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Community First Presentation



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Community First

Community First supports people in discovering, exploring, or expanding opportunities for personal growth or enrichment through community involvement and connection.

Research indicates...

Per the New Avenue Foundation, “Community inclusion is one of the greatest challenges facing people with disabilities. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities often do not participate in community activities in a meaningful way, in roles that allow them to demonstrate their abilities, establish true relationships with others, earn recognition and respect from others, learn new skills, or simply to have fun. True community inclusion must be based upon personal connections, common interests, shared values, and upon ongoing interactions that occur as people with disabilities and community residents encounter each other on a regular basis in natural settings, such as at church, the grocery store, at restaurants, and other community settings.”

<https://newfdn.org/community-inclusion/>

The Community First program is meeting this challenge with input from participants and we are proud to facilitate and enjoy successful community inclusion as a direct result of CCDDB funding.

Overview

- DHS and CCDDDB-funded day programs combined serve 200+ people from Champaign, Urbana, Mahomet, Rantoul, Ludlow, Fisher, St. Joseph, Ogden, Philo, Pesotum, as well as other surrounding communities
- In FY20 52 individuals received services through CCDDDB funding (25+%). These people would otherwise be without service, waiting for availability of state-funded services.
- Services are provided throughout a variety of community locations each day, as well as in program sites in Champaign (CDS Bradley and Clark Road) and Urbana (CDS Philo)
- Individuals supported represent a wide range of abilities, interests, and support needs
- Emphasis is placed on community involvement and connections
- Services are designed to foster personal choice, personal growth, personal connections, and personal satisfaction

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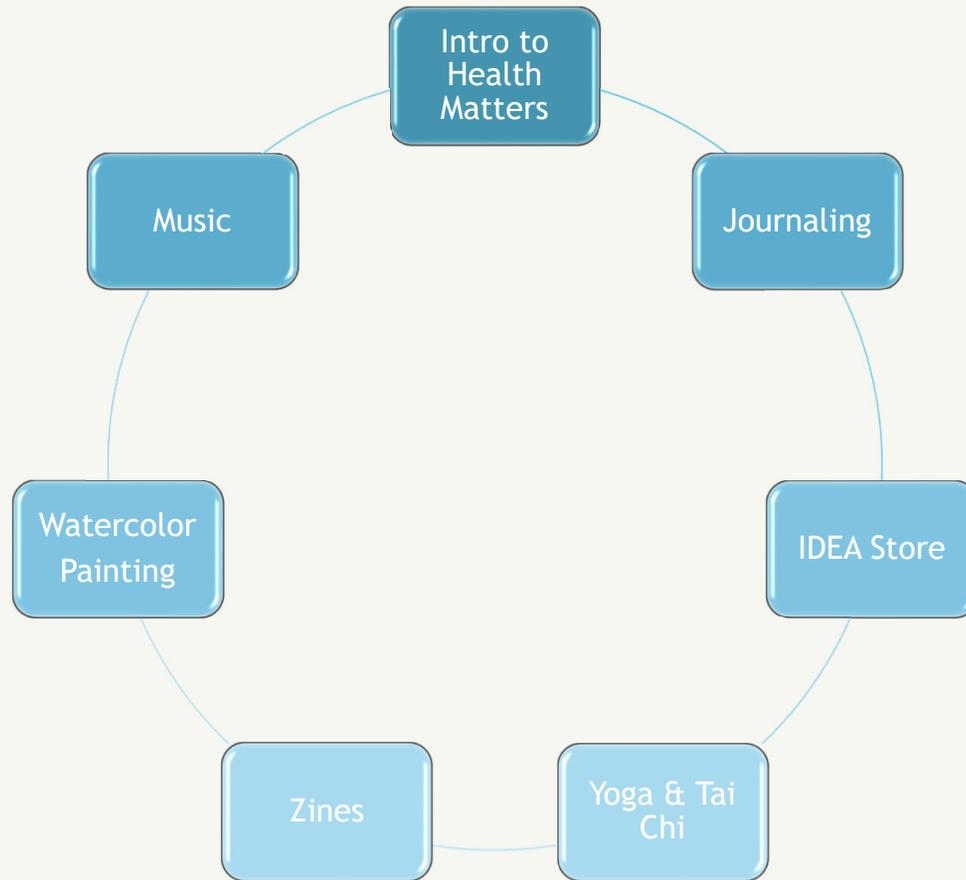
- At its inception in FY15, the Community First program focused on the transition from traditional day program to more community-based services. At that time, 100% of participants also worked within DSC's in-center programs.
- In FY16, we began our current practice of opening people primarily for community involvement, in addition to continuing to encourage current participants to be more involved in their community.
- As people secured state funding and closed from the program, TPCs who participated primarily in community activities replaced them.
- As a result of this practice, 40% of FY20 program participants spent 100% of their time in community engagement.

