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DANI 2024 CURRICULUM REPORT

DANI's mission is to deliver a full continuum of person-centred services - including social, recreational, employment training, social enterprises and residential - to adults with developmental disabilities, incorporating Jewish practices and traditions; and integrating into the community, and its service networks.

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INTRODUCTION

Our mission is to deliver a full continuum of person-centred services - including social, recreational, employment training, social enterprises and residential - to adults with developmental disabilities, incorporating Jewish practices and traditions; and integrating into the community, and its service networks. At the DANI ACE Program, we strive to abide by two major educational philosophies: person-centered planning and a holistic approach.

With the person-centered planning approach, we are cognizant that each participant in the program has individualized goals derived from their own personal interests and skills. During the planning process, staff are committed to creating a program which is developed and constructed to support and align with those goals. In accordance with the holistic approach, we view every single participant as a whole person with varying needs, interests, and abilities beyond their developmental or physical challenge. We look to enhance and support the lives of our participants on multiple levels by providing diverse and wholesome programming. We also recognize that participants come from different walks of life and carry with them their own identities and experiences. At DANI, all participants are welcome and respected, and we strive to provide them with equitable support and opportunities through our programming.

Over the past three years, the DANI Curriculum Review has been enhanced with the opening of our second campus – DANI Magnetic. With this development, our programs have expanded across two sites and continue to grow in their level of creativity, relevance to personal goals, and room for individual growth.

This document is a result of the collaborative efforts of the DANI team, with special thanks to Tammy and Rachel who co-created this document and oversaw the process. We would like to thank our wonderful colleagues for their care, dedication, and commitment to creating engaging and innovative programs that promote growth and enrich the lives of our participants. We would also like to thank our participants for being a constant source of motivation and inspiration for us to continue improving every day.



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CORE LEARNING AREAS

1. ARTS

These programs allow participants to explore new ways to be creative and express themselves. DANI offers a variety of programs in areas such as visual, music and performing arts. These programs create opportunities for participants to explore different mediums and use their imagination to express themselves, improve their communication skills and their motor abilities. In addition to using the arts as a form of relaxation and recreation, DANI's art programs offer a performance-based component that invites the community to see what they have produced, including an annual Art Show, annual play and various community productions.

2. LIFE SKILLS

These programs prepare participants for leading independent lifestyles and give them opportunities to improve their problem-solving skills in real-life situations. DANI works hard to cultivate an environment where participants can be as independent as possible and work towards their long-term life goals. With these programs, we hope to provide our participants with the tools necessary to lead quality and independent lifestyles, both at home and in the community.

3. LIFELONG LEARNING

The DANI program recognizes that the desire to learn doesn't stop when school ends. Our program participants continue their learning journey through a wide array of classroom-based and interactive opportunities. These programs offer a variety of learning experiences in numerous areas, including functional literacy and numeracy, exploring the world through science and technology, and engaging in their personal passions such as movies, music, etc. Participants are actively involved in a multitude of activities that maintain and further develop skills learned in academic settings and promotes a lifelong passion for learning.

4. RECREATION & HEALTHY LIVING

These programs allow participants to explore their various interests, passions, and hobbies in a fun and social setting. Recreational programs promote a lot of teamwork, social skills, and a healthy lifestyle. These programs create opportunities for participants to interact with their peers and experience different activities. In addition to the programs listed in this document, participants are also involved in a variety of opportunities to socialize and have fun together, both at DANI and in the community, including outings, games, and leisure activities such as karaoke and LEGO.

5. VOCATIONAL SKILLS

These programs encompass the DANI vision that promote community engagement and create opportunities for participants to partake in enjoyable and meaningful work. Within these programs, participants can work on and improve various vocational skills that will aid them in their work placements and volunteer opportunities. Participants are matched to placements that reflect their strengths and interests and allow for their continuing development of transferable skills. These programs give the opportunity for participants to feel valued as contributing members of society as well as strengthening their community relationships. In addition, DANI also offers in-house opportunities to develop vocational skills such as laundry, shredding, and other tasks around the DANI Campus'.

AIM

The curriculum review process is aimed to serve a few purposes:

1. **Assessment** – The curriculum review is aimed to evaluate different aspects of the programs. This document sheds light regarding the areas of the programs which are successful, as well as those areas which require to be changed in order to improve the service we provide for our participants.
2. **Documentation** – The DANI program is continuously evolving, so there has been an accumulation of programs and activities created and developed by the DANI staff over the years. The curriculum review can be used as a tool to ensure that up to date information regarding our programs is preserved and added to our own educational database.
3. **Consistency** – To maximize flexibility in leadership of programs, it is important to provide a clear description of specific objectives, settings and modes of delivery for each program. This document can be used as a resource to ensure programs are delivered with minimal changes, to ensure all staff, including our relief staff, have clear guidelines on how each program should run.
4. **Resource Management** – Staff, classrooms, vehicles and materials are resources required for program delivery. This document is intended to be a tool which can help to improve understanding of the specific program needs, and to enhance efficiency in allocation of our resources. This is a particularly important aspect due to the expansion of our campuses and having to share these resources on a larger scale.

PROGRAM REVIEWS

Curriculum Review Template

The process of curriculum review is one in which information regarding each program is collected from both of our campuses, and processed. The lead staff of each program is responsible for assessing the effectiveness

of the program as a whole, using input from other members of the staff team as well as feedback and observation of participants. This process enables staff to evaluate the content as well as the structure of each program, and offer ideas and suggestions that may be implemented in the future for new and existing programs.

ARTS - Program Reviews

1.1 ART CREATION

Program Description:

Art Creation engages participants in completing artistic projects, with varying levels of assistance provided as needed. The program follows a thematic approach, focusing on topics like the ocean theme for the art show. Classes are conducted once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Each participant receives tasks and assistance tailored to their preferences and abilities, ensuring an inclusive and engaging environment.

Review of Successes:

- Participants have learned various techniques, such as pouring and collaging, which culminated in creating cards that showcased their new skills.
- The program encourages self-expression, with participants excited to see their final projects, and are given opportunities to share to express their interests in the art work.

Review of Challenges:

- Personalized projects sometimes lead to participants waiting for individual instruction, affecting the flow of the class.
- Low comprehension levels mean that projects tend to focus more on visual elements rather than philisophical themes, and the need for one-on-one time can lead to delays.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Simplifying the projects to a more unified format for all participants could help streamline the process and reduce waiting times.

1.2 CREATIVE ARTS

Program Description:

Creative Arts encourages participants to explore various art styles and techniques, creating unique projects individually or collaboratively. Their creations are displayed in the annual Art Show and contribute to other events, including the annual play. Participants also make handmade crafts to take home, enhancing their sense of accomplishment.

Through this program, participants develop their ability to plan and execute projects from start to finish, using both fine and gross motor skills to manipulate materials and show attention to detail. They also enhance their teamwork and communication skills by working collaboratively on art projects with shared materials. Most importantly, participants foster their creativity and self-expression through various mediums, providing effective and enjoyable ways to engage with the arts for relaxation and recreation. Classes are run once per week with the duration of one hour per class.

Person Centered Focus:

- Projects are designed to ensure maximum engagement, allowing participants to work independently where possible, with additional support provided as needed (visual demonstrations, instruction, and hand-over-hand support).
- Participants can choose their materials and are encouraged to communicate directly when working on group projects, fostering teamwork.
- Participants may be offered specific responsibilities during the program such as assisting with setup/clean-up, washing paintbrushes, etc.

Review of Successes:

- Participants take great pride in creating art pieces and showcasing them at our annual Art Show.
- Many participants show great enthusiasm for working on their artwork each week.
- Participants are actively engaged in creating each project and enjoy experimenting with different materials.
- The program effectively fosters skills such as creativity, teamwork, attention to detail, and the ability to follow instructions.
- With the current staff-to-participant ratio, participants are able to work independently and improve their skills while having the support on hand if needed.
- Collaborations with external organizations, like the Bathurst Clark Library, have further enriched the participants' experience.

Review of Challenges:

- Participants' varying paces can create difficulties in maintaining a consistent class rhythm, with some finishing early and others needing more time.
- Organizing classes efficiently, especially when needing additional workspace, can be challenging.

- The diverse abilities of participants mean finding projects suitable for all skill levels requires careful planning.
- Participants' high motivation can lead to excessive excitement and boundary issues.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Integrate more recycled materials for sustainability and creativity.
- Incorporate various art forms like dance, music, and drama to enhance participant engagement.
- Explore adaptive techniques and tools to address challenges related to disabilities and inclusivity.
- Offer a range of creative outlets such as painting, sculpture, and mixed media to cater to diverse interests and abilities.
- Collaborate with local artists and organizations to provide specialized workshops and guest lectures.
- Implement sensory-friendly environments and materials to accommodate sensory sensitivities.
- Incorporate music therapy sessions to explore rhythm, expression, and emotional release.
- Organize outings to local galleries, museums, or cultural events to inspire creativity and broaden participants' artistic perspectives.

1.3 DANI GLEE

Program Description:

DANI Glee is a class created to empower our participants with their voices. We focus on vocal warm ups, singing songs that are appropriate for their skill set, and honing in on their individual skills. We do class sing along as well to promote friendship and efforts to work together. We practice the song we are focusing on for the term by learning the lyrics, understanding the meaning behind the song, listening to the artist's rendition, and occasionally adjusting the tempo to ensure comprehension. Additionally, we emphasize vocal techniques such as dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation to fully grasp and embody the essence of the song. Throughout this process, we also work on vocal volume and breath control, ensuring clear pronunciation of the lyrics to convey the song's message effectively.

Our goal is for some of our participants to have opportunities outside of our campus to showcase their skills, such as in retirement homes, or even in the play. This class is very focused on skill building for each individual person. Classes are run once a week with a duration of 1 hour per class.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants are encouraged to sing at their comfort level, whether solo or with support, ensuring everyone can participate at their comfort level while preparing our voices for the program ahead. It encourages self-expression and confidence-building, allowing each participant to showcase their talents in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Review of Successes:

- The program provides participants with opportunities to shine individually, fostering a sense of achievement and boosting their confidence through practice and praise.

Review of Challenges:

- Differences in individual progress can sometimes lead to impatience or frustration among participants, especially when waiting for their turn.
- Participants expressed a desire for more variety in song choices, moving beyond the familiar repertoire.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Introducing a clear schedule at the beginning of each class could help set expectations and manage turns, minimizing friction.
- Regularly seeking input on song preferences can ensure the program remains engaging and relevant.

1.4 DRAMA

Program Description:

The Drama program at DANI engages participants of all abilities in the dramatic arts, culminating in an annual play performed live at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. The program emphasizes teamwork, communication, adaptability and building self-confidence and self-esteem through performance. Classes are conducted once a week for 2-2.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

The program is designed to leverage participants' individual strengths, providing opportunities both on-stage and behind the scenes. This inclusive approach ensures that every participant can contribute, whether through acting, set design, or supporting their peers. Participants come to watch and support their friends, promoting inclusivity and camaraderie. Each class ends with the inspirational phrase: "I am an actor."

Review of Successes:

- The program's greatest achievement is the annual end-of-year play, a culmination of twelve months of dedicated effort and determination from staff, participants, administration, and families.
- The play represents a significant endeavour, requiring full commitment from every individual within the organization, from the executive director to the kitchen staff, as well as participants, their families, program staff, and management team members.
- Participants and staff alike have demonstrated sustained enthusiasm throughout the year.

