation, education / training, and independent living skills.
- While some instruction occurs in a classroom setting, Adult Living Skills prides itself on primarily using the community as its classroom.
- Students participate in lessons and activities designed to foster transition skills at locations such employment and volunteer sites, in neighborhoods, parks, and stores, on public busses and trains, and on college campuses.

Our Problem



- After completing our program, students are expected to suffer from a wide variety of mental and physical health ailments throughout their life.
- These ailments are numerous and often have compounding effects on individuals. They are also in addition to other physical ailments outside of intellectual disability (cerebral palsy, down syndrome, spina bifida, etc.)
- Medical professionals consider it very difficult to reverse the damage caused by these ailments once individuals reach middle age.
- The median life expectancy of a student from our program is **63.1 years**.
- **This is about 20% lower than the average United States citizen.**

What's causing this?

Chronic symptoms that contribute to early mortality in our students include...

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Obesity
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Isolation
- Poor Nutrition
- Neglect
- Sedentary Lifestyle
- Diabetes



Pilot Year



- In the 2016–2017 school year, 4 out of 18 ALS students participated in a semi-regular exercise program with volunteers from the Autism Awareness Association at the UC Davis Athletics and Recreation Center (student gym). Memberships were paid for by students or families.
- The cost for students to participate was prohibitive (\$34.00 a month from an average \$189.00 monthly paycheck, or about 18% of their income).
- Students who were unable to participate were given an alternative community based program, but it lacked the resources to have a similar impact and environment factors posed several challenges.



Mini-Grant Proposal

- The 2017-2018 mini-grant requested \$3,200.00 in funds to support all 16 attending students for six months.
- While students would typically pay \$50.00 a month for a membership, ALS leveraged its partnership with UC Davis that allowed for it to provide a discounted rate of \$34.00 a month with a six month commitment.
- The Autism Awareness Association provided between 2-5 volunteers / “gym buddies” a day for 90 minutes a day based on student needs.
- ARC facilities would be available to students daily throughout their six month memberships, and students would be allowed to attend and participate in activities outside of the school day.

The Program



- Gym buddies worked one-to-one or in small groups in order to show students how to engage in safe stretches / calisthenics, operate weight lifting equipment, engage in strenuous cardio exercises, and participate in various recreational activities (basketball, racquetball, dance classes, etc).
- Gym buddies and students were encouraged to develop natural friendships with limited teacher / paraprofessional intervention.
- Students would attend exercise sessions between 2-4 times a week based on their availability, interests, and needs.
- Depending on student abilities and needs, gym buddies, staff, or students would develop student fitness goals and track data on their progress.

Expected Outcomes



The identified ailments contributing to early mortality in students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities will be mitigated by...

- 1.) Access to a state-of-the-art university gym with multiple weight rooms, an indoor track, cardio rooms with treadmills, bicycles, and elliptical machines, basketball and racquet courts, and much more.
- 2.) Coaching, training, and support from university students that act as student "gym buddies" and role models for our students.
- 3.) Programs that include Group Exercise, Dance classes, Martial Arts, Personal Training, Rock Climbing, and Intramural Sports.



Expected Outcomes (cont.)

- 4.) A reduction in mental health challenges (such as anxiety, depression, and isolation) as well as a decrease in the effects of physical health ailments (such as diabetes, poor nutrition and eating habits, high cholesterol, obesity, etc.) through regular structured and intensive exercise.
- 5.) The development of varied positive and lasting relationships with a same age peers from a diverse typically developing population, as well as strengthening their roots on a university campus.
- 6.) Overall improvement in the quality of life for students with moderate to severe disabilities.

Questions and Feedback



A final word from Tyler...

ADULT LIVING SKILLS