How are activities identified/chosen?



Activities take place at various community locations. People choose new groups every four months from an array of offerings based on areas of interest expressed by participants. Some groups are very popular and are repeat offerings while other groups are developed from a desire to learn more about a topic explored in a previous group. Participation ranges from one to five days per week, depending on the number of groups requested and availability of space in a specific group.

Pre-Pandemic Popular Group Selections



Pre-Pandemic Popular Group Descriptions

- **Intro to Health Matters:** It's the new year! SO that means anyone looking to get into healthier living can start here. Intro to Health Matters will be a beginning point into the world of being healthy and fit. This group will travel to the Leonard Center via MTD, so this will be a great way to sharpen those skills as well!
- **Music:** In this group, participants will explore all areas of music. We will be diving into all genres of music from country to punk rock. Discover some new favorites, and grow your appreciation for music. We will also be taking a look at how music is made. During this session, we will have a guest speaker from a local record label discussing with participants how the music business works!
- **Journals:** Our journaling group will dive into keeping a journal. Discover ways to write things down such as "What am I thankful for?" or "What super power do I wish I had? Why?" You don't need to share your personal submissions if you don't want to.

Continued...

- **Watercolor Painting:** Co-Led by one of our program's artists, this group will learn how to create a watercolor masterpiece! Whether you are looking to be the next Bob Ross or simply create some art for our next open house, this is the group for you!
- **Zines:** Short for magazine (I think), our Zine group will continue to bring you the greatest literary magazine in history! Our writers and artists have spent the last year bringing you issues filled with stories, art, and pieces of self-expression. This session will nominate a participant as editor of our Zine!
- **Yoga and Tai Chi:** This group will meet at Clark Rd and participate in a class offered at the YMCA. Practice your downward facing dog and learn some new ways to exercise!
- **IDEA Store:** We will be taking a group to volunteer at the IDEA store in Lincoln Square. The group will partner with other community volunteers to sort through donations and set up items for sale on the floor.



Factors Affecting % of Time Spent in the Community

Our Community First program supports a wide range of individuals with various interests, abilities, and needs and the manner in which we support them is quite varied. While some people thoroughly enjoy being out and about all day, every day, others have personal issues or needs that impede their ability to spend *extended* periods of time in the community. Specifically these include:

- Physical limitations and need regular personal care support, such as feeding, restroom assistance, and/or therapy interventions that require specialized devices or equipment, thereby necessitating center-based involvement for some portion of their day.
- Physical conditions that affect their mobility and stamina.
- Behavioral or emotional challenges that affect their ability to be in unfamiliar or varied or crowded environments for extended periods of time.

Although the vast majority of participants have shifted to spending most of their time engaged in the community, five long-term participants have elected to continue to work exclusively and have declined all community opportunities.

In planning our daily schedule we have to factor in these considerations, while also ensuring considerably smaller staff to consumer ratios for our community groups, with the end result being that in-center groups may be larger and our overall time spent in the community may be less than what we would like.

While we fully embrace the expansion of our community involvement, we wanted to take the opportunity to speak to some of the variables in play for some of our day program participants who have more significant support needs or who may choose not to participate in community groups.

Even with these considerations, we continue to increase our community footprint, with TPCs and NTPCs benefitting from these efforts, but for a portion of our day program the pace of expansion may be slower than for others.

FY20 Community First Hours

	Criterion: 8,500 quarterly service hours	Criterion: 60% in direct contact (5,100/Q)		Criterion: 50% of direct hours provided in the community (2,550/Q)	
Service Hours	Total Hours (Direct + Indirect/ Administrative)	Direct	% of hours in direct contact	Community	% of direct hours spent in community
1st Quarter Total	8,626.00	8,389.25	97%	3,779.50	45%
2nd Quarter Total	8,124.50	7,894.00	97%	3,591.50	46%
3rd Quarter Total	7,193.00	6,935.50	96%	3,348.75	48%
4th Quarter Total	734.00	619.25	84%	264.75	43%
FY20 Total	24,677.50	23,838.00	97%	10,984.50	46%

- In FY20 DSC served 52 people in Community First.
- In FY20 Community First participants, on average, spent 46% of their time in the community and 54% in-center.
- Support need and individual preference factors previously noted did have an affect on community participation hours, however, the % of time spent in the community had been increasing over the first 3 quarters of the fiscal year and was on target to meet participation goals.
- On March 17, 2020 Community First was shutdown as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. All in-person services ceased.

