



Southeast Region Youth Expedition

The Pervasive Parenting Center (PPC) along with the Developmental Disabilities Council of Oklahoma (DDCO), Carl Albert State College, Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma Family Network (OFN) Autism Foundation of Oklahoma, and Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) provided a four-day advocacy leadership training in eastern Oklahoma. The event was open and free to everyone, with a target audience of youth with developmental and other disabilities.

While the four-day event was designed to focus on young adults with id/dd it included something for the whole family, and included overnight stays in the campus dorms. The first day campers checked into their dorms, and then went into icebreaker sessions. These activities helped them to get to know each other better. Day two and three included trainings to help young adults learn self-advocacy skills, job skills, life skills, and social skills.

On Wednesday, June 5, the organizations presented the third annual expedition. This year we expanded the camp to three-nights in the dorms. Check-in began at 12 p.m. We had 29 youth stay in the dorms, and an additional 10 commuters. We started with the rules, regulations, and expectations. The training began with icebreaker games to help the attendees get better acquainted. The Peer Counselors then lead the groups in Team Building Exercises. They had a trip to the cafeteria for dinner, and then had a water balloon fight and some free time prior to going back to the dorms for bedtime.

The second day began with breakfast in the cafeteria. The format changed this year to breakout sessions throughout the day. We had eight teams that rotated from sessions including Family Feud to help with goals, Jeopardy for self-advocacy, Wheel of Fortune for self-care, Team-Building, Healthy Relationships, and Financial Literacy. Also on the first day, Carly Dummit and Kyle Brit with Autism Foundation of Oklahoma held a session on Improv that helped with communication skills. These sessions are designed to help students better understand their overall goals of a “better life” and what it will take to achieve this goal. They also provided tools to help with self-advocacy skills so that they could provide better input for their better life. Following the group participated in art therapy. Each participant was encouraged to paint their version of something that made them happy. Joni Bruce with OFN provided Transition Notebook Training. That was followed by more breakout sessions. Following dinner, bingo was provided for further socialization and fun.

The third day began with breakfast prepared by PPC. The breakout sessions continued, but the Improv was replaced on Friday with Poetry and Chill. This is a group from Oklahoma City that helps campers understand their emotions and tell their story through poetry and written expression. The afternoon included a session of yoga that focused on self-care. Terri Kinder with OFN provided Telling Your Story training. That was followed by more breakout sessions. Following dinner, a dance was provided for further socialization and fun. Lunch and Dinner were also provided by PPC.

On Saturday, June 8, the organizations began the day by providing breakfast. The keynote speakers were Anthony Crawford with Poetry and Chill, and Caleb Harper, a local self-advocate and board member. Crawford recited poetry and told about his hardships growing up, and as a young adult. Harper explained how he overcame his disability of cerebral palsy, and how it did not hold him back from becoming a dad. Following the keynote there was a reflection on the camp as well as certificates provided by the team leaders and peer counselors. The afternoon rapped up with more reflection of the three-day event, and a self-advocate panel made up of veteran campers.

The event was held on the campus of Carl Albert State College in Poteau. Facilities were presented in-kind thanks to President Jay Falkner.

Over three days there were 42 youth participants from all over the state. There were 52 pre-registrations, three nurse visits (all minor), and 8 parent participants.

“I got to meet new friends, so that was exciting,” said Konner Toney, Panama.

“If I’m being honest I loved it,” said Garrett Mabry or Pocola. “I liked helping each other, team work, all of my friends, spending time with people you like.”

“I definitely want to come back next year,” said Josie West, Spiro.

Pervasive Parenting Center

Kodey Toney
1507 S. McKenna
Suite 502
Poteau, OK 74953

Phone: (918) 647-1255

ktoney@pervasiveparentingcenter.org