

LEARNING FOR LIVING



BENEDICTINE

Introduction

The Benedictine Sisters opened The Benedictine School in 1959, well before the general public awakened to the fact that children with developmental disabilities could be educated. The Sisters replaced perceived barriers of disability with bridges built from the belief that all children with disabilities should have the opportunity to achieve their greatest potential. Today the Benedictine School is both a day and residential school serving children ages 5-21 living with Autism, Intellectual Disabilities and Multiple Disabilities.





The Benedictine Adult Open Community Program was established in 1982 to serve the multiple needs of persons ages 21 and over with developmental disabilities with high quality residential, vocational and health care services. Benedictine currently operates 18 homes and an extensive vocational and supported employment program.

“Helping children and adults with developmental disabilities achieve their greatest potential”



The Vision

In the beginning, there was an employee who was working as the Supported Employment Manager / Program Coordinator at the Benedictine in Ridgely. This employee made a point of keeping up to date on the changes in state and federal regulations.



This person envisioned a new way to help people with disabilities. She could see that the students coming out of high school needed to be out in the community as part of the competitive workforce instead of immediately joining a sheltered workshop. This idea grew into what is now our Easton Supportive Employment Office and Training Center. One way to sustain this type of office was to provide services supported and approved by The Division of Rehabilitation Services(DORS).



Program Development

We started by taking a look at the Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS) fact sheet supplied by DORS. There were five components to consider:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work based learning experience
- Opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs
- Workplace readiness/independent living training
- Self-Advocacy



Job Exploration Counseling

We do this type of work with individuals in the form of job development.

We have developed a two week training program called Career Exploration that we will be submitting for approval soon. The class will accommodate six to twelve students.

During this time, we will explore the student's interests and abilities in the hopes of transforming them into skills that will meet the needs of local employers.



Work-Based Learning Experience

This may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships – We provide some of these services in the form of: internships, exploratory and community assessments, and job development/job coaching.



Post-Secondary Education

We have provided these types of services during job development by exploring community colleges and assisting with online trainings.



Workplace Readiness Training

In collaboration with our Easton Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) we were able to develop our most successful eight week training program in Hospitality. The training center also has approved curriculum in Retail and Work Adjustment Training (WAT).



Our geographical location lends itself to many opportunities in these fields of business. Training transitional youth (PRE-ETS) in these industries is beneficial to both the students and employers. Providing training, such as Hospitality and Retail, also benefits **the provider** since 15% of DORS funding has to be spent on students and youth with disabilities.



High school students with significant disabilities interested in applying for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services often get put on a waiting list. The Federal law states that people with the “**most significant disabilities**” must be served first. However, currently enrolled high school students *ages 14 to 21* with a disability receiving services under an IEP, 504, or has a disability for purposes of section 504, are *eligible* to participate in (PRE-ETS).



Because our trainings were *developed to meet the specifications* put forth by DORS and the curriculums then had to be approved, DORS is willing to refer appropriate candidates for our classes. At first it was hard to fill a class of six students, now the class size has doubled and we have a waiting list! Working closely with our DORS counselors, Jena and Candace, allows us to ensure students placed in the class will make the most of it.



How many of you know and talk to your DORS representative?

We meet once a month with Candace and Jena or when an issue comes up.

Here is an example of how we work together: we had a young lady enter the retail program and for whatever reason, she was not dedicated to it. She failed to complete the eight week training. The following school year, the same young lady requested through her school to try again. Needless to say we at Benedictine had our doubts.



We contacted Candace Henry, our DORS representative, whom immediately set up an appointment with all three parties involved. Together with the individual, Benedictine's staff and the DORS counselor, we decided to let the young lady retake the class. Everyone agreeing to the same plan of action will insure the success of this young lady!



Upcoming Trainings

Instructions in Self Advocacy

We are excited to be starting a two week Self Advocacy training class which is in its' final stages of approval by DORS. Some of the topics covered in this program include: Voting, People On The Go, Finding a Mentor, and IEP /IP Meetings.



“BUILDING ADAPTABLE,
SUSTAINABLE, INTERACTIVE
CURRICULUM”

BASIC

Writing the Curriculum

Choose a curriculum that you want to focus on –

We based it on community needs and input from DORS. We chose to begin with Hospitality training. The community in which we live has a huge need for workers in hotels and restaurants. Our transitioning youth (referred to us by DORS) can fill this demand with some training and hands on experience. The curriculum we created will help them be successful in this field.



