

Elizabeth A. Howard Project Summary

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Day One Leadership Program, SLCE 1002

Project Executive Summary Item 1

This semester our group, “Ride Along,” galloped into working with our community partner to work with our riders with disabilities hoping to improve their mental and physical capabilities. We hoped to provide conversation and stimulation through various activities while our riders experienced physical activity while they rode their horse. Our initial goal was to provide a better trail-riding experience as opposed to the typical arena scene they enjoy every week. We hoped to accomplish this through timely participation and communication while also offering our services to the childish in need. Unfortunately, though, we decided to change our service learning project fairly late. This was due to new information from our CP that made us realize that the improved trail would not be as beneficial as we originally thought. Therefore, we decided to shift our focus to improved games for the children with in the arena. We decided on a “Price is Right” themed set of games to both engage and challenge the minds of the children. At this stage we have bought the materials to build a “Punch Box” game; “Wheel of Fortune,” and “Plinko.” The community partner is very excited about us creating these new sets of games because not only does it save the organization time, it allows for a greater variety of activities than previously possible. Overall, our dedication to our riders has been the most impactful facet of our service-learning experience. We have provided a consistent experience for multiple children who have come to form fairly close relationships with most of us, and have made vast physical improvements in just a few short weeks as a result of consistent physical engagement.

Our contributions are important because for these children with disabilities it means a world of difference just to be engaged instead of bound to a wheelchair, or their homes. This addition of mental and physical stimulation allows the child to build confidence and improved motor functions that not only make the child happy, but their friends and family as well.

Project Executive Summary Item 2

As the team “Ride Along,” we have learned a wide variety of skills and values as a result of working with the community partner. Our project is not yet complete, but it will be a success because we have discussed our plans with the community partner and have come to a mutual understanding that it is indeed what they want. Our greatest challenge thus far has been gathering the resources and finalizing an idea for what is realistic for us to accomplish. Due to the multi-faceted nature of our project, it is difficult to pull all the resources and man hours we need to adequately accomplish our goal of building sensory stations along the trail. In order to overcome this obstacle, our team has assigned responsibility to specific members to complete a comprehensive list of materials required to build as well as finding the time that works best for all members to be able to participate.

The most important leadership lessons we learned are the importance of patience, teamwork, adaptability, time management, and persistence. Also, the importance of struggling through adversity, communication and budgeting. Each member had to embody at least one of these skills while working on the project. We held each other responsible for showing up to our therapy sessions on time and working while we were there. This was difficult to do due to the very conflicting schedules we had, but through patience and adaptability we were able to accomplish this. Finally, we were able to really figure out what we wanted to accomplish and

how we would do that through team-work and persistence. Our project would be impossible if not for the continued support of the Day One staff and our mentor as well as our fellow.

As far as overcoming our challenges, there are still a few we must try to conquer. Time management and patience are two of these. Finding a time to work on and finalize our project is becoming more and more difficult. Our patience is also running thin. When we decide on a day to work, no one shows up and it is not fair to make two people do all of the work.

The most important leadership lesson we have learned is to never give up. We have had a few rough patches along the way, but we still have faith that our project will come together as it should. This lesson can be applied in all aspects of life. No matter what you do in life, you should never give up.