Review of Challenges:

- Coordinating a large group for the play can be demanding, especially ensuring engagement during rehearsals.
- Managing distractions and maintaining focus during large group sessions requires careful planning and attention.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Engaging families and staff in discussions about the play can help maintain enthusiasm and commitment.
- Offering alternative roles for participants who may not wish to perform can keep everyone involved, whether through backstage support or set design.
- Utilizing the drama program's two-hour duration each week to engage non-participating individuals in set creation while drama activities are ongoing in another room allows them to play an integral role in the show without being onstage.
- Staff members who are not enthusiastic about participating in the show can contribute by supporting the drama set program on a weekly basis.

1.5 FASHION

Program Description:

Participants gain knowledge on how to creatively express themselves through clothes, style, personal hygiene, beauty self-care accessories, designing, and more. Participants engage in creative self expression through fashion that they can implement in their everyday life and become more independent in the fashion industry. Each class is always introduced by doing the “DANI spotlight” which is an introduction activity where each participant has a spotlight opportunity to present to all the participants about their outfit of the day. This involves describing the outfit, the reasoning behind the outfit and what they like most about their outfit. Participants also get to learn which clothing attires and dress codes are appropriate for different events and different seasons. The different projects/activities are guided by the participants interests and can take one class, weeks, or more to complete. Classes are run once a week with a duration of 1 hour per class.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants get to individualize their exploration based on personal preferences and unique style that they each like. In the program there is tailored support according to each participant's abilities and independent needs. The program accommodates participants' unique styles and preferences, allowing them to explore fashion in ways that reflect their personalities. Activities are flexible, tailored to individual needs, and encourage participants to collaborate on projects., which promotes self-expression and confidence.

Review of Successes:

- Participants express creativity through clothing, style, and design.

- Development of fine motor skills through tasks like colouring and collage-making.
- Increasing participants' confidence and self-expression through artistic projects.
- Collaboration and teamwork demonstrated during group activities and classes.
- Utilization of artistic skills to enhance personal style.
- Pride and effort displayed in completed fashion projects.
- Enthusiasm for fashion class and eagerness to participate.
- Positive feedback from participants regarding the enjoyable nature of the class.
- Interactive learning experiences through games and practical applications
- Engaging activities that reinforce learning and make the class enjoyable ex. matching games, trivia, puzzles, magazines
- Lecture-based instruction with hands-on projects for a well-rounded learning experience for participants.

Review of Challenges:

- Attendance variability can disrupt class flow, requiring adjustments to lesson plans.
- Long-term projects may lead to impatience as participants wait to see completed outcomes.
- Flexibility in lesson plans is needed to accommodate varying attendance and ensure all participants can fully engage in the learning process.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Maintaining flexible lesson plans and offering alternative activities can help accommodate attendance issues.
- Continue to encourage group participation.
- Foster excitement for project outcomes and progress regularly to everyone
- Seek input and feedback from participants regularly.
- Emphasize the importance of patience and perseverance to all of them.
- Continuously adapt lesson plans based on participant feedback\

1.6 MUSIC COMPOSITION

Program Description:

This class reflects on the participants desire to relate to music and their own experiences. Listening to different genres of music and finding meaning in the words and sound has opened up opportunities to discuss thoughts and feelings they would otherwise not share or question. The class has composed their own song as part of a team building experience that all the participants felt proud of. Classes are run once a week with a duration of 1.5 hours per class.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants are encouraged to share their interests and personal thoughts with the group. This allows for participants to advocate for themselves and others while building their own community network amongst each

other. Their interests are then related to music and music-related topics of interests are found and analyzed. Participants are given the control of the flow of the class within structured guidelines to support them in achieving their personal goals. They are also encouraged to come up with ideas for lyrics for their own songs and share them with one another.

Review of Successes:

- Deep discussions on pressing issues of the group, and individuals within the group have been filmed.
- It is a weekly practice for most of the participants to celebrate the existence of the class and cheer on in anticipation for this class, a half day to up to a week in advance.
- Participants have taken work home, to practice their skills.

Review of Challenges:

- Maintaining consistent engagement can be challenging, as interest levels vary across participants.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Acknowledging that not every participant will be fully engaged all the time and offering various entry points for involvement can help maintain overall participation.

1.7 MUSIC WITH ELLEN

Program Description:

Music with Ellen is a leisure-focused program where a volunteer, Ellen, engages participants in singing and enjoying music. Ellen plays the piano or guitar, encouraging participants to sing along or dance. The program includes a range of music, including seasonal themes and participants' favorites. Classes are held once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants take turns requesting their favorite songs, allowing them to personalize the session. Ellen has developed a repertoire that reflects their tastes, enhancing engagement and participation.

Review of Successes:

- Participants enjoy singing, dancing, and actively look forward to Ellen's visits.
- Ellen's responsiveness to participants' song requests fosters a lively, engaging environment.

Review of Challenges:

- Repetitive song selections can limit engagement, and some participants leave before getting their turn to request a song.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Incorporating musical games, such as Musical Chairs, or guessing games can diversify activities and maintain participants' interest.

1.8 PLAY SETS

Program Description:

Play Sets involves participants in designing and creating sets and props for DANI's annual play. Participants paint backgrounds, assemble set pieces, and craft props, contributing to the production behind the scenes. Participants are given a sense of accomplishment and pride in having their work on display during our performance, while providing opportunities for those who may not want to act in the play to contribute and be involved in the production. Classes run one to two times a week, lasting 1-2 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

Tasks are adapted to participants' strengths, integrating their interests, motor skills, and abilities. Activities are designed to be challenging yet enjoyable, promoting skill development.

Review of Successes:

- Participants are deeply engaged, especially those who also perform in the play, as they take pride in their contributions to the sets.
- The quality of the sets has received positive feedback from audiences.

Review of Challenges:

- Limited programming time was a constraint, necessitating the repurposing of other classes to complete set projects.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Allocating consistent time slots of two hours throughout the year and scheduling sessions on days when more creative staff are available can improve efficiency and collaboration

2. LIFE SKILLS

2.1 ACCOMPLISHING GOALS

Program Description:

The program is an opportunity for participants to express themselves and discuss the following topics and improve upon these skills: communication, teamwork, time management, problem solving, organization, and social skills. Through discussions, participants share their experiences and practice these skills. The program runs once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants' specific goals are applied to the skills of the program, drawing on each of their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with the topic. Discussions incorporate visual aids for enhanced understanding.

Review of Successes:

- Participants are actively engaged, sharing their many thoughts and demonstrating comprehension through discussions.

Review of Challenges:

- Too many staff members in a confined space can lead to a crowded environment.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Reducing the number of support staff or restructuring their roles to lead specific activities can streamline the class, allowing more focused engagement.

2.2 ALL ABOUT ME

Program Description:

All About Me encourages participants to express their emotions, feelings and thoughts through creative outlets such as art, writing, and discussion. The program promotes emotional well-being, offering weekly classes that run for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

A strengths-based, anti-oppressive approach helps participants express themselves, build confidence, and speak positively about their identities.

Review of Successes:

- Ability to incorporate individual emotion/feelings.
- Participants gain self-esteem through positive self-expression facilitated by the program's supportive environment.

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants may need individualized support, which can limit overall class engagement on certain days.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Preparing for potential needs in advance and modifying class activities can reduce stress for both participants and staff.

2.3 BROADCASTING

Program Description:

Broadcasting focuses on self-advocacy through podcast-style interviews. Participants discuss topics ranging from personal interests to broader issues, with each session providing them the opportunity to express themselves freely. The focus of this program is on self-advocacy. Classes are held twice a week, for one hour each.

Person Centered Focus:

Each person interviewed gets full opportunity to express themselves, and are encouraged to do so - the session is often led by the participant.

Review of Successes:

- Many participants have opened up and shared personal stories, using the platform for self-expression and problem-solving of emotional difficulties.

Review of Challenges:

- Non-verbal participants or those struggling with verbal expression have faced challenges engaging with the program, despite the introduction of assistive technology.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Non-verbal participants may benefit from alternative programs where they can express themselves through other mediums.

2.4 CAFE CONVERSATION

Program Description:

Cafe Conversation aims to enhance conversational skills, teaching participants to engage effectively and appropriately in discussions. The program emphasizes turn-taking, active listening, and social cues, held once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

This program is designed to benefit participants inside and outside of DANI. Using the person-centered approach, it focuses on the participant's communication needs and preferences. With the help of staff, participants are able to ask questions to their friends, such as open-ended/close-ended questions and engage in interesting discussions.

Review of Successes:

- The program fosters a relaxed environment, where participants are comfortable sharing thoughts, learning from each other, and building connections, and enjoying a calm environment.

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants may be hesitant to engage without prompting, or they may direct questions to staff instead of peers.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Continuing to redirect and prompt participants
- Pre-class preparation on basic conversation skills (proper eye contact, body language, avoiding interruptions, actively listening), along with smaller breakout groups, can encourage more direct peer-to-peer interaction.

2.5 COMMUNITY SKILLS

Program Description:

Participants will develop their independence in the community through visiting local shops to make small purchases for themselves, as well as familiarizing themselves with concepts around navigation, community safety, and appropriate social and communication skills in a variety of settings. Participants will work on following the steps of ordering and paying for a treat, and practice socializing with friends while enjoying a community activity together. Participants will also practice budgeting and shopping skills by making small purchases for themselves when possible. This program is run once per week with the duration of 2.5 hours per program.

Person Centered Focus:

- Many of the participants in this group have goals around increasing safety awareness and independence in the community, and have also shown a strong interest in going out
- Participants with strong social skills are encouraged to take on a leadership role in assisting peers and leading conversations
- Participants are given opportunities to make choices about where to go, which stores to visit, etc. and practice communicating with the group to ensure everyone has opportunities to choose
- A high staff-to-participant ratio enables each individual to receive individualized support as needed when making purchases in shops, so staff can adapt the tasks as needed to accommodate for any challenges (ie. hearing or vision impairment, limited or no speech)

Review of Successes:

- Removing the in-class portion of the program to maximize the amount of time spent in the community has been very successful since participants have shown a strong preference for the outing
- Reducing the group size this year to fit into one DANI vehicle has enabled us to visit a wider range of places and go out every week regardless of weather
- Consistently visiting some of the same locations throughout the year has increased participants' independence and comfort level speaking to the employees. The employees have also seemed to become familiar with how to support and prompt some of the participants through the purchasing process as well
- Participants have taken great pride in coming prepared for the program with their wallets and look forward to the opportunity to go out
- Some participants have enjoyed the opportunity to shop for personal items (ie. socks, CDs/DVDs) and look forward to the chance to make purchases
- Participants look forward to their weekly outing and often talk about it during the week leading up to this program

Review of Challenges:

- Inconsistent access to funds and varying walking paces can create logistical challenges during outings.
- Some participants have a tendency to get distracted while walking and may be too far ahead or try to wander off from the group to look at something that interests them without communicating with staff
- Some participants face difficulties in transitioning between locations, which can lead to delays.
- Staffing for this group is a little tight at times, especially in case of any behavioural challenges with any of the participants. Having an additional staff/student when needed was very helpful.
- Some participants have difficulty waiting for others to finish eating or try to walk away on their own without letting staff know where they are going.
- One participant in the group has a visual impairment that requires him to have extra support while walking. Given the staff to participant ratio of this group, 1 on 1 support is not possible so his staff must support him while also supervising another participant, which can be challenging at times.

