Don't Just Talk About It, Be About It!: Strategies for Engaging Today's Youth with Disabilities

Resources for Independence Central Valley
Sarah Harris Director of Programs
Jordan Noble Youth Empowerment Specialist
How’d we get here?

Early March 2020
Pre-Pandemic World
Goals:
Person Centered Planning-August 2020
Hybrid Services-August 2020
Where we started...
March 17, 2020
Day 1 of Remote Work

I saved over $1,000 this month by switching to Quarantine.
March 18, 2020
Rethink services!
We are a Consumer-driven/person centered organization
How do we do that?
Person-centered planning
Discovery

- Vision statement
- Likes & dislikes
- Who is on my team?
- What is awesome about me
- What works/doesn’t work
- Worries & concerns
- Hopes & dreams
- Community engagement
Action plan issue areas

- Advocacy
- Community engagement/social engagement
- Daily living skills
- Education
- Employment
- Financial literacy
- Health & wellness
- Healthcare
- Safety
- Self-care
- Transport
- Recreation
- Other
Goals Achieved

- Employment
- Recreational (Sporting events)
- Planning a trip
- Reading comprehension
- Decision Making
- Writing a book
Be About It!
Youth Group Program
Youth discovering opportunity goes virtual!
Workshops

- Fall Workshop (Intersectionality, inclusion, diversity & culture)
- Conflict resolution & Problem Solving
Y.E.S @ RICV
Youth age 16-28
We meet weekly on Zoom for be about it!
Some of the challenges we faced...
Monthly themes

- Disability pride month
- LGTBQ+
- Talk like a pirate
- COVID safety
How do we entertain youth weekly??

- Readers Theater
- Show & Tell
- Contests
- Musical Moments
- Lesson Sign-Up
How do we get the word out?

● Utilize MailChimp
● Facebook
● Word of mouth
● Good ol’ fashioned outreach
How do we manage a bunch of youth on zoom?

- Remind youth to be respectful
- And most of all....

HAVE FUN!!!
Youth empowering youth
What is Youth Empowering Youth?

- Virtual Classroom Presentations
  - Created for Youth
  - Developed by Youth
  - Facilitated by Youth
Who is YEY for?

- Students with Disabilities 14 & Up.
  - High Schools
    - Special Education Classes
    - Mainstream Classes
  - Adult Transition Programs
- Counties we serve:
  - Fresno
  - Kings
  - Madera
  - Merced
  - Tulare
Self- advocacy conference
How did we take a whole conference to the virtual world?

- Surveys to gauge interest and timelines and topics.
- Things that we learned...
- Maximize our utilization of Zoom
The 2021 Self-Advocacy Conference for youth with disabilities, age 14-26, was held virtually on Zoom over from April 13-May 4. Each Week had a theme and two one-hour sessions.

Week 1-April 13: Self-Care is not Selfish!”

Week 2-April 20: “Healthy Body=Healthy Life”

Week 3-April 27: “Work! Work! Work!”

Week 4-May 4: “Listen Up! My Thoughts Count!”
Youth Discovering OPPORTUNITY Summer Program

SESSION 1

June 29th-July 8th, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays.
10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., plus Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 p.m.

Session 2

July 27th-August 5th Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays.
10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., plus Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 p.m.

Okay... Now what?