



Gaudenzia Early Intervention: A Summer of Teambuilding

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Community Preceptor: Rayn Phillips, MSW, LSW, Gaudenzia, Inc

COMMUNITY PARTNER

Gaudenzia Early Intervention: a program for 12–18-year-olds that provides drug and alcohol prevention education. The summer curriculum focused on team building, effective communication, and developing healthy coping skills.



BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Centro Primavera Early Intervention Program's goal is to assist economically disadvantaged youth who are at risk of using and/or abusing alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, to become aware of the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and other drugs on health, quality of life, education, learning and the community at large.

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

This summer, the interns supported the free summer program, whose theme was teambuilding. Each intern was tasked with developing and implementing a week's worth of curriculum, highlighting their individual areas of expertise. Some curriculum topics included mindfulness, compassion for self and others, and leadership. The interns also attended scheduled trips, in the community. These trips were aimed at exposing the teens to new creative outlets and other community mentors in hopes of encouraging new interests.

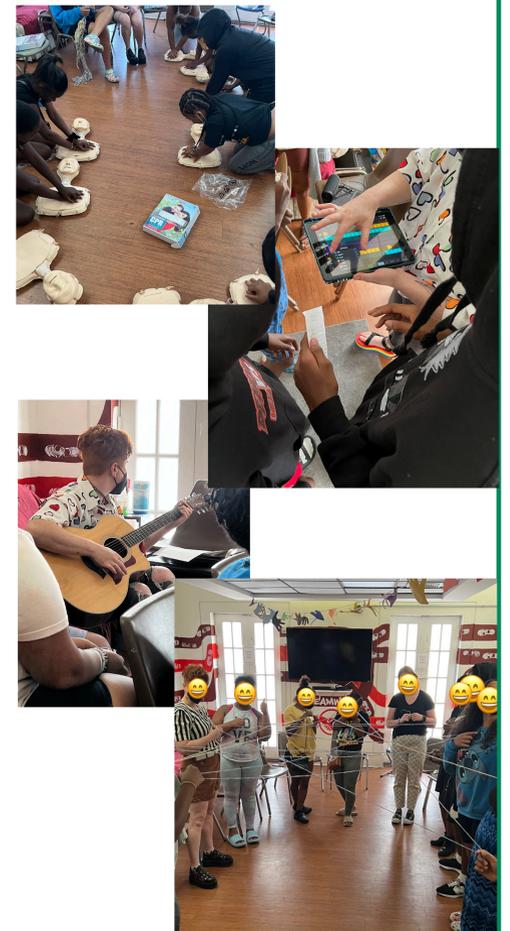
CHALLENGES / ACCOMPLISHMENTS / JOYS

Challenges:

- ❖ Limited resources and materials
- ❖ Keeping teens engaged
- ❖ Time constraints of internship compared to camp length
- ❖ Navigating challenges around emotional regulation
- ❖ Adapting to staff shortages and abrupt changes
- ❖ Navigating internalized misogyny among some of the teens

Accomplishments/Joys:

- ❖ Creating a space safe enough for the teens to be vulnerable with the interns
- ❖ Incorporating CPR Training and engagement with music into activities with the teens
- ❖ Learning how to be adaptable and effective in a short amount of time
- ❖ Developing a strong team dynamic among the multidisciplinary group of staff



REFLECTION

Kayla Cooper: “Through this internship I gained a deeper understanding of letting the community express their needs and then serving them accordingly. I formed connections with the amazing teenagers I worked with simply by lending a listening ear and being my authentic self. I was a bit daunted at the idea of leading lessons, but as I built connections with both the teens and staff, my worries quickly subsided. I had the support of a strong interdisciplinary team that collaborated seamlessly in a manner that would be expected of teams who had been working together for years instead of seven weeks.”

Em Wexler: “This internship has taught me that authenticity is essential to building trust. Throughout my time at Gaudenzia Early Intervention, I built strong connections with both the incredible interdisciplinary team of staff and the teen participants of the program and bore witness to the necessity for unconditional care and support. We engaged in activities that enabled the teens’ intelligence and creativity to shine, and their leadership skills to begin taking shape. There is still so much work to be done for these young people, on individual, community, and systemic levels, but I have learned that you never know what kind of an impact you have on someone’s life, and to make the most of the time that you have together.”