- Participants have a tendency to become fixated on the same routines week after week, causing the group to always visit the same limited locations repeatedly
- Clear communication with families is necessary in case of any participants purchasing items other than their treats, however families are not always easy to reach to get sufficient detail for staff to know what is expected in terms of spending limits and what items are needed
- The timing of this program was frequently impacted by changes to the schedule due to Drama rehearsals. Since rehearsals tend to push back the lunch hour, this program would often start late which could limit where the group could go or affect participants' ability to transition smoothly
- One participant shows a lot of disruptive behaviour while in the community (ie. speaking very loudly, inappropriate comments or noises) and can become angry if redirected which may cause the disruptive behaviour to increase
- Some participants in the group have a poor awareness of safety especially in parking lots, and can be resistant to redirection. Staff must pay close attention when crossing any street or parking lot to ensure participants are safely off to the side and aware of what is happening around them

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Continue to schedule the group to have one van and have the ability to stay out until 3:30 (rather than returning for 3:00) since this maximizes options for being out in the community
- If possible, it would be beneficial to schedule this group to have one more staff/student, especially a male to assist with washroom visits in the community since all participants in the group are male.
- Explore more Kosher food/drink options that are affordable and within driving distance to increase the variety of places the group can visit
- Offer more opportunities for participants to purchase items (ie. personal hygiene products, books, games) for themselves. A clear system of communication with families is necessary to acquire information about budget/spending limits, what to buy, etc.
- Continue to develop partnership with the Bathurst Clark Library and other local places (ie. firehouse) that might offer tours and activities suitable for participants.
- Participants have requested visiting other places such as bowling, mini golf, movies, etc. Having a small budget for occasional outings for this group would help to expand the range of options available, which will help to develop and reinforce skills in a wider variety of settings.
- Organize visit to Community Safety Village to reinforce some of the concepts learned during the outings
- Incorporate more outdoor activities (weather permitting) to change up the routine and offer a wider variety of ways for participants to enjoy being in the community and increase flexibility in the routine.

2.6 COOKING CLUB

Program Description:

The Cooking Club is a collaborative, hands-on, educational, and interactive cooking and baking program. Its goal is to teach essential life skills in food handling and preparation while also improving fine motor, reading

comprehension and social skills. Throughout the program, participants follow structured recipe instructions and engage in various culinary techniques, such as measuring ingredients, mixing, scooping, cutting, spreading, squeezing, and pouring, etc. Alongside practical cooking skills, participants develop active listening, reading comprehension, and basic math skills. Furthermore, the program promotes social interaction by encouraging teamwork, turn-taking, and collaboration among peers.

Person Centered Focus:

The class lesson plan and teaching methods employed in the program aim to accommodate participants with varying levels of abilities, embracing a person-centered approach. Visual aids such as pictures of the finished product and step-by-step recipe instructions are provided to enhance comprehension for participants with diverse levels of ability. Recipe instructions are presented in a clear, specific, and easy-to-follow manner. Staff ensure understanding by repeating instructions, providing detailed explanations, modelling tasks, and assisting through hand-over-hand method. Participants are encouraged to complete tasks at their own pace and within their own capabilities. At the end of each class, participants are invited to share their feedback on the recipe at hand and suggest other recipes they would like to explore in the future. Classes are run once per week with the duration of 1.5 hours per class.

This year, a new strategy has been introduced for participants with goals around leadership skills. It involves pairing them up and assigning each pair a specific task that requires collaborative interaction to accomplish. This approach introduces a heightened level of complexity to the program, enabling participants to develop and enhance skills such as communication, attention to detail, and turn-taking, among others.

Review of Successes:

- Simplified, visually supported recipes keep participants engaged and improve their ability to follow instructions independently.
- Picking recipes that participants find appealing is a great way to keep them excited, interested and engaged in the program.
- Smaller group sizes promote engagement and allow for more personalized assistance.

Review of Challenges:

- Participants with poor fine motor skills may have difficulty performing the majority of hands-on tasks and will require staff hand-over-hand assistance.
- Some participants who are loud and persistent pose disruptions to the class.
- Participants who have difficulty maintaining engagement throughout the entire class may find it challenging to stay focused, particularly during recipes which take longer to complete.
- Some more challenging tasks to execute, such as cutting up fruit, require more individualized staff support.
- Budget constraints limit the variety of recipes that can be explored.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Provide personalized support to each participant as they address their specific individual challenges through reminders, encouragement, and positive reinforcement. Ex. close to the end of the program one participant gets restless and asks to leave the class before it is finished. Perhaps in the beginning of the program let everyone know.

2.7 DAVENING

Program Description:

Davening, or Jewish prayer, is a fundamental part of Jewish daily life and is often integrated into morning programs, especially in educational or community settings. This program involves morning blessings and prayers that express gratitude for daily life and abilities. Music is incorporated into the sessions to enhance the experience, fostering a sense of community. Classes are held every morning, lasting 40-50 minutes, five days a week.

Person Centered Focus:

- The program establishes a consistent morning routine, creating a comforting and spiritual start to the day.
- Staff ensures the prayer space is clean, comfortable, and conducive to concentration and spirituality.
- Some participants play drums to make prayers and blessings more meaningful
- Prayer books are available for some participants.
- Participants are encouraged to lead some of the prayers and sing along with their peers.

Review of Successes:

- Integrating prayer into the morning schedule sets a reflective and purposeful tone, fulfilling both spiritual and communal needs.

Review of Challenges:

- The program is well-established and effective; no significant challenges were identified.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Consider inviting spiritual leaders, such as rabbis or cantors, to occasionally lead the sessions, enriching the spiritual atmosphere.

2.8 INTERNET SAFETY & SOCIAL MEDIA

Program Description:

- This program teaches participants to navigate social media platforms like Gmail, Facebook, and Pinterest, emphasizing online safety. Participants learn to recognize potential threats, including scams, phishing, and inappropriate behavior, while also exploring creative ways to connect online. Participants will also develop their understanding of how to interact appropriately with others in an online setting, including what kinds of messages and photos are appropriate to share, maintaining boundaries online, and how to leave comments. Participants will practice using various social media platforms to explore new ways to express themselves creatively and to have more options to independently interact with friends. Classes are conducted once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participant input and questions help shape the direction of the program by providing direct feedback on what they would like to learn
- Participants are chosen for this class based on those who has an identified interest in using social media
- Online materials were found to explain concepts to the group at an appropriate level with practical examples that they could use to apply what was learned
- Activities were adapted to meet the needs of participants based on their literacy and communication skills

Review of Successes:

- Most participants showed a strong retention of the “rules” of how to keep safe online from week to week
- Several participants showed a lot of enthusiasm for the discussions and frequently asked questions or contributed examples
- Participants seemed to really enjoy the hands-on, creative activities and showing off what they had learned
- Participants were exposed to new kinds of social media that they may not have experienced before, and showed a strong interest in learning to use them (ie. building their own boards on Pinterest)
- Participants seemed to really enjoy working on activity packages from Twinkl that served as a review of online safety

Review of Challenges:

- Limited access to technology for some participants makes it challenging to practice skills consistently.
- The staff running this program had limited experience with social media platforms which could make it more difficult to introduce/explain concepts
- Few devices were available for our group to practice with.
- Varying literacy skills affect how participants engage with certain activities, and technical issues can disrupt sessions.
- One participant in the group tended to become disruptive by speaking very loudly over staff and could get sidetracked by sharing his own examples, some of which were not so relevant to the discussion at hand

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Adjust the program schedule to avoid conflicts with other technology-based sessions, ensuring more device availability.
- Limit program to participants who have a strong personal interest in using social media or who are already actively using social media, since it is not so applicable to those who have no access
- Partner up participants in the group to practice sending messages to each other
- Seek feedback from participants about which platforms they use most often and if there are any skills or new sites/apps they would like to learn
- It would be helpful to have one more staff/student to assist participants if the class includes more direct practice using technology
- Use more worksheets and activity packages to help reinforce concepts

2.9 FUNCTIONAL COOKING

Program Description:

Functional Cooking is a program that provides participants with fundamental kitchen skills and safety techniques to be able to independently execute basic kitchen tasks in their home setting. Participants assist with the process of shopping and paying for ingredients at the grocery store. In addition, participants develop their awareness of hygiene and food safety while preparing snacks, such as washing their hands, washing ingredients, and safely using a variety of kitchen tools. With the repetition of the same recipe over a 4-6 week span, participants are also developing their memory of the sequence of steps needed to prepare simple snacks as independently as possible. Classes run twice a week for 1-2 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants' goals guide the customization of tasks, ensuring a personalized approach to learning culinary skills.
- Within the program, we endeavour to customize recipes and tasks to align with each participant's strengths and abilities
- Encouraging full participation, individuals are empowered to engage in the entire process, from setup and shopping to food preparation and cleanup, striving for as much independence as possible.

Review of Successes:

- Participants have improved in food preparation and memory retention, confidently handling kitchen tasks.
- Being able to shop for the ingredients that we are going to be cooking has been a humongous success for participants as it keeps them engaged in the process and builds new skills in the community.
- The inclusion of a second class has expanded opportunities, accommodating more participants throughout the week.

Review of Challenges:

- Limited time on Fridays: only one hour allocated instead of the preferred two. This group was not able to be a part of the shopping component of the program
- Participants may feel rushed, impeding skill development and problem-solving.
- Insufficient time for a comprehensive cooking experience, leading to condensed sessions and incomplete objectives.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Extending the duration of classes would allow a more thorough exploration of cooking activities, supporting a better-paced learning environment.
- Consider switching the timing of the second Cooking class to include different participants who have shown an interest or would benefit from the program who are not currently at program on days where Cooking is offered or who are scheduled for other programs that conflict (ie. a work placement that is only available during the Cooking time)

2.10 GIRLS GROUP

Program Description:

Girls Group fosters independence, confidence, and social skills, focusing on financial literacy, self-care, and community engagement. Participants practice budgeting, using debit cards, and socializing during outings. In addition, self-care is also practiced to promote maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Physical health and hygiene is discussed through online videos that are followed related to topics such as exercise, skin care, etc. Participants visit local malls and parks to practice the skills they have learned and to develop social skills in a group environment. Participants enjoy socializing, browsing shops, learning about fashion, health and wellness products, and meeting new people and friends. Classes are held once a week for 2.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Activities reflect the goals of participants, with staff providing support and guidance during each outing.
- Participants work on communication skills and independently navigating social situations
- The program encourages participants to manage their time, interact respectfully, and assist peers as needed.

Review of Successes:

- Participants have developed stronger social skills, gaining independence through managing their finances and making personal purchases.
- Outings provide a social environment that participants enjoy, fostering friendships and learning about community life.

Review of Challenges:

- Planning shopping lists and managing turn-taking can be challenging, as some participants are more focused on their own needs.
- Budgeting inconsistencies and limited patience during shopping trips can occasionally disrupt the group's activities.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Introducing new topics like basic bookkeeping or letter-writing can diversify learning.
- Providing more structured in-class preparation before outings can help reinforce budgeting and social skills.
- Encourage participants who don't often shop to try purchasing items occasionally.

2.11 LIFE SKILLS

Program Description:

Participants engage in a weekly Life Skills class that benefits them in so many different ways. These individuals learn about very important life skills such as cooking skills, food safety, and how they can stay safe in the kitchen. Participants have also learned about road/community safety and the necessary steps required to remain safe in the community. Another reason why this program benefits participants is because they help one another out during activities, they problem solve different activities together, while still working independently. Lastly, the participants have also learned a little bit about properly managing their emotions and how emotions affect their relationships with friends and family. Classes are run once per week with the duration of 1 hour per class.

