

Project HAPPY Volunteer Manual

PLEASE NOTE: Due to COVID concerns we are operating with a reduced enrollment. Swim classes have been temporarily suspended as we wait for the repairs on the pool to be completed. ALL STAFF MUST BE FULLY VACCINATED.

PROGRAM DATES

Spring Term

February – May

Fall Term

September – December

PROJECT HAPPY STAFF

Executive Director	Jennifer Tuten
Project Director	Penny Shaw
Assistant Director	Semra Kayabas
Program Coordinator	Olivia Matthews
Basketball Instructors	Augustus Allotey, Martin Puello
Frisbee Instructor	Brad Keller
Dance, Yoga Instructor	Erin Saslav
Weight Training Instructor	Anthony Peters
Arts & Crafts Director	Heather Taylor
ABC Head Counselor	Jordalyn Arias
Juniors Head Counselor	Raisa Amin
Middle Group Head Counselor	Mariluz Garcia
New Group Supervisor	Leeat Perelmutter, Daphnie Illescas
Afternoon Group Head Counselor	Lynn Jacobowski

WORK STUDY ASSISTANTS: Hunter College students who receive Federal Work Study awards may choose to work at Project HAPPY.

VOLUNTEERS: Project HAPPY could not exist without the help of the volunteers – there are usually about 100 volunteers who assist each week. During the pandemic, there will be 50 volunteers.

Project HAPPY is a Hunter College, Department of Curriculum and Teaching program. Finances are managed by The Research Foundation of The City University of New York.

Current funding for Project HAPPY is provided by corporate grants and individual donations:

The FAR Fund	Elisa & Keegan Key Charitable Fund
Material for The Arts	The JPB Foundation
Fred L. Emerson Foundation	The Crane Fund for Widows and Children

Project HAPPY (Hunter Activity Program for Parents and Youth) is designed as an instructional physical education and recreation program. Each year the program serves over 150 young people with disabilities. Sessions are held on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All Sessions meet at the Brookdale Campus of Hunter College (425 East 25th Street. New York, NY 10010).

Project HAPPY started in 1980 as a one-semester pilot program for children with developmental delays. In the spring term of 1981 the program expanded to include teenagers who have mobility impairments, in 1985 the program expanded to include young children with mobility impairments and in 2007 the program expanded to include groups of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). During the pandemic we will be operating at 50% enrollment.

Activities are conducted by trained specialists in adapted activities and include: dance, aerobics, basketball, volleyball, soccer, frisbee, weight training, yoga, and arts and crafts. The specialists are assisted by Federal Work Study Students and volunteers from Hunter College and the community. Some of the volunteers are preparing for careers in Physical Therapy, Special Education, Dance Therapy, Occupational Therapy or Adapted Physical Education. For some, their volunteer work qualifies as fieldwork, community service, or experience required by a college course, and others are inspired to help as a way of “giving back.”

The Participants

The participants are divided into eleven groups:

Senior Group (Sr) – 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Participants are over the age of 16 who have mobility impairments.

Middle Group (MG) – 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Participants over the age of 13 who have mobility impairments.

Junior Group (Jr) – 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Participants under the age of 13 who have mobility impairments.

New Group (NG) – 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. - Participants between the ages of 10-20 who have intellectual disabilities.

ABC Group 1 – 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Participants between the ages of 14-18 with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

ABC Group 2 – 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. – Participants between the ages of 11-14 with Autism Spectrum disorders.

ABC Group 3 – 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Participants between the ages of 9-11 with Autism Spectrum disorders.

ABC Group 4 – 11:00a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Participants between the ages of 6-8 with Autism Spectrum disorders.

Afternoon Group (PM) – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. - Participants between the ages of 15-25 with autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, or mobility impairments. These participants sometimes have more than one disability.

Participants in the Senior and Middle group make individual choices of activities throughout the day. The other groups are offered limited choices.

HOURS

All **Federal Work Study students** should arrive at **9:00 a.m.** each Saturday. **VOLUNTEERS** should arrive at least 10 minutes before they are scheduled to start work. At that time be sure to check with Penny or Semra for your day’s assignment.

Volunteers who need their hours recorded for credit should sign in and out each Saturday. The sign in sheet is located near Penny and Semra’s desk.

ABSENCE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are unable to be present on a particular Saturday, please notify Penny by email as soon as possible.

EMAIL ADDRESS: **projecthappynyc@gmail.com** (anytime)

PENNY’S CELL PHONE: Penny’s cell phone should be used on program SATURDAYS only after 7am.

Cell # 917-882-0757 (**NO TEXTS** and **NO VOICEMAILS** at this number.)

If you cannot reach Penny, call Olivia at (917) 753-3668.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Lockers are available in the men's and women's locker rooms. You will most likely need to use a locker, so **be sure to bring a lock for use during program hours.** Personal belongings are not safe unless they are locked in lockers. You must remove your lock at the end of each Saturday.

CELL PHONES & HEADPHONES

Cell phones should be used for emergencies only. Headphone use is prohibited during program hours.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs and videos are prohibited unless granted permission from Penny or Semra.

LUNCH

Interaction with the participants during lunchtime is important. **LUNCH TIME IS NOT TIME OFF.** The New Group eats at 12:30 p.m. and the Juniors, Seniors and Middle Group eat at 1:00 p.m. The Afternoon Group participants eat at 1:30 p.m. All of the ABC Groups eat in their classrooms. Many of the participants bring their lunch. A light lunch is provided for volunteers and participants who have not brought their own. Coffee, tea, and fruit are available in the hallway near the Project HAPPY kitchen. Some participants have food allergies so be sure to check with the head counselors before offering food.

DO NOT USE LATEX GLOVES WHEN HANDLING FOOD (see "RUBBER GLOVES"). Carefully wash hands with soap before handling food.

YOU MUST NOT WALK THROUGH THE PROGRAM AREA WHILE CARRYING A HOT DRINK.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

The schedule changes from time to time. The schedule will be posted near the Project HAPPY desk, so be sure to look at the copy of the day's schedule when you arrive. A sample schedule is on the last page of this manual.

CLOTHING

The uniform for volunteers and staff is a black t-shirt and blue jeans. Clothing should be modest in style. The gymnasium and hallways tend to be quite warm even on very cold days, but some areas can be cool.

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Parents/caregivers are responsible for children who are not registered in the program. They cannot be on campus unless they are fully vaccinated. No unregistered child is permitted to go unescorted through the Brookdale campus. Parents/caregivers should not be in the activity areas unless they have special permission from Penny or Semra.

If there is a problem with a child, please discuss this with Penny. DO NOT speak directly to the parents.

PROJECT HAPPY INJURY PROCEDURE

In case of a serious injury call security at extension 4444 (212-481-4444) and inform Penny or Semra. Do not move a seriously injured person. Do not perform medical treatment unless bleeding has to be stopped or breathing has to be restored.

In case of a minor injury summon the directors (Penny or Semra). Do not treat the injury.

A list of C.P.R. certified staff can be found at the front desk. Please put your name on the C.P.R. list if you are also certified in C.P.R.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

At no time should staff involve themselves in trying to resolve the personal problems of our participants. You must report all signs of abuse to Penny or Semra.

PROJECT HAPPY FIRE PROCEDURES

Evacuate all participants without delay. All staff should be familiar with the location of the emergency exit doors.

RUBBER GLOVES

You must wear protective gloves whenever you deal with bodily fluids of any kind. Gloves are stored in the first aid kit at Penny's desk, and they are also in Penny's file box (filed under G). You may also find gloves in W111 (in the women's locker room).

Non-latex gloves are available. Always ask participants if they have a latex allergy.

EQUIPMENT

Do not leave equipment behind or unattended when you complete an activity. Report damaged equipment to Penny or Semra so that it can be repaired or replaced.

DONATIONS

Donations are much needed, appreciated, and are tax deductible.

Contributions of healthy snacks are a real treat at lunchtime.

There are fundraising drives in the Spring and Fall terms.

Let us know if you know anyone who would be willing to make a contribution.

Notes on interactions with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorders

*Basic Concept: **Relationship***

The relationship between you and the child is key.

For all of us, our patterns of movement, of cognition, and of perception are based on relationships.

Tips and suggestions:

Meet the child at her/his eye level; kneel or sit on the floor to do so

Match the child's rate of speech and length of pauses between words

Wait for child's response; it may be longer than you are used to

Find something the child is good at, and/or is interested in

Find ways to keep the circle of interaction open and fluid. Expand the subject, even make a deliberate mistake, and find ways to encourage open ended responses.

*Basic Concept: **Comfort***

Comfort is based on knowing where one is in space, and about the physical environment. It is about the speed and type of incoming sensory stimulation, about the kind of personal interactions and relationships around us, and about the feeling of being met in a profound and personal way.

Tips and suggestions:

Find moments to reinforce and reassure the child's physical boundaries

Allow as long as possible for transitions including for changes in sound, light, activity.

Let the children know what the next activity is before it is time to shift, and notice which children need extra support and time for transitioning.

Your own comfort can add to the general sense of well-being of the children around you.

If a child looks and acts "overextended," inspire the child to use more flexion (bent joints). Arrange to have a quiet space available when needed.

*Basic Concept: **Cycle of attention, engagement and processing***

Being attentive is a whole body state; for many children, sorting out competing sources of stimulation is challenging. They may not spend enough time in this part of the cycle, and so do not have enough information to engage comfortably. Engagement is the working and playing activity, such as building a tower alone or with friends, followed by time to rest and process the experience. For some children, attending, then processing new information and finding new patterns of response may happen rapidly and comfortably. But, as the challenges mount, the child's speed of processing may not keep up, and the child may not seek out processing time without help.

Tips and suggestions:

Notice signs that a child is getting overstimulated and needs support to find quiet for processing



Welcome To Holland

By Emily Perl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever, go away...because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things...about Holland.