Service Options Timeline

- **Jan – May 2020 – Group Selections were requested and offered to people in the CF/CDS programs**
- **And Then COVID Happened...**
All day programs cease on Tuesday, March 17th, per Governor's Shelter In Place Order

How do we reach people now?

- **April – modifications to in person groups to allow for some virtual options**
Individuals contacted routinely to check in and maintain a level of support/comfort during shelter in place order
- **May/June - Virtual Class, activities, opportunities introduced**
- **June – Survey sent to families for feedback regarding current family status – work, health, stress, etc.**
- **July – IDHS supplies benefit risk tool which is used to contact all families personally to measure benefit/risk for individuals to return to Community Day Services**
- **August – Survey results are sliced, diced, cut/copied, pasted, dissected, sorted – to identify people able and willing to return with respect to most current guidance.**
- **September 8 – Community First/Community Day Services reopens on a small scale based on survey tools, comfort level of individual/family, support needs, ability to mask and social distance**

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Shutdown – Successes

- ▶ Community First staff members proved to be exceptionally flexible, adaptable, and resilient in the face of ever-changing expectations and assignments.
- ▶ Community First staff members learned new skills [Zoom activity facilitation, Therap documentation (DSC's new electronic record-keeping, documentation, and data collection system that was rolled out right about the time the pandemic hit!).]
- ▶ Community First staff members maintained weekly contact with individuals and families throughout the shutdown.
- ▶ Community First staff members taught individuals how to utilize new technologies – devices *and* platforms.
- ▶ Initiated small-scale in-person groups incorporating COVID-19 precautions.

We're gonna zoom, zoom, zooma, zoom

▶ **Popular Zoom Offerings during the Shutdown:**

- ▶ Twice-weekly Jam Sessions
- ▶ Music/Sound Exploration
- ▶ Drawing Class – trees, sea, space, rainy day
- ▶ Arts and Crafts projects – dollar tree crafts, glitter stars, painting rocks, beading, origami butterflies, flowers, paper fireworks
- ▶ Fitness – chair Zumba, dance, yoga, exercises
- ▶ Reading Group
- ▶ Game Groups – role playing games, story dice, Pokemon, Batman Adventure, Outburst, Pictionary
- ▶ History – exploration of various music, cultures, architecture
- ▶ Garden Group – planting, virtual tours of gardens, virtual local garden visits, photo/video sharing
- ▶ Science Classes – volcanoes, hurricanes, batteries/electricity, fireworks, acids and bases, air pressure, fingerprinting, astronomy, geography, zoology
- ▶ Virtual Tours – zoos, safaris, amusement park rides, Mars 2020 mission, circus, museums, beaches around the world
- ▶ Cooking Demonstrations

Preparing to Reopen - Surveys

DSC conducted 2 surveys (**one via mail** and the **other via phone**) with individuals and guardians to assess the benefits vs. risks, as well as their overall comfort level, in returning to day program services.

Based on the responses to these surveys and internal considerations following CDC/CUPHD guidelines, DSC was able to categorize every day program participant's status upon formal reopening of the day program, as follows:

Returning, Virtual, 1:1, Delaying Return.

Decisions were based upon:

- individual/family wishes
- evaluation of the individual's ability to mask and social distance
- personal/health/behavioral issues that might put self/others at risk
- the setting/staffing pattern necessary to safely support the individual

Survey/Planning Results

Community First TPC Status	% Community First TPCs
Returning in person	50%
Virtual	18%
1:1	14%
Delaying Return	18%

Issues that have an impact on the type of services provided and the number of hours served include:

- Individual or family concerns/preferences – varying levels of comfort in returning to in-person services
- Logistics - social distancing indoors and in the community – reduces the number of people able to participate
- Covid-19 room capacity - fixed limits on the number of people within an indoor space
- Staffing patterns – coverage limits initiated to reduce exposure potential between groups
- Reduced transportation capacity as a result of social distancing guidelines
- Community access considerations – previously patronized locations (volunteer sites, libraries, YMCA, restaurants, etc.) may have group size/capacity limitations
- Weather – inclement weather limits outdoor meeting options
- Access to a computer, iPad, smart phone, or webcam/mic and support in utilizing for virtual activities
- Many Community First participants have become much more familiar and comfortable with using technology, thereby increasing opportunities for connection moving forward.