Person Centered Focus:

- The program is specifically designed for individuals transitioning DPRS, equipping them with skills to foster independence.
- Participants enjoy the opportunity to share which colour zone (Zone of Regulation) they are in at the beginning of each class
- Participants work together, sharing their feelings and supporting each other during activities, with lessons tailored to individual learning speeds.
- Some participants in this group have a harder time understanding certain activities and others who learn new activities quickly help the ones who struggle a little bit more.
- Some participants in this group have expressed their desire to learn about new activities that have not been discussed yet

Review of Successes:

- Participants consistently show enthusiasm, with individuals actively engaging and helping each other during activities.

- Two participants in this group always ask to incorporate new activities.
- Most of the participants in this group are extremely focused on a weekly basis and enjoy learning about the necessary skills required in everyday life.
- Participants in this group regularly completed activities effectively every single week and they were determined to not make any mistakes.
- The group has developed problem-solving skills, maintaining focus and demonstrating strong teamwork.

Review of Challenges:

- Disruptions can arise from noisy participants or those frequently leaving the room, affecting the flow of the session.
- Participants in this class who struggled with certain activities would often copy the other individuals' answers, which makes it difficult to assess how well they are understanding the material
- Technical issues with equipment may cause delays, limiting the time available for activities.
- Although this group was designed with the needs of those transitioning to the DANI home in mind, minimal support/guidance was provided on what skills were necessary to focus on which could make it challenging to structure the program at times

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- To introduce new activities that the participants have expressed their desire to learn about.
- Assigning dedicated staff to manage disruptive behaviors can help minimize interruptions.
- Increased guidance on specific skills from program leaders will aid in streamlining session planning.
- Offer more hands-on opportunities to practice skills in preparation for independence at home (ie. practice doing laundry, cooking skills, etc.)
- Include a focus on other topics that may be relevant to the transition to a new home (ie. learning home address and phone number) as well as further discussion of coping with change and how to be considerate of other housemates

2.12 LUNCH PREP

Program Description:

Lunch Prep builds basic kitchen skills, teaching participants to make sandwiches, cut vegetables, and clean up after meals. This program is designed to promote independence and runs once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants receive personalized support to develop their kitchen skills, focusing on tasks that build independence and self-sufficiency.

Review of Successes:

Participants receive personalized support to develop their kitchen skills, focusing on tasks that build independence and self-sufficiency.

Review of Challenges:

- Adhering to hygiene standards, such as handwashing and avoiding touching food, can sometimes be difficult.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Staff should maintain close observation to reinforce hygiene practices, ensuring all participants follow sanitary procedures.

2.13 SHABBOS PARTY

Program Description:

Shabbos Party introduces participants to the traditions of Shabbos, including prayers, blessings, and discussions about the week. It offers participants who do not regularly experience Shabbos at home the chance to engage in this important cultural practice - for those who do observe Shabbos, it helps to get into the Shabbos spirit before going home. Classes are run once a week for an hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants take turns sharing their thoughts and practicing patience, reinforcing community bonds and cultural understanding.

• Review of Successes:

- Participants consistently engage and express joy during sessions, enjoying the opportunity to practice Shabbos traditions with friends.

• Review of Challenges:

- No current challenges identified.

• Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- No suggestions at this time.

2.14 SKILLS WITH PLAY-DOH

Program Description:

Playdough is an interactive, hands-on, artistic program, where participants explore diverse activities utilizing playdough. The program's objective is to enhance fine motor skills through various playdough techniques and promote creative expression through a variety of engaging activities with playdough. By engaging in diverse and stimulating molding techniques, participants have the opportunity to refine their fine motor abilities while simultaneously expressing their creativity. Classes are run once per week with the duration of 1 hour per class.

Person Centered Focus:

The primary advantage of this program is that it is inclusive to all participants regardless of their varying level of abilities. By focusing on each participants' unique strengths and needs, the program ensures that everyone can engage meaningfully in the creative process. Each participant is encouraged to express themselves creatively. This promotes confidence and fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Review of Successes:

- An ideal group size; with seven participants, enables everyone to remain seated closely together.
- Limited noise and disruption levels increases participants' ability to maintain focus.
- Opportunities for interaction with peers and the ability to observe what everyone is creating.
- A structured, step-by-step approach in executing playdough creations enhances engagement and comprehension levels among participants as it allows breaking down the process into clear, easy-to-follow steps.

Review of Challenges:

- The current staff-to-participant ratio makes it challenging to provide personalized support, affecting overall engagement.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Assigning specific participants to each staff member could improve the consistency of support, enhancing participant experience.
- Adding another staff member to support the program in general can help ensure that support is distributed evenly among participants. This allows for more personalized attention and assistance, ensuring that each participant's needs are adequately met.

3. LIFELONG LEARNING

3.1 COMPUTERS AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Program Description:

The Computers and Digital Literacy program provides participants with foundational computer skills, covering essential areas such as navigation, typing, database management, and introductory formula use. Through practical, hands-on activities, participants build confidence in software that supports various practical applications, including data entry and basic digital management. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

This program recognizes and supports the diverse learning styles and abilities of each participant. Personalized instruction is provided through one-on-one support, small group activities, and tailored learning plans, ensuring that each participant can engage meaningfully at their own pace.

Review of Successes:

- Participants successfully created visual databases based on personal interests, building hands-on experience in a user-friendly environment.
- Engaging in interactive typing games, such as "TypeTastic," allowed participants to practice typing skills through fun, visual, and auditory feedback mechanisms.

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants required additional support with typing and database management tasks.
- Software requirements, such as needing advanced devices with Microsoft Office, limited access for some participants.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Expand to include more participants would increase engagement and skills-building.
- Incorporating database management into an employment program could create pathways for future placement opportunities, enhancing practical skill applications.

3.2 COMPUTER LITERACY

Program Description:

The Computer Literacy program teaches participants how to navigate Google Drive and its key features, such as creating new files, organizing folders, and understanding various file types (e.g., Docs, Sheets, and Slides). Through guided practice, participants learn to perform foundational tasks like creating tables, formatting, and setting basic formatting rules. This program is conducted weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

This program is designed to accommodate a variety of special needs, including visual, auditory, and physical differences. Accessibility is enhanced through customizable font sizes, closed captioning, and keyboard shortcuts, ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all participants.

Review of Successes:

- Participants have successfully learned to access Google Drive, locate files, and differentiate between application use cases.
- Increased understanding of document formatting has enabled participants to perform basic tasks independently.

Review of Challenges:

- Limited computer access led to downtime and some frustration.
- Complex instructions sometimes required additional staff support to maintain engagement.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Offering alternative activities during wait times can help maintain engagement.
- Training advanced participants to support peers may ease instruction and enhance the learning environment.
- Applying for a grant to add more laptops would improve access and support individual learning.

3.3 CURRENT EVENTS & TRIVIA

Program Description:

Interactive program designed to entertain and explore various topics through research, discussions, and trivia games. Participants create their own questions based on class formats. Classes run weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants are empowered to contribute by creating their own questions, promoting a sense of ownership. A supportive environment encourages participants to share their knowledge and perspectives on different topics.

Review of Successes:

- The class provides diverse learning opportunities, helping participants gain new knowledge.
- Participants asking questions enhances literacy skills, public speaking confidence, and peer interaction.

Review of Challenges:

- Open discussions can occasionally lead to off-topic conversations.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Including visuals could help maintain focus and ensure discussions stay on track, making content accessible to all participants.

3.4 DISNEY

Program Description:

The Disney program explores various aspects of Disney, from theme parks to movies and music. Participants learn through mixed media, such as videos, songs, and worksheets, which reinforce Disney's valuable lessons. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

This small class format allows for a personalized approach, enabling each participant to shine in their own way, whether they prefer presenting or observing. The focus on individual strengths fosters confidence and engagement.

Review of Successes:

- Participants actively contribute ideas, shaping the class content together. The small class size allows lessons to be tailored to each participant's interests and learning style.

Review of Challenges:

- Diverse interests sometimes create conflicts over how the class should proceed.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Regular feedback sessions allow participants to shape the program, ensuring everyone's voice is heard and needs are met.

3.5 FAIRY TALES & FABLES

Program Description:

This program introduces participants to fairy tales and fables, engaging them through storytelling, workbook activities, and crafts focused on character, setting, and plot. Participants work on reading comprehension, descriptive language, and creative thinking. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Customizable workbooks are tailored to each participant's abilities, while story selection is informed by participant feedback. A high staff-to-participant ratio allows for individualized support and attention, promoting active engagement.

Review of Successes:

- Participants consistently express enthusiasm for the stories, and workbook activities help reinforce comprehension.
- Participants work independently and collaboratively, showing pride in completing tasks and helping each other understand story details.
- Familiar stories like those adapted by Disney are especially engaging, encouraging participants to suggest additional stories.

Review of Challenges:

- Participants with hearing or vision difficulties struggle to fully engage with certain aspects of the class, such as worksheets or discussion portions.
- Finding a wide range of suitable activities for some fairy tales is challenging due to limited pre-made online resources.
- Customizing and compiling workbooks is highly time-consuming, requiring significant preparation to print and assemble all worksheets.
- Participants work at different speeds, making it difficult to gauge appropriate discussion length or when to progress. Ensuring equal engagement without boring some or leaving others behind requires careful, dynamic planning.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Expanding online resources, adding subtitled videos and multimedia elements, incorporating crafts, and exploring a broader range of stories would support accessibility and engagement.
- Partnering with local libraries could provide additional storytelling resources and introduce lesser-known tales.

3.6 LITERACY

Program Description:

This class builds reading, writing, and communication skills through group discussions, interactive activities, and literacy games. Participants enhance comprehension, expression, and confidence in literacy. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants are encouraged to suggest discussion topics to help shape the program. Visual and auditory elements, such as PowerPoint, support varied learning styles, ensuring all participants can follow along.

Review of Successes:

- Participants are enthusiastic about learning new literacy skills and show noticeable improvement in specific areas during check-ins.

Review of Challenges:

- Ensuring information is accessible to all participants can be challenging given the range of skill levels.
- Some concepts are easier for certain participants to grasp, while others find them challenging, making it difficult to balance engagement and accessibility.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Further tailoring the program to individual skill levels and grouping participants with similar literacy abilities would allow for more targeted support.
- Increasing staff assistance for participants who need extra help could further individualize learning.

3.7 LITERACY GAMES

Program Description:

Improve participants' reading abilities using evidence-based instructional methods and social communication skills while engaged in fun, age-respectful games and activities within a small group setting. Improving speech production (e.g., speaking clearer by talking slower &/or using exaggerated articulation, appropriate use of vocal loudness), oral language (e.g., increased vocabulary, producing longer sentences using decoded words), functional numeracy, self-advocacy, and self-regulation skills (using Zones of Regulation). Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Differentiated instruction was used to meet participants' individualized literacy goals, by using different reading materials during shared games and activities. For example, before rolling a die or taking a turn, one participant was working on letter-sound correspondences, while another participant was expected to read consonant-vowel-consonant words.
- Participants were given choices or asked to generate a list of preferred games or activities to increase their motivation and engagement in group activities.
- Different types of turn-taking devices were made available to accommodate participants' personal preferences, physical abilities, &/or visual access.

- A magnifying glass was provided or words were printed on cue cards in large print to improve one participant's visual access during reading.
- Colouring was incorporated into literacy activities for one participant who enjoyed art work.

Review of Successes:

- Two participants demonstrated high motivation and steady progress in literacy, language, and self-advocacy skills.
- Regular check-ins and communication with staff supported effective progress tracking.

Review of Challenges:

- One participant showed low motivation and sometimes disrupted the group by shouting or attempting to leave the room.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Re-evaluating group composition and offering personalized activities could enhance engagement. Exploring literacy apps like Pictello may help participants enjoy learning through alternative formats.
- Continue to encourage self-advocacy and use of self-regulation strategies during sessions.

3.8 NEWSLETTER & LITERACY GAMES

Program Description:

Participants write and/or dictate articles about their programs and activities to be published in the bi-weekly DANI Days newsletter, which keeps families and the community informed about what is happening at DANI. Participants are expected to describe their activities at DANI in as much detail as possible, with a focus on accurate recall of events, sequencing, and descriptive language. Through the process of sharing their activities, participants develop their abilities to communicate clearly and foster connections with others and the community. Participants not directly contributing to the newsletter engage in literacy games, enhancing skills such as letter recognition and expressive language. Classes are held weekly for one hour at the Clark campus.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants are encouraged to use technology independently or with staff assistance. Familiar staff members are paired with each participant for a consistent approach, helping participants share experiences in a comfortable and supported setting.
- Participants who need assistance to write are paired with a staff to prompt them with questions to elicit more detailed information
- Photos of various activities can be used to prompt participants to share more details about their chosen topic

- Participants who are not able to write or dictate articles may be offered alternative literacy-focused programming while the group works on their articles, but will be featured in the newsletter via photos

Review of Successes:

- Participants play an active role in choosing what to share in the newsletter and more than half of each edition is made up of their contributions
- Families and the community are provided with up-to-date information about what is happening at both campuses and involving all branches
- Participants enjoy creating the newsletter and feel a sense of ownership and pride in seeing their contributions shared with others.
- Many participants have improved in their ability to share more details about their programs and have started to write/dictate longer articles and several have been able to write articles completely independently
- Switching to a different system of communication/article collection from Magnetic has generally made the process of collecting articles and photos smoother. A WhatsApp group was created to enable photos to be sent efficiently with a description of the program/activity, and articles are stored in weekly folders on the drive for easy access
- Similarly, switching to an expectation for each staff liaison to write with their own caseload at the Magnetic Campus has made the process of collecting articles smoother and sets up clearer lines of communication of who to speak to for each participant (ie. in case of any suggestions of topics, questions, etc.)
- Almost every participant in the ACE program contributes directly to the newsletter by writing articles, and photos of almost every participant (including those who do not write articles) are featured in each edition
- By including news from both campuses, participants can see what their friends are doing at the other campus and families are given a more complete picture of what is going on at program
- Families have expressed strong positive feedback about seeing photos in the newsletter and enjoy getting to see the variety of activities. Feedback has often indicated that photos are a highlight for many families, and especially for participants
- Pieces from the newsletter as well as completed editions are also used as promotional materials for DANI during fundraisers and on social media
- Participants in the Literacy Games group have shown significant improvements in their letter recognition, letter-sound correspondence, and related skills

Review of Challenges:

- Although photos of programs are essential to the newsletter, staff from both campuses have indicated that it can be difficult to remember to take photos while leading programs. Frequent reminders are needed to ensure photos are taken and uploaded/sent in a timely manner, including from Sunday Program and both campuses
- Newsletter sessions can be easily impacted by schedule changes (ie. holidays, special events, additional play rehearsals) or staff absences

- High staff-to-participant ratio is necessary since even participants who are writing independently should have someone available to check on them for spelling, sentence structure, or to ensure appropriate topic and article length
- Some participants finish their articles very quickly and can be resistant to joining any other activities for the rest of the program hour
- May be difficult for staff who are less familiar with the activity that the participant is describing to know how to prompt them
- Many participants require prompting to elaborate on their ideas and offer more detail to ensure the article is an appropriate length and remains on-topic – it may be challenging for staff to know how best to prompt each person, especially if they are less familiar with the participant or the program they are describing
- Can be difficult to include participants who attend program less frequently (ie. individuals who are at program for half-days, or only a couple of times per week) – staff must be especially conscious to ensure they are involved and/or present in photos
- Some participants have a tendency to repeat the same article topics each week and require more support to vary topic choices. Staff have reported that this tends to happen because the participant writes on the same day each week, and can only write about activities that happened that day
- When multiple participants are working on articles at the same time/near each other, the room can become noisy and it can be difficult for participants to remain focused or for staff to hear them clearly
- Significant prep time is needed to put together each newsletter
- Challenging to find balance between inclusion and overall length
- Participants who are non-speaking or who have difficulty expressing themselves clearly through either speech or written language may not be a good fit for writing articles, and should be offered alternatives
- Non full-time participants may not be a good fit since they are limited in what they are able to share about
- The Literacy Games group can become overwhelming if too many participants join after completing their articles without enough added support. Staff should join the group with their participant, or find an alternative activity to engage them if the Literacy Games group is already full

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Implementing a two-week production cycle would streamline article collection.
- Program time for newsletter should be scheduled on a day and time when there is adequate support to ensure a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio, and ideally on days that are less likely to be disrupted by schedule changes
- Photos should be taken in all programs and work placements since this can help prompt participants to recall details and also provides photos to include in the newsletter alongside their articles. A staff or student who is supporting each program, rather than the staff leading, should be assigned to take photos even when the activities are similar each week (ie. work placements where tasks are always the same)
- Ensure a consistent routine is in place for all staff to upload their photos to the Drive each week or send via WhatsApp. If photos are sent via WhatsApp, a brief description should be included for context so the lead staff knows which program they belong to and what the activity was
- Encourage a minimum expectation of at least 10 sentences for more independent writers and at least 5 sentences per article for participants who need more support

- Lead staff will continue offering a weekly list of topic suggestions, and staff should prompt participants to choose a variety of topics. For some, it may be beneficial to vary the day that they write if possible to encourage them to write about different activities
- Utilize templates and prompts available on the Drive more often to assist participants with the process of sharing information (ie. sample questions for different topics)
- Continue to encourage participants to elaborate on ideas with as much detail as possible, and use photos to support them in remembering what happened. Most participants are able to expand on ideas with prompts, and staff should be encouraged to be creative and try multiple ways of prompting to elicit more information
- Speech-to-text tools may also assist participants who find typing challenging
- Lead staff will continue to check in on a weekly basis to gather information as needed from both campuses and other branches of DANI (including Vocational services, social enterprises, etc) to ensure all relevant information/updates are included
- Offer alternative programs to participants who are not a great fit for writing articles. Those who come to program only once a week or who are non-speaking are typically not expected to write articles, but should be included in photos instead
- Incorporate a wider variety of games into the Literacy Games group to continue developing new skills
- Instead of having participants who have finished their articles join Literacy Games, develop a range of activities that they can work on (ie. literacy worksheets, games from the cupboard, etc.) This can prevent the Literacy Games group from becoming too overwhelming in size, and helps to keep the participants engaged in literacy-related activities even after their article is finished

3.9 SCIENCE

Program Description:

Our Science program fosters a sense of exploration and discovery among our participants, emphasizing innovation and basic engineering principles that benefit both humanity and the environment. Participants engage with enthusiasm and curiosity, indulging in hands-on experiments. They explore the effectiveness of producing electricity with circuits and use various building materials to create movement, gaining a deeper understanding of how things work and are made. Classes are conducted weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Support is tailored to each participant's needs, with materials introduced through Smartboards and handouts to aid comprehension. Individual assistance is available during experiments.

Review of Successes:

- Successfully worked together to build and engineer a robot
- High level of staff engagement with the robotics helped keep enthusiasm and engagement
- Dividing participants into two groups working on different projects was helpful

- The use of a snap circuit run by batteries with a motor was very participant-friendly and they found it highly engaging. It also included visual instructions for participants to follow
- Participants also had fun with the Environmental Sciences unit
- Participants practiced observing the growth of the plant and charting its progress over time

Review of Challenges:

- Maintaining the focus of some the participants, since some had difficulty engaging in the activity
- Aspects of putting together the robot could be difficult for the participants (ie. some parts required a lot of dexterity and fine motor skills that could be difficult for them) and the instructions were occasionally difficult for staff to figure out as well
- Not all materials were accessible for participants who had visual impairments and certain portions of the class were not accessible for individuals with hearing impairments
- It was difficult to find a place to store projects that were in progress, since constantly transporting them from the office to the program room could lead to loss of pieces, items breaking, etc.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Introduce other science equipment such as using microscopes, plant lights, etc.
- Introduce more environmental sciences and engineering topics, such as gardening, building projects, etc.
- New units such as growing fungi or introducing some agriculture concepts
- Organize a group visit to the Science Centre to see exhibits on related topics

3.10 SHORT STORIES

Program Description:

The Short Stories program introduces participants to a diverse selection of short stories and offers opportunities to explore their content through various activities. Its primary objectives are to introduce participants to diverse themes and ideas present in the stories, while also encouraging exploration, engagement, and self-expression through creative exercises. Participants have the opportunity to enhance their reading and comprehension skills, expand their vocabulary, and engage in introspection by exploring their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Moreover, the communal setting of story reading creates a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, fostering a sense of community among the participants. Classes are conducted weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Stories are carefully chosen to be relatable and understandable to all.
- To enhance comprehension, the facilitator pauses at various intervals to rephrase, ask questions, and interpret the narrative.

- Participants are encouraged and supported in interpreting the story and sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Review of Successes:

- Selecting shorter stories with simpler themes and concepts tends to be more effective, as it ensures that participants can easily comprehend the storyline and remain engaged throughout the reading. This approach accommodates the varying levels of comprehension among participants, facilitating a more inclusive and enjoyable experience for all involved.
- Taking turns and allowing all participants to read helps maintain their focus on the story. Additionally, pausing the story at various points to ask questions regarding the story provides an opportunity to ensure that all participants are following the story as well as helping participants to better comprehend the story.
- Implementing a structured approach where participants take turns reading based on a predetermined order and number of pages, enhances the fluency of the story reading. This method helps participants to be more prepared and engaged in the reading process.
- Overall, in the latter part of the program, during the activity session, all participants are actively involved and appear to enjoy the various activities. Having activities that accommodate all abilities ensures that participants stay engaged and can relate personally to the material.

Review of Challenges:

- Participants with limited reading and comprehension skills, as well as those who struggle to maintain focus throughout the entire story, may find it challenging to follow the story and fully understand its content.
- With the introduction of more complex activities, additional staff support is needed.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Interactive storytelling and visual aids would support participants with different comprehension levels.
- Dividing into smaller groups based on reading abilities could also improve engagement.

3.11 SOLVING MYSTERIES

Program Description:

Solving Mysteries builds problem-solving and critical thinking skills by introducing participants to the structure and steps of solving mysteries. Activities include finding hidden objects, solving puzzles, and using the Smartboard for interactive learning. Classes are conducted weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants are supported individually, with questions and tasks tailored to their communication levels. Sessions begin with a review of previous lessons to reinforce retention and continuity. Familiar examples from books and movies help contextualize material.