Create an outline of the major topics you want to cover –

For example, we chose themes such as Teamwork, Flexibility, Interview Skills, and The Customer Is Always Right.

Determine how long your program will run based on the time frame suggested by DORS and the amount of topics to cover.

We decided eight weeks was needed to accomplish the Hospitality training both in and out of the classroom. Some curriculum choices will require less time to accomplish.



Break each topic down into daily lessons--

We incorporated handouts/worksheets, you tube videos, group discussion, role playing and skill-building tasks specific to the daily theme, into a lesson plan. The class generally runs from 9am to 2pm and includes one 15 minute break and an hour for lunch.

Cultivate community partners

Determine what businesses in the surrounding area might be good “training incubators”, where the class can go practice the things they are learning in the classroom as well as get hands on experience doing jobs specific to that line of work. This is where it’s helpful to have sales experience.

You want to be able to share your excitement with potential partners. We give them information about our program and ask if they would be willing to take some time out of their day to give our individuals the opportunity to experience onsite training to cultivate skills leading to competitive employment.





Our mission is helping children and adults with developmental disabilities achieve their greatest potential.

Our vision is to be the educator and adult service provider of choice for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities and autism.

Core Values
Compassionate Caring
Dignity of Work
Hospitality

*Benedictine Adult Services
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Easton, MD 21601
Phone: 410-822-4751
Administrative FAX: 410-822-2561*



Who Are We? - Benedictine Talbot County Supported Employment Office and Training Center. *"Helping adults with developmental disabilities achieve their greatest potential."*

What Do We Do? -A licensed provider of training and assessments through the Division of Rehabilitation Service (DORS), Benedictine 's training center offers effective coaching that develops job skills and life skills necessary for individuals to obtain and maintain competitive integrated, community employment.

Who Are Our Business Partners? -Supportive community partners provide on-site training in retail, hospitality, customer service, and office skills, giving individuals the opportunity to cultivate skills leading to competitive employment.



Setting up your class schedule--

We choose to stay in the classroom the first week. We introduce the class to lessons in basic skills that allow them to function in the workplace such as: Appearance, Punctuality, Dealing with the Boss, and Getting Along with Others.





The second week we start to incorporate partner visits where we spend two hours on site learning various tasks. Along with partner visits, we schedule days for the purpose of training our classes to use public transportation, specifically Delmarva Community Transit (DCT). We also plan a visit to the Talbot Career Center/One Stop where we complete resumes and upload them for job searches online.

Teaching the Curriculum

Teaching/Adapting the Curriculum--

Staying in the classroom the first week allows time for the team to get to know each other, develop trust and learn socially acceptable behaviors. The instructors have the opportunity to assess the student's abilities and personalities. Take this time to determine whether accommodations must be made for individuals specific needs.





One of my favorite lessons we always do in the first week is our class on teamwork. This is a fun way to break the ice and helps the class have a sense of what it's like to be a good team player and co-worker. We see friendships and leadership roles develop during these activities that last throughout the 8 week training.





As the instructor, you will be evaluating people's abilities; you will need to adjust your lesson plan accordingly depending on their level of comprehension.

One way to determine whether they understand your point is to simply ask them and have them discuss it. For example, our lesson on “The Customer Is Always Right” contains a short lecture defining the word empathy as “Joining with the feelings and experience of another, unselfishness.”



We ask the class if anyone knows what this means or if someone can share a personal experience. If no one knows what it means, we need to spend more time elaborating on the subject. We would add a personal experience or story of how putting yourself in the shoes of another would be showing empathy.

Keeping the Curriculum Interesting and Up to Date—

You will never teach the same material in the same way. Every class will be different and the material chosen will need to match the dynamics of the class. The key is to keep the class engaged; too much lecture or discussion will start to lose their attention.