Reopening and future steps

- ✓ Established reopening date of September 8, 2020.
- ✓ Determined day program small group composition (5-10 people each, including staff) and service locations: Bradley, Philo Rd., Clark Rd., The Crow, CU Independence Apartments, community, 1:1 community options, virtual.
- ✓ Created new transportation schedules. Modified seating and installed barriers on buses.
- ✓ Developed formal COVID-19 adjusted reopening plan outlining policies, procedures, protocols, and training.
- ✓ Re-opened on September 8 with most individuals identified as “Returning” in attendance. A few individuals elected to return approximately 2 weeks after the formal reopen date, as a safeguard.
- ✓ DSC will continue to evaluate the success of its reopening, mindful of the changing circumstances within our community related to the pandemic, and will consider additional phases of reopening.
- ✓ Individuals identified as “Delaying Return” will be considered as priority returnees in successive reopening phases.
- ✓ Individuals on our waiting lists will also be considered.
- ✓ Intakes continue to occur.
- ✓ Any person participating in an intake, or being considered for services will complete the COVID-19 Risk Benefit Discussion Tool with a DSC staff member.
- ✓ Information specific to individuals receiving Community First services, returning to services, being admitted for services, and having been assessed with the Risk Benefit tool, will be provided in Quarterly reports.

Current Groups

- Journaling
- Virtual travel
- Health Matters
- Music
- Brain teasers
- Virtual nature
- Reading
- Yoga/Meditation
- Drawing
- Short stories
- Bingo
- Podcasts
- Technology
- Origami
- Self-awareness
- Zines
- Women's group
- Men's group
- Zoology
- Astronomy
- Adult coloring
- Geography
- Socially distant games
- Myths and legends
- Learn a new language
- Trivia

How Services Have Changed

Pre-Shutdown	During Shutdown	Upon Reopening
<i>All</i> small groups in the community and in-center	<i>Limited</i> community groups	<i>Few</i> small groups in the community or in-center
No Virtual Learning/Connections	<i>Primarily</i> Virtual Learning/Connections	<i>Some</i> Virtual Learning/Connections
No 1:1 Support	No 1:1 Support	<i>Some</i> 1:1 Support

COVID IMPACT ON SERVICE DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY DAY PROGRAMS -

- ▶ Increased costs for PPE and Supplies related to disinfecting
- ▶ Attendance is lower due to space and limiting exposure and individual risk/vulnerability
- ▶ Smaller groups and lower individual client ratio
- ▶ More 1:1 services to limit exposure to those more vulnerable
- ▶ Virtual Opportunities – Technology expenses to provide services and access to technology for those who want to attend
- ▶ Fixed costs of programming at multiple sites with smaller settings in order to social distance and limit exposure
- ▶ Work force retention and recruiting during pandemic – exacerbates/delays hiring process

Changing Services, Participation and Benchmarks...Oh My!

Services during the coronavirus pandemic are different than they were pre-pandemic. **We have fewer people participating in full-day in-center or community groups**; however, **we are able to offer *more* individuals 1:1 and virtual options**, some of which may approximate full-time attendance, but most of which will result in half-time or less participation hours. We have embraced new methods of supporting people in-person and virtually, and our staff members have demonstrated tremendous flexibility, adaptability, and creativity.

We believe we will be able to meet our benchmarks of providing a minimum total of 8,000 hours of direct service activity with TPCs (in person or virtual, any location) during the first two quarters and a minimum total of 4,000 hours of same during the third and fourth quarters.

We recognize, however, that increases in local, state, or national COVID-19 positivity rates could adversely affect our ability to provide in-person activities and may require adding more virtual options for individuals. Community spread may also have an impact on the individuals we support, their families, as well as our staff members, and consequently, our staffing pattern and ability to support individuals at the levels we had hoped.

The unpredictability of this worldwide catastrophe has definitely had an impact on our service system, yet we have all learned new skills, ways to adapt, and ways to support people through difficult times, and we will all rise again to meet any new challenges.



***DSC supports people in living a
rich and meaningful life.***

Thank you.