Review of Successes:

- Participants enjoyed interactive games like “Guess Who?” and “The Effective Detective.
- Many participants expressed enthusiasm in creating their own mystery stories and characters.
- Participants had a good amount of support to engage in visual and hands-on experiences
- It supports their cognitive abilities and reasoning and rationalizing parts of mystery
- Some participants were able to recall concepts learned from week to week and apply them when needed, such as when writing our own story

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants had difficulty focusing for the duration of the lesson
- Solving problems as a group could be challenging because it was difficult to get feedback from everyone
- Participants with expressive communication difficulties found discussion portions harder to engage with.
- Finding activities that are suitable for all participants in the group can be challenging due to the different strengths/needs of the participants in the group

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Adding more role-playing and hands-on games could help maintain engagement
- Add more structure around the activities such as more projects (ie. writing stories)
- More visual activities to present to the group
- Try alternating between worksheets/discussions one week, and a related activity the following week
- Devote more time to writing our own mystery stories based on different themes
- Create workbooks of resources or activities for participants to work toward
- Grouping participants by skill level may allow for differentiated activities

3.12 TORAH (BIBLE) STUDY

Program Description:

The Torah Study program introduces participants to Jewish values and Torah knowledge. Participants read or listen to weekly portions and engage in discussions that connect Jewish teachings to their own lives. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Texts are available in Hebrew and English, with additional stories to enhance understanding. Participants practice literacy skills by reading aloud in both languages.

Review of Successes:

- Participants stayed engaged with Torah narratives and actively contributed by reading in both languages and asking relevant questions.

Review of Challenges:

- The room often faced disruptions from people entering and leaving to gather supplies for another program.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Reserving a dedicated space with a Smartboard would minimize interruptions and improve focus.

3.13 WORKING WITH WORDS

Program Description:

Working with Words allows participants to contribute ideas to a virtual Shabbat table displayed on the Smartboard. Participants select items, colors, and decorations to create a collective Shabbat setting. This program helps to develop expressive language and creativity as participants share their ideas and contribute to the image as a group. Classes are conducted weekly for 45 minutes.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants with limited verbal skills are engaged through yes/no questions and can interact directly with the board.
- Goals include promoting teamwork and respecting turns.

Review of Successes:

- This end-of-day program provides a relaxing, team-oriented activity, fostering creativity and engagement.
- The program combines a calm environment to get the participants in the spirit of the day.

Review of Challenges

- No current challenges identified.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- This area remains satisfactory.

4. RECREATION & HEALTHY LIVING

4.1 BURST OF ENERGY

Program Description:

Burst of energy is an engaging and high-energy dance class that provides a safe and inclusive space for participants to express themselves through the medium of dance and music. The class promotes strength, coordination, balance, flexibility, and fitness through various dance techniques and freestyle opportunities. Classes run weekly for 30 minutes.

Person Centered Focus:

The program adapts activities to meet individual needs, allowing for varied participation levels. Participants choose music and dance styles, with guidance available based on each participant's abilities. Alternatives, including seated movements, ensure accessibility for all.

Review of Successes:

- High-energy class providing a refreshing break after a day of sitting, allowing participants to release energy.
- Provides a creative and therapeutic environment, promoting emotional expression and stress relief.
- Experience growth and learning through different movements each week, enhancing their physical abilities and coordination.
- Exciting opportunity to be active and mobile, contrasting with other programs.
- Builds confidence and self-esteem by showcasing their abilities and express themselves freely in a supportive environment.

Review of Challenges:

- Engaging participants who may not have as much energy or enthusiasm for physical movement requires additional effort and encouragement to keep them involved.
- Many participants may be feeling tired after a long day, making it challenging to maintain their focus and participation levels throughout the class.
- The high-energy nature of the class, including loud music and energetic movements, can be overwhelming for some participants, leading to sensory overload and discomfort.
- Adapting activities to suit varying energy levels and physical abilities of participants can be challenging, requiring careful planning and flexibility during class prep times
- Some participants may struggle with coordination or following complex dance moves, requiring additional support and modifications to ensure they can fully participate and enjoy the class.
- Managing behaviour and ensuring a safe environment, particularly during energetic activities, can be challenging, as participants may become overstimulated or disruptive behaviours.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Relocating the class to the gym, using a speaker instead of the Smartboard, and keeping mats and seating arranged for accessibility have promoted a more active, engaging atmosphere. These changes have enhanced class dynamics and participation.

4.2 CARNIVAL GAMES

Program Description:

Carnival Games engages participants in physical activities that develop gross motor skills. Each week, participants rotate through stations focusing on jumping, balance, coordination, and agility, offering fun, interactive physical challenges. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Activities are tailored to each participant's abilities, with options for individual choice and participation level. Personal assistance and encouragement help each participant succeed and feel valued.
- Supportive and inclusive atmosphere where participants feel valued and accepted, regardless of their skill level or physical abilities.
- Each participant's achievements and progress are acknowledged and celebrated, reinforcing a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

Review of Successes:

- A revamped structure emphasizes active engagement with support from staff.
- Weekly skill focus with variations keeps the class fresh and enjoyable, and multiple stations at a time reduce downtime and maintain engagement.
- Engaging and enjoyable class atmosphere maintained.
- Inclusion of different levels of difficulty ensures appropriate challenge for all participants
- Participants enjoy a fun and enjoyable space for being active.
- Enriched class format by incorporating four stations at a time running which reduces downtime and increasing engagement from staff, students, and participants

Review of Challenges:

- Potential tiredness among participants due to increased physical activity.
- Maintaining motivation and enthusiasm over time can be hard since a lot is going on at once

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- This area remains satisfactory.

4.3 COMMUNITY CENTER

Program Description:

The Community Center gym provides participants with the chance to engage in recreational activities. A mix of organized activities and free choice allows participants to explore different sports and games while building teamwork and cooperation skills. A focus of the program is teamwork and collaboration while emphasizing autonomy and including others in their activity. Classes are held weekly for two hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Allow participants to take the lead in choosing the activities they want to engage in during the program. This program offers a variety of options, such as different sports, games, or fitness activities, and encourages participants to select activities that they enjoy and feel comfortable participating in.
- Being responsive to the individual needs and abilities of participants, making adjustments as necessary to ensure that everyone can fully participate and enjoy the class.

Review of Successes:

- Participants enjoy the interactions of playing together and socializing
- Participants are learning how to regulate behaviours through playing games with staff involvement

Review of Challenges:

- Supervising structured activities while managing other participants' free time can be challenging.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Coordinating staff support more efficiently to oversee and engage participants across different activities could enhance group management.

4.4 CREATIVE MINDS

Program Description:

Creative Minds combines learning with creative projects, focusing on an annual theme related to DANI's play. This year's theme, "Oceans," involved exploring marine life and geography in connection with *Finding Nemo*. Classes are conducted weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

The program uses a variety of media, including music, videos, and interactive elements, to meet each participant's sensory and learning needs. Activities are inclusive and allow for open-ended responses, accommodating speaking and non-speaking participants.

Review of Successes:

- All participants enjoy and actively engage in the topic, rarely requiring breaks.

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants could benefit from additional individualized support to complete tasks.\

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Reducing class size or increasing staff would provide more personalized support and enhance engagement.

4.5 DRUMMING

Program Description:

The Drumming program is an accessible music and movement class where participants use drumsticks and basketballs to follow patterns, stay on beat, and express themselves. This program supports coordination, motor skills, and stress relief through rhythmic movement. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Playlists are customized to include participant-preferred music, and movements are modeled for practice at the start of each session. Participants can choose their own movements, whether drumming or dancing, and receive individual assistance as needed.

Review of Successes:

- All participants enjoyed drumming to the music, with many following patterns well through visual cues.
- Themed playlists introduced new music and added variety.

Review of Challenges:

- echnical issues with the Smartboard or WiFi sometimes disrupted access to YouTube playlists.
- Some drumsticks have developed damage, creating potential safety issues.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Purchasing new drumsticks will ensure safe participation for all.
- Expanding themed playlists can further increase engagement and introduce more musical variety.

4.6 HEALTHY LIVING

Program Description:

The Healthy Living program focuses on improving participants' physical and mental health. Through tailored exercises, participants enhance strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular health, while also learning stress management and resilience-building techniques. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Exercises are adapted to participants' varying abilities, offering seated options and visual aids.
- Actively involves participants in setting personal health goals, empowering them to take ownership of their wellness journey.
- Accommodate diverse developmental approaches, such as employing sensory-friendly techniques.
- Create a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and motivated to pursue their health and wellness goals.

Review of Successes:

- Participants were highly engaged, showing particular interest in yoga and outdoor activities.
- Many participants were eager to learn how yoga benefits physical and mental well-being.

Review of Challenges:

- One-on-one literacy sessions sometimes disrupted the program.
- The timing of the program, held on the same day as Drama, was impacted by delays in the lunch hour and transitions.
- One participant in the group found it difficult to do activities in the park due to the walk involved to the area
- Some lessons could be unexpectedly upsetting for participants who were triggered by the material

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Introducing new activities like meditation and nutritional information on healthy food choices may further enhance learning.
- Adjusting the program's timing could avoid conflicts with other sessions.

4.6 LEGO ARCHITECT

Program Description:

LEGO Architect originally began as a structured building class, but now offers free play, encouraging creativity, sharing, and casual socialization. Participants create their own towers or structures, promoting independent thinking and teamwork. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

Participants work independently, using their imagination to design structures, which fosters autonomy and creativity.

Review of Successes:

- The free-play approach allows participants to make rules and encourages social interaction.
- Many demonstrate creativity and imaginative thinking.

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants struggle with program length and may have difficulty communicating needs, which can disrupt the class.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Incorporating short breaks, changing project themes, and encouraging open communication among participants can support engagement and manage behavior.

4.7 MINDFULNESS

Program Description:

The Mindfulness program provides a calm, end-of-day space for relaxation and rejuvenation through meditation, self-reflection, and gratitude activities. Participants are encouraged to share their insights with the class and participate in interactive games designed to enhance learning. Classes are held weekly on Mondays for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Each activity is adapted to participant needs. Non-verbal participants have picture-based options for expression, while those needing help with spelling receive support. Reflection prompts are open-ended, encouraging personal insights.
- Participants are given the opportunity to answer questions related to their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences
- Reflection prompts are designed to be open-ended, allowing for diverse responses based on individual perspectives.

Review of Successes:

- Participants appreciate the consistent class structure, using it as a time to unwind.
- Participants enjoy the opportunity to reflect on their feelings and share which allows participants to use their self of expression.

- Participants practice presentation skills by providing opportunities to share their thoughts and experiences.
- Engaged in grounding and meditation exercises that help participants feel more centered and present in the moment, promoting relaxation and calmness skills they can implement in their everyday life.

Review of Challenges:

- Participants with limited verbal skills may find it challenging to express themselves or engage in group discussions effectively.
- Some participants struggle to stay focused, especially at the end of the day, and others may find content unengaging if they feel tired.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Incorporate brief breaks or movement activities to help participants stay engaged. Provide clear, concise instructions and vary the pace of the class to maintain interest.
- Increased utilization of visual aids, gestures, or alternative communication methods to support the non-verbal participants so everyone can feel included
- Provide positive reinforcement and encouragement for active participation.
- Offer choices and autonomy whenever needed to increase engagement from everyone.

4.8 OUTDOOR FUN

Program Description:

Running from mid-May to late September, Outdoor Fun incorporates gross and fine motor skill-building with literacy activities. The program uses games to engage participants physically and cognitively, supporting growth in multiple areas. Classes are held weekly for two hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Tailored activities focus on enhancing communication, fine motor, gross motor, and literacy skills through enjoyable games.
- Each participant's goals and preferences drive activity selection and modification.
- Facilitators provide personalized support to ensure inclusivity and engagement for all individuals.
- Continuous assessment and communication foster progress and adjustment to activities, promoting individual growth and development.

