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Adult Day Services Program Provides Life Enrichment

BY WENDY PEAY
UNITED WAY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Adult Day Services provides community-based adult day care to clients who are low- to moderate-income and are: physically, mentally and emotionally, or intellectually challenged adults; adults at risk of abuse or neglect; or adults who are frail due to advanced age.

The services are provided in an effort to prevent premature institutionalization while maintaining individual client dignity and relief for the family caregiver whenever possible.

Adult Day Services' purpose is to: reduce neglect, abuse and exploitation of at-risk adults, reduce the risk of premature institutionalization of challenged adults, and enhance the quality of life of senior adults.

"It allows adults to maintain their dignity by staying as functional as possible in their own homes or the homes of the family members and still remain safe and secure," according to Director Beverly Culp. "It also allows caregivers to have a break from their daily caregiver role or allows them to continue to work while keeping their loved one safe."

United Way of Greene County started funding Adult Day Services in 2017 with a grant for transportation.

"Many residents and caregivers in Greene County who needed the services of Adult Day Services were unable to access the program in Johnson City," