Aspire
Preparing Students for a Successful College Experience
Aspire

- Supporting transition to College life
- Students 17-21
- Autism spectrum or related mental health disorder such as anxiety, depression or bipolar, as well as individual’s with a Traumatic Brain Injury
Summer Program Highlights

- Preview day in June to alleviate anxiety

- Program runs in Post summer session at West Chester University, the first week in August.

- 5 Nights in College Dorm setting on West Chester University Campus
  - Co-Ed dorm, shared rooms, public bathrooms

- 1-credit College Course
  - Society and Social Reasoning

- Afternoon Seminars

- Supervised evenings and overnights
Society And Social Reasoning
1 Credit College Course

- Course offers a survey of the developmental process of adolescents and the challenges they may face as they transition from childhood into adulthood. Course is highly interactive.

- 3 hours, daily, 9-12

- Course work included:
  - Reading assignment prior to arrival to first class
  - In class group project
  - Written assignment
  - Final exam

- College Coach Support (BCBA) for Executive Functions Support
Seminars

- Assistive Technology
- Emotional Regulation – Mindfulness and Stress Reduction/Safety
- Transportation/Travel Safety
- Office of Services for Students with Disabilities
- Career Exploration and Portfolio development
Supervised Evenings/Overnights

- Supports provided by Home and Community Services
  - Planned social activities in the evening as a group
  - Reinforced independent completion of assignments
  - Provided support for social skills
  - Provided support for anxiety related issues
  - Monitored independent living skills
  - Data collection on student performance throughout the day
Peer Mentors

- West Chester University students volunteer hours to support students within the program
  - Traveling the campus safely
  - Time management related to study habits
  - Exploring career interests
  - Modeling appropriate social behavior
Summer Program Data Collection
Summary Report provided by CCIU

- Setting up dorm room, making a bed, changing bed linens
- Independent living
  - Laundry
  - Purchasing meal and clean up
  - Showering, personal hygiene, medication management
  - Maintaining personal belongings and dorm room
  - Following schedule, timeliness with arrival
  - Street crossing and bus safety
- Emotional Control
- Group/Class Participation
- Academic assistance/Self advocacy
- Response to Authority Figures
- Time Management
APPLICATION PROCESS

- **SUMMER – 5 nights**
  - District Referral
  - Application/Dates
  - Registration WCU
  - Doctor/Medical Releases
  - Confirmation

- **SCHOOL YEAR (Fall/Spring)**
  - District Referral
  - Application/Dates
  - Registration WCU
  - Self Administer Meds on campus
  - Confirmation from WCU and Aspire
West Chester University Campus

Aspire program room is in the center of campus, close to the Church Street Septa bus stop, food trucks, Library, etc.
Traditional School Year Program Highlights

Piloted during the 2012-13 school year

Program Features:

- Located on WCU campus and surrounding community
- 3 credit college course of student’s choice/interest, with option to take additional coursework up to 9 credits per semester.

College Coaching

- Support for college course work and planning
- Self advocacy – connect with professors, Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Accommodations, Accessing tutors
- Time Management – use of day planners other electronic devices

Budget Profile- based on career choice and lifestyle expectations
Program Features (continued)

- Support for social skills, executive functioning needs, self advocacy, and self regulation – making connections on campus (text, email, IM)
- Conversational skills – supportive listening, compassionate feedback, acceptance and flexibility
- Mindfulness Stress Reduction Seminars in collaboration with Director Of Stress Reduction Center at West Chester University, Dr. Donald McCown.
Traditional School Year Program

- Program Features Continued
  - Peer Mentoring by West Chester University student volunteers
  - Healthy Eating and Exercise
    - Meal planning
    - On Campus Recreation Center access
  - Career exploration
    - Post Secondary Education Exploration
    - College Search/Common Application Completion
Traditional School Year Program

Additional Program Options:

- **Discover Program**
  - Work skills development in areas of interest including internships, volunteer opportunities, and paid employment supported by job coaching

- **Transitional Living Program (TLP)**
  - Independent living skills instruction –
    - meal prep and planning, budgeting

- **Travel training instruction** (screen for safety on campus)
  - On campus and community street safety and navigation
  - Public transit use
Traditional School year Program

- **½ Day Program** – For students who need to fulfill high school credit requirements and would benefit from transition and post secondary education support.

- **Full day program** – For students who have fulfilled all credits for graduation, but benefit from additional transition support. Program continues for academic school year in Fall and Spring semesters.
School Year Program Data Collection

- Individualized IEP goals – Quarterly progress monitoring of goals
  - Self Advocacy
  - Time Management
  - Emotional Regulation
  - Social Skills/Group participation
  - Organization
  - Independent living
    - Self care
- Travel Training
  - Street Safety and navigation
  - Bus safety
- Discover Program Work Experience
  - Resume development
  - Interview Skills
  - Workplace etiquette
Summer Program Student Achievements

- Identify College Readiness
- Making Peer Connections
- Successful completion of a college course
- Increasing self awareness of one’s abilities and needs
- Sharing a room and community showers
- Developing self advocacy
- Navigating on campus and off
- Managing their time and schedule
- Overcoming stressors
School Year Program Student Achievements

✓ Successful completion of college course(s)
✓ Learned strategies for accessing on campus support
✓ Independent public transit travel to University or work site
✓ Obtained paid employment
✓ Established lasting relationships with peers in University setting
✓ Multiple acceptances into Post Secondary Institutions including Universities and Community College
✓ Recipients of academic scholarships
Bridging the process from Supported to Independence…

How is program funded?

- **Summer** – parent/guardian pay for 1 credit course *Society and Social Reasoning*, and related fees as well as course materials. Additionally, students will need to have a PA state issued ID or Passport in order to obtain the West Chester University student ID, which is an additional $12 fee obtained upon completion of course registration process. This ID is needed for students to access classroom and other university buildings and their meal plan during the week long program.

- **Academic Year** - one 3-credit course fee is included in the program costs, however any additional course credits are the parent/guardian responsibility. Course materials are also the responsibility of the parent/guardian for all courses even one covered in initial program.

- Partnerships and responsibilities need to be understood.
  - Obtaining on campus supports
  - Communication between University and Student
Student Feedback

- “I can get along with someone when I am sharing a room with them.”

- “I learned I am more likely to seek help with work from an authority figure when I don’t have my parents to rely on to get help for me.”

- “I am better suited for college life than I thought.”

- “Experience is as important as intelligence.”

- “I learned that afternoon classes would be better for me.”

- “I learned I can work pass problems.”

- 87.5% of participants would recommend the program to their peers.
Q and A