Review of Successes:

- Genuine engagement from both staff and participants has been a notable success.
- Participants express enjoyment through verbal feedback and positive body language during activities

Review of Challenges:

- Unpredictable weather sometimes requires moving indoors, and running 40-50 small activities yearly presents logistical challenges, including storage and maintaining variety.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Additional funding could support larger activities, relieving the need for high-volume planning. Continued funding will help ensure the program's long-term success.

4.9 SPORTS

Program Description:

Weekly classes introduce participants to a variety of sports and exercise activities, fostering movement and promoting overall wellness. This approach ensures a diverse and engaging experience that contributes to physical fitness and well-rounded health. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

The Sports program introduces participants to various sports and physical activities, supporting fitness and overall well-being. By rotating sports each week, participants experience a range of skills and activities to promote physical health. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Review of Successes:

- The varied sports offerings keep participants engaged, building excitement as they learn new skills each week.
- The program helps develop physical fitness while promoting well-being.

Review of Challenges:

- Indoor activities may feel less motivating for some participants, and ensuring activities are accessible to all participants requires flexibility.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Indoor activities may feel less motivating for some participants, and ensuring activities are accessible to all participants requires flexibility.

4.10 SPORTS & SPORTSMANSHIP

Program Description:

This program is designed to introduce participants to a variety of sports that can provide fun ways to promote fitness and physical activity in all kinds of weather. In addition, this program introduces fundamentals of sportsmanship to develop social skills, communication, and the ability to engage in both cooperative and mildly competitive activities. During colder months, this program involves a weekly indoor fitness component that focuses on endurance and cardio. During warmer months of the year, the group goes outside to play basketball in the park using shooting, passing and dribbling drills to develop hand-eye coordination, motor skills, and a general interest/motivation to participate in physical activity in a fun environment. A weekly routine of stretches, passing drills and shooting drills is used to develop these skills. Classes are run once per week with the duration of one hour per class.

Person Centered Focus:

- Several individuals in this class thrive every single week and look forward to learning new drills every week.
- Many of these individuals are very skilled at basketball and pick up on new drills very quickly.
- Some participants in this group are better at motor skills than others in this group and encourage their friends who may struggle a little bit more.
- Modifications are made for a few individuals who are unable to do certain drills without assistance.
- Some participants set goals for themselves by making certain types of shots they haven't tried.

Review of Successes:

- A high staff-to-participant ratio supported successful class management.
- Seeing the participants follow instructions made the class run smoothly on a weekly basis.
- Many express their enjoyment with sports and are eager to learn new activities.
- All understood both the fitness aspect of the class and the basketball aspect.
- Team building was a big success; participants were consistently encouraging one another, whether it was

Review of Challenges:

- The indoor portion of this class was slightly challenging because many of the participants love the outdoors.
- Indoor classes provided limited space, leading to crowding.
- Certain fitness videos were quite challenging for some participants.
- A few participants struggled with coordination in the fitness aspect of this class.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Introduce a new sport for the outdoor portion of this class.
- Introduce new fitness activities that are slightly more challenging.
- Introduce new basketball drills that would benefit the participants.
- Procure additional supplies for the outdoor and indoor aspect of the program

4.11 SWIMMING

Program Description:

The Swimming program at North Thornhill Community Center focuses on lane swimming, promoting gross motor skill development and physical fitness. Participants can end each session with hot tub relaxation. Classes are run once per week for a duration of 2 hours total, with 30-60 minutes allocated for swimming.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants selected based on their interest in swimming, fitness goals, or recreational pursuits.
- Encouragement for participants to swim at their own pace and take breaks as needed.
- Participants have autonomy in deciding when to transition to the hot tub for relaxation
- Emphasis on understanding and respecting individual physical limitations.

Review of Successes:

- Participants enjoy the structured swim format and look forward to the hot tub, making the community center a positive environment for fitness.

Review of Challenges:

- Limited community swim slots create time constraints, requiring participants to rush through transitions and reducing swimming time.
- Desire expressed for longer swim durations to fully enjoy the activity.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Scheduling swimming on a day with extended swim times would alleviate the rush, enabling participants to enjoy a fuller experience.

4.12 TRIVIA

Program Description:

Trivia is a fun, theme-based weekly class that helps participants expand their knowledge on different topics. Participants enjoy discussing familiar themes and look forward to the friendly competition each week. Classes are held weekly for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants with good knowledge of themes are encouraged to assist other participants who may have a more difficult time answering questions.
- Some participants in this group have communicated their wish to have themes they are familiar with.

- Non-verbal participants answer questions by coming up to the smartboard and pointing to the answer they think is correct.

Review of Successes:

- Participants actively engage with the trivia themes and show excitement each week, often gathering early for class.

Review of Challenges:

- Having a large number of participants in this class does lead to a lot of noise on a weekly basis.
- Off-topic conversations disrupt to the flow and get the participants off-track
- Some participants are more disruptive than others which often irritates the participants who wanted to focus throughout my trivia class.
- Preferences for different games can also cause division after the trivia portion is completed.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Including varied themes and adjusting trivia difficulty could keep the class challenging. Implementing additional themes may appeal to diverse participant interests.

4.13 YOGA

Program Description:

Participants will engage in a blend of gentle stretches, mindful breathing, and relaxation techniques. This program promotes wellness and provides participants with calming self-care techniques. Classes are held weekly for 30 minutes.

Person Centered Focus:

- Using suggestions from participants about what they want.
- Try to give participants alternative poses when they are unable.
- This program is also about their wellbeing and teaches them strategies to relax and feel calm.
- Incorporated self care and breathing techniques into this program.

Review of Successes:

- The yoga program is making a positive impact on some of the participants, with many expressing enjoyment and relaxation. Their engagement and focus in the class indicate they are benefiting from the program. It is evident that participants are progressing in their yoga skills week by week.

Review of Challenges:

- Participants with mobility challenges may find certain poses difficult to follow without modifications.
- Some participants have challenges in following directions from the front of the class.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Researching alternative poses and incorporating supportive props, like chairs, would increase accessibility.
- Staff assistance could further support participants in following along.

5. VOCATIONAL

5.1 ADATH ISRAEL (SHREDDING)

Program Description:

Participants attend Adath Israel Synagogue to assist with document shredding, providing a vocational training opportunity where they develop skills in organization, teamwork, and problem-solving. The team environment fosters communication skills and cooperation as participants share workspaces, delegate tasks, and take turns. This experience also supports independence, helping participants improve their ability to focus and stay on task for longer periods. This program runs once per week for 2.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants are given opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as setting up shredders and distributing papers.
- Some work in pairs, supporting each other at the same shredder.
- Tasks are assigned based on participants' interests and abilities (e.g., removing staples, setting up workstations, using the shredder).

Review of Successes:

- One participant has taken on a strong leadership role, managing the shredding equipment setup and organizing task sequences.
- Another participant has shown marked improvement in stamina and motivation, now working diligently for the entire session.
- Most of the group displays enthusiasm for shredding and are motivated to work for extended periods.
- Participants enjoy the synagogue environment, showing interest in items like siddurim and displays.
- Pairing participants with complementary roles keeps everyone engaged.

Review of Challenges:

- Initially, transporting shredders to and from the synagogue each week delayed transitions, though this issue has since been resolved.
- Supplies (e.g., garbage bags, paper) are not always readily available, occasionally delaying start times as synagogue staff locate materials.
- Some participants initially showed low engagement in shredding, though motivation has generally improved over time.
- Cleaning up after shredding is hindered by the lack of a broom or vacuum.
- Shredder malfunctions can lead to wait times if participants have to share a single shredder.
- Some participants find it challenging to share the shredder, preferring prolonged individual turns.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- An additional staff member or student would benefit the group, particularly for smoother transitions.
- Bringing a broom or vacuum would enable participants to take responsibility for cleanup.
- Requesting additional tasks from synagogue staff could provide variety for participants, especially those less engaged with shredding or waiting their turn.

5.2 AISH

Program Description:

Aish is a longstanding program at DANI that has evolved to focus on Jewish living and learning. Participants explore what it means to be Jewish, engaging in activities such as prayer, expressions of gratitude, and weekly lessons on topics like Israel, Jewish pride, and holidays. The program also includes singing well-known Hebrew songs. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their heritage, fostering a sense of pride and understanding. This program runs once per week for two hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Leadership roles are tailored to each participant's strengths. For instance, one participant is designated as the "Rabbi," a role that suits his enthusiasm for helping others.
- Participants are encouraged to read aloud and engage in group discussions about the weekly Parsha.

Review of Successes:

- Aish has been successful in meeting individual needs, integrating each participant's strengths to create a meaningful experience.
- Participants who are not typically inclined to lead have stepped into leadership roles, showing increased confidence and a willingness to try new challenges.

Review of Challenges:

- Class size presents a challenge in ensuring that each participant receives an individualized experience.
- Varied learning styles require careful planning to ensure every participant benefits fully.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- At the beginning of each class, consider identifying a unique role for each participant to encourage active involvement. This approach will help everyone feel valued and engaged in a way that best suits their interests and learning style.

5.3 BATHURST CLARK LIBRARY

Program Description:

Participants volunteer at the Bathurst Clark Library, where they assist with tasks such as dusting shelves, organizing items by library card numbers, and arranging magazines by date. Participants also practice numeracy and literacy skills by ensuring books are in the correct order. The program fosters appropriate behavior in a library setting and encourages participants to remain focused on their tasks. This program runs once per week for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Workstations are assigned based on each participant's strengths, interests, and skills.
- One-on-one support is provided as needed, with adjustments available for participants with sensory disabilities (e.g., sign language instructions for those with hearing impairments).

Review of Successes:

- Introducing the task of shelving hold items has offered greater challenges for those with strong literacy skills, making the work more engaging.
- Participants have shown increased motivation and enjoyment in completing their tasks, with some even requesting additional responsibilities.
- A high staff-to-participant ratio has allowed effective support, particularly for a participant who uses sign language.

Review of Challenges:

- The library's workload is inconsistent, making it difficult to anticipate how long tasks will take.
- Limited cleaning supplies can prevent participants from fully completing their assigned tasks.
- One on one support is required for participants shelving books on the holds shelf to ensure all books are correctly put away, especially for one individual who is deaf and requires instruction using sign language to complete this task effectively
- Most participants in the group seem to get tired and/or bored after about half an hour and request a break

- Some participants have become resistant to switching to other tasks, even when they used to do them very successfully, and tend to pick the one that is easiest for them
- Several of the participants in this group have a tendency to be very loud, which can be disruptive to other patrons at the library
- One participant's disruptive behavior occasionally affects others, and managing preferred pairings among participants can be challenging.
- Communication with management at the library can be challenging at times since the staff are not always physically there at the same time as the group and may be slow to respond to emails

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Request a broader variety of tasks from the library to maintain participant engagement.
- Encourage participants with strong task skills to rotate responsibilities more frequently.
- Additional training in arranging multi-digit numbers may benefit participants involved in the shelving task.

5.4 BRESLOV SHUL

Program Description:

Participants learn to recognize, categorize, and organize books and other items in a structured workspace. Through their roles, they practice identification, organization, communication, and time management skills. This program runs once per week for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Tasks are tailored to align with each participant's individual goals, focusing on skills like identification, organization, and effective communication.

Review of Successes:

- Participants display enthusiasm for the tasks, showing marked improvement in organization skills and a growing ability to work independently.