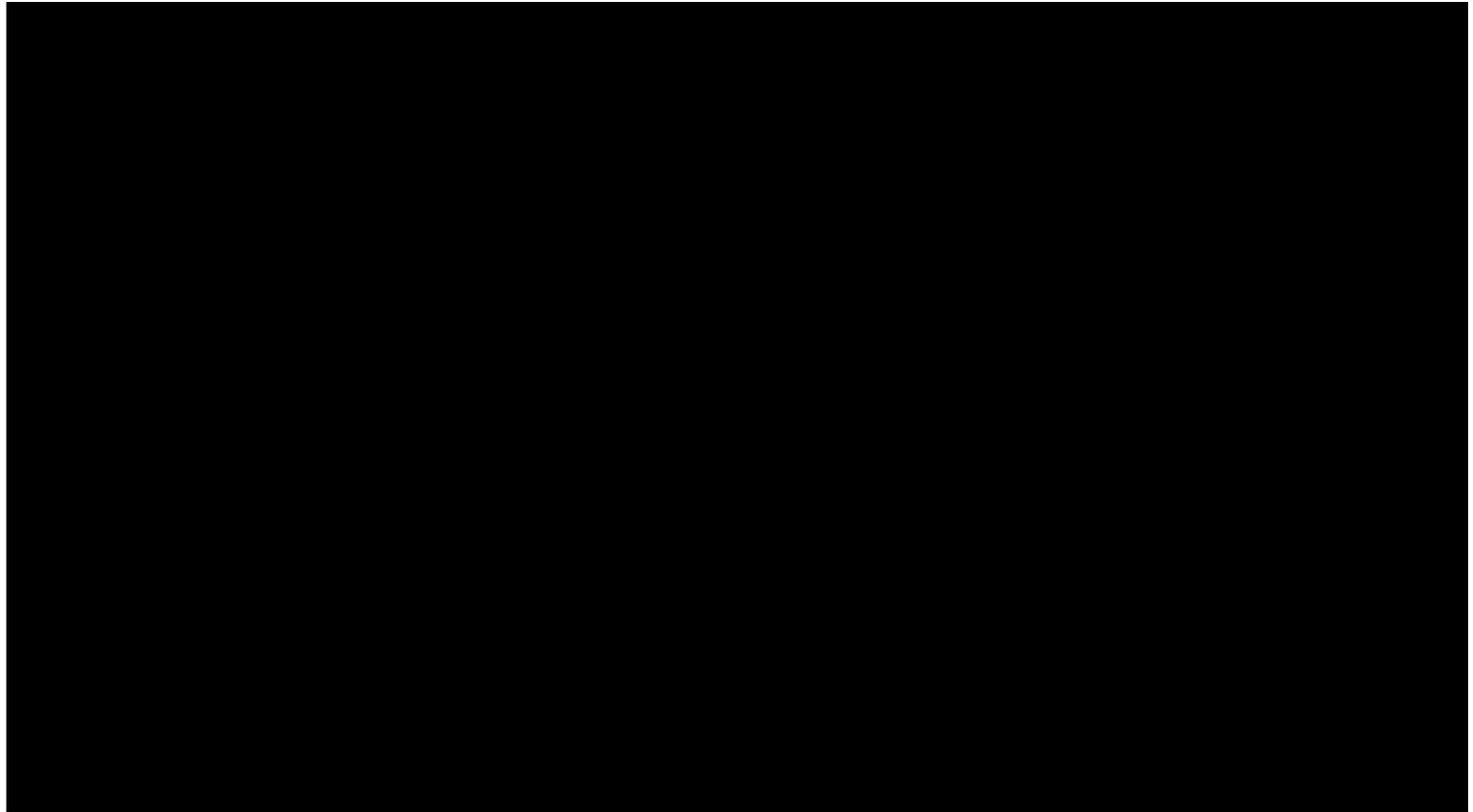




To keep students engaged we use:

- Relevant YouTube videos
- Role playing activities
- Games
- Brainstorming/listing ideas on a whiteboard
- Handouts/worksheets
- Group discussion
- Lecture
- Community partner visits
- Hands on training

Time to switch gears- The following is an example of a funny video we used in our class to demonstrate “The Customer Is Always Right”.





Here's a look at our lesson on Teamwork. (*Briefly walk through the lesson, explain how we added the marshmallow challenge).*

The Power of Community Partner Visits—

This is a huge part of the 8 week training experience. Students are expected to behave as if they are on the job. This is exciting because the students are exposed to job skills they have never done before. Some are simple like vacuuming or using a broom, others are more complicated and our trainers assist them with the task.





There are times when the trainers take a step back and the staff of the establishment trains the students themselves. Prior to every visit we remind the students that they are being watched by potential employers. We tell them to pretend as if they are auditioning for the part.



We spend a lot of time in the classroom preparing the students for visits with lessons like the following: Making People Happy At Work, Avoiding Gossip, Drawing Boundaries, Helpfulness, Listening Skills. These types lessons help reduce the risk of unwanted behaviors in the workplace.

Hospitality Training

June – August 2016

Our Featured Partners

Some of the partners featured today were:

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES EASTON

HYATT REGENCY CHESAPEAKE BAY CAMBRIDGE

INN AT CHESAPEAKE BAY BEACH CLUB(Knoxie's Grill) STEVENSVILLE

We have an amazing 27 community partners to date!

A special thanks to

General Manager, Mr. Waitman Vanorsdale and his team for going the extra mile to share their talents with us!



Partnerships

In April we celebrated the Fairfield Inn & Suites, Easton Grand Opening. While I had the opportunity to meet several local leaders in our community only two offered the opportunity to partner with the Benedictine school. Our partnership began with one class, 8 students, and a lot of positive reinforcement to help our friends learn basic home, and occupational skills.



Our partnership was based on two members of the Benedictine school. Both Gaffney and Stephanie's enthusiasm, energy, and passion for the students sold me on the spot.

Prior to starting our 8 week journey I was contacted by Gaffney numerous times via E-mail, phone and even in person to ensure a plan was in place to enrich the lives of the students joining our team. Mutually we wanted the group to have a good experience however we wanted to make sure the hotel team embraces each student for their individual strengths and weaknesses.



Week one was primarily learning the hotel, learning everyone's names, and discussing weekly routines or job skills. We found some of the students excelled with repetition, others worked well with less supervision and a few just enjoyed spending time in the kitchen learning food safety, appropriate procedures for food preparation and of kitchen management.



Week two was a hit. The hotel team wanted to do something special for our Benedictine students. The hotel team volunteered to make a full buffet breakfast, serve our friends, and give them the same experience I expect our associates to give a guest. The goal was to provide an example of taking care of others. In turn the Benedictine team cleaned up, used their organizational skills from week one and taught us... this group is a force to be reckoned with.

Week three we asked for volunteers to build a guest room, under a tent with everything from our physical guest room. Not only did everyone volunteer, they spent hours outside measuring, building and setting up. The amount of pride and accomplishment was wonderful watching how proud everyone was. This moment carried over a month later when I was at another engagement setting up the tent and to my surprise Gaffney and the Benedictine team came to help me set up.



From week one to week eight the same team had grown. They came in the door, got their supplies or task for the day, and turned several of their obstacles from the beginning to “wins”. Our group had a sense of accomplishment and it showed through confidence, ownership, repetition and passion from the first hour until they left.

After an amazing experience the opportunity came to host another hospitality class. I presented to our hotel team their thoughts on partnering with another class and the remarks were touching. Without a doubt the second Benedictine team joined us 8 months ago.

- “This experience made me want to do more in the community”
- “These guys were so much fun, can they learn the Front Desk”
- “Can we hire Abby”? (yes we did)
- “Can I volunteer”
- “I have a family member that’s been to the Benedictine school, it’s our responsibilities as humans to support our friends”.



It was my pleasure to have our Chief Engineer, Director of Sales and Guest Service Expert attend the Benedictine Hospitality graduation.

Marriott has a very special pin that can only be handed out once and it's to the hotel team that opened the hotel. After a long discussion with the hotel leadership team we all decided our last class deserves a "Fairfield Inn Legacy Pin" for their special achievements. It was great seeing their faces and confirmed they are a part of our family.



TIPS

Just a few observations..

- We watched them grow, they taught us to pay more attention to detail, to shake it off when things don't go as planned, most importantly to have an open mind.
- They put so much effort and passion into every little detail; it's helped remind our team that all of our jobs should be treated that way
- As they kept coming we developed a relationship with them, one that was comfortable for them and something that you could tell they really appreciated.
- The pride that they had in those pins and the smiles they had showed me yet another reason I decided to engage in the process.



Since partnering with the Benedictine school over 16 weeks we have on boarded 3 students. It would be our pleasure to on board an additional 2 students however due to our demographic area transportation for career jobs is limited.



Overall this experience brought the best out of our team, we have all created a special memory with each student and it's hard to see them go however its our hope that the skills learned, friendships made and remaining a resources for each student moving forward as a contributor to their success.

It would be our pleasure to partner with the Easton Benedictine school at any time. It's the passion and dedication of their teachers that made the difference.



Conclusion

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EASTON DORS STAFF
JENA PAQUIN & CANDACE HENRY**

AND

ALL OF THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS ON THE EASTERN SHORE

Thank you all for coming!

We'll be glad to answer any questions at this time.