Review of Challenges:

- Sometimes tasks are completed early, necessitating additional activities to maintain engagement.
- Participants may struggle to stay engaged for the full hour.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Consider adjusting the duration or introducing supplementary tasks for participants who finish early.

5.5 CARD

Program Description:

Participants volunteer at a not-for-profit equine therapy center, cleaning saddles in the tack room to ensure they are ready for use. This program encourages teamwork, problem-solving, and independent task completion, with minimal staff involvement. This program runs once per week and typically lasts around 1.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants divide tasks among themselves, supporting those who need assistance with specific instructions.
- The focus is on working together as a team, with minimal staff intervention to encourage independence.

Review of Successes:

- The program operates smoothly, with participants familiar enough with the routine to assist each other independently when needed.

Review of Challenges:

- Limited space in the tack room restricts mobility and lacks seating.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Consider adding an additional shift if feasible to accommodate more participants in a less crowded setting.

5.6 CHABAD GATE

Program Description:

At Chabad Gate Shul, participants organize a diverse collection of religious texts, enhancing their organizational, comprehension, communication, and fine motor skills. Through a structured set of tasks, they categorize books by color, size, and type and return them to designated shelves using a labeling system that aids independent work. This program runs once per week for two hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- The program promotes independent book organization skills, with individualized support based on each participant's specific needs.
- A prompting sheet titled "Chabad Instructions" outlines four tasks, which participants check off as they complete each one.

Review of Successes:

- The labeling system with numbers and colors is effective, allowing participants to follow clear instructions and work more independently.
- Organizing participants into smaller groups promotes active participation and manageable workloads.
- Participants enjoy the process and take pride in completing the organizational tasks.

Review of Challenges:

- Some participants require prompting throughout the steps, occasionally forgetting or skipping tasks in the sequence.
- Participants may benefit from additional time and space to process instructions.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Introduce visual reminders to support task transitions and use checklists for each participant.
- Encourage participants to verbalize or demonstrate each step to reinforce retention and understanding.
- Providing the checklist to all participants rather
- For participants who require assistance, assign a staff member to provide one-on-one support. This approach can further break down the organizational process and help participants stay focused on the task at hand.

5.7 CHAVA FARMS

Program Description:

Chava Farms provides participants with vocational training in a farm setting, fostering skills in animal care and teamwork. Tasks include cleaning water buckets, filling hay nets, grooming, and feeding horses, which enhance participants' communication, problem-solving, and independence skills. This program runs once per week for 1.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants are paired and rotate tasks, promoting cooperation and exposure to various activities.
- Participants in this group demonstrate independence in the workplace through their successful completion of assigned tasks.
- Jobs are assigned based on individual strengths following a person centered approach in order to include each participant.
- Staff always provide support when needed for a specific task.

Review of Successes:

- Most participants demonstrate high engagement, often completing tasks with minimal prompting.
- Participants work effectively as a team, showing growth in skills like outdoor safety and hygiene.

- Regular task rotation has helped participants adapt their communication styles with new partners.

Review of Challenges:

- Equipment location and lack of detailed instructions can create challenges when the workplace supervisor is unavailable.
- Some participants find it difficult to maintain focus for extended periods.
- Seasonal weather changes impact attendance and appropriate attire.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Request additional tasks from the Farm Supervisor to broaden learning opportunities.
- Aim to arrive at the farm earlier to maximize work time.
- Ensure hay nets and equipment are easily accessible.

5.8 HUMANITY FIRST

Program Description:

Humanity First Food Bank provides a grocery store-like environment where participants learn various vocational skills. Tasks include organizing, recycling, and restocking items, helping participants develop patience, resilience, and adaptability. This program runs once per week for two hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Each participant's program is tailored to their abilities, challenging skills such as dexterity, social interaction, and independence.

Review of Successes:

- All participants have made significant progress in skill development, including reduced anxiety and improved task execution.
- The program is highly recommended for its positive impact on vocational skill building.

Review of Challenges:

- One participant continues to require one-on-one support.
- The limited space at Humanity First can comfortably accommodate a maximum of four participants.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- No additional suggestions required at this time.

5.9 STALCO

Program Description:

Participants visit Stalco, a distribution service company, to engage in paid employment opportunities where they pack products for shipment. Tasks vary weekly but often involve packing makeup products into boxes, fostering teamwork, problem-solving, and responsibility. This program runs once per week for four hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants display high determination, setting individual goals to increase productivity.
- The program promotes peer encouragement and mutual support, with roles that align with participants' strengths (e.g., box taping, product counting).

Review of Successes:

- Participants enjoy the work environment and take pride in earning wages, which reinforces a sense of responsibility.
- Longstanding friendships among participants foster effective teamwork and communication.
- Independence and productivity are consistently high, with participants taking pride in their contributions.
- Each individual in this group comes to work extremely determined and leaves work extremely satisfied.

Review of Challenges:

- One participant occasionally disrupts others with high energy, though they are skilled and responsive to direction.
- Another participant is sensitive to noise and may need breaks during work hours.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Try and separate the participants who are quite chatty from each other
- Start lunch earlier to accommodate participants who struggle with waiting for extended periods.

5.10 THORNHILL COMMUNITY SHUL

Program Description:

Participants volunteer at the Thornhill Community Shul, combining spiritual engagement with volunteer tasks. They begin with traditional blessings over a Torah portion, followed by organizing charity funds and arranging books. This program runs once per week for 1.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants are encouraged to work as a team, with staff support for counting and other tasks as needed.
- Emphasis is placed on fostering a sense of community service and teamwork.

Review of Successes:

- Participants enhance their numeracy skills and feel valued within the community.
- The tasks foster a sense of purpose, with participants appreciating their contributions to the synagogue.

Review of Challenges:

- Staffing numbers can occasionally exceed what is necessary for supervision, leading to surplus staff without designated tasks.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Adjust staffing to match task requirements, minimizing instances of excess staff.

5.11 TIM HORTONS CHARITY & SHOPPING

Program Description:

In the Tim Hortons program, work experience, social interaction, and community engagement. Additionally, the Costco shopping program teaches grocery shopping skills using visual lists, helping participants inspect and pack items. This program runs once per week for 1.5 hours.

Participants develop skills in counting and sorting coins donated to the charity, which fosters various skills, including counting and sorting, handling money, communication, and teamwork. The program provides work experience, a sense of purpose, and opportunities for social interaction and skill development. In addition, the program helps to increase engagement and community involvement.

The Costco shopping program teaches participants how to use a visual grocery list, search for the food, and inspect the food in order to ensure the product is acceptable. In addition, they learn other valuable life skills such as scanning items, packing food bags, and how to be aware of their surroundings in order to avoid blocking the aisles or bumping into other shoppers. This program runs once per week for 1.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Recognizing and valuing the individual needs, goals, and abilities of each participant, and providing tailored support to help them succeed in the program. For example visual charts to assist with sorting have been developed and grocery lists are sectioned with pictures for those who can't read.

Review of Successes:

- Participants enjoy the activities, particularly the food selection process, and show improved navigation and coin identification skills.

Review of Challenges:

- Tasks can be demanding, and more one-on-one support would be beneficial to meet participants' varied needs.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Adding 1-2 students for additional support would enhance individual assistance and engagement.

5.12 TORONTO WILDLIFE CENTRE

Program Description:

Participants volunteer weekly at the Toronto Wildlife Centre, where they assist with cleaning equipment used for animal care. This opportunity provides a rewarding experience. They learn and perform basic animal care tasks, and observe animal behaviour under supervision. This program runs once per week for one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Staff provide tailored support, accommodating individual needs while promoting communication skills.
- Participants enhance verbal and non-verbal communication skills through interaction with staff, other volunteers, and visitors.
- Tasks are hands-on, enhancing participants' fine and gross motor skills.

Review of Successes:

- Participants learn to take responsibility for specific tasks and understand the importance of reliability and accountability.

Review of Challenges:

- Tasks are often repetitive, which may limit variety and engagement.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Explore potential for task variety, such as animal feeding or gardening, to broaden skill development.

5.13 VE'AHAVTA

Program Description:

Ve'ahavta offers a work placement opportunity for participants to organize donations, including clothing and non-perishable food items. Through these tasks, participants develop personalized skills in sorting and

organization while gaining experience in teamwork and community interaction. This program runs once per week for 1.5 hours.

Person Centered Focus:

- Each participant focuses on specific skills, such as following instructions, team interaction, and item organization, according to their goals and preferences.

Review of Successes:

- Participants have developed a strong work ethic and an ability to work efficiently in a team, supported by close coordination with the placements coordinator and program size.

Review of Challenges:

- The small workspace can occasionally lead to disagreements among participants.

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Have staff or student assistants monitor and address issues promptly.
- Maintain open communication with the site supervisor to support team dynamics.

5.14 YORK REGION FOOD BANK

Program Description:

Participants go to the York Region Food Bank where they help the organization by putting a variety of food products and drinks into the boxes or bags provided. Participants practice sorting and matching by searching for similar items to bring to the table. Participants practice teamwork and communication skills to locate items as well as flexibility in adapting to different roles or tasks as needed. Participants develop their independence and productivity in a vocational setting. The program runs once per week, with morning sessions lasting two hours and afternoon sessions lasting one hour.

Person Centered Focus:

- Participants are assigned a specific role while at the Food Bank depending on skills and strengths. Participants are either stationed at a box to place items in, or are “searchers” who locate items from the bins
- Staff provide direction to participants as needed to search for specific items (ie. more vegetables)
- Participants are encouraged to communicate with each other and with staff to decide which items are going to be placed in the boxes next
- Participants may be paired to assist each other as needed

Review of Successes:

- Participants have grown in their independence at many of the tasks involved at the Food Bank, especially the process of setting up the table and cleaning up afterwards
- All participants in the group are typically able to work productively for the duration of the placement and assist with all steps in the process
- Participants have improved in their ability to match items as needed to form pairs
- The group has consistently been able to finish 4-6 boxes minimum each shift
- One participant has especially shown significant growth in his leadership setting up the table with new boxes as needed and putting the completed boxes onto the skids

Review of Challenges:

- Varying tasks can pose adaptation challenges for some participants.
- The space is sometimes crowded, complicating navigation for individuals with mobility challenges.
- Participants may struggle with the concept of “matching” items when items are not identical but similar.
- Some participants may become frustrated or anxious if they can not find enough duplicates of the same item, or when an item they have chosen is not put into the box
- Participants sometimes have a tendency to focus on searching for food or drinks that they personally enjoy rather than finding a variety of items
- Some participants have a tendency to ask for breaks frequently or become
- Some participants who are given the “searcher” role may try to add additional items into the boxes, which can cause uneven weight and distribution of items between boxes, and need additional reminders to allow the participants in the “packing” role be in charge adding items
- Keeping the team focused and engaged has been identified as a challenge for the AM shift specifically

Suggestions and Ideas to Assist Challenges:

- Teach some participants to use the scale for weighing boxes to encourage responsibility.
- Offer more specific direction at times to find food or drinks that would be needed to balance out the box
- Rotate participants’ roles to allow for skill variety and prevent task fatigue.
- Proactively check in with participants who tend to need breaks and encourage them to let staff know. Switching roles throughout the shift may also be beneficial since it allows participants to try something new and may minimize boredom
- Continue reinforcing group communication, especially for participants in packing roles.
- Encourage participants to search for foods that have higher nutritional value as opposed to their personal preferences
- Set a goal for the number of boxes for the group to finish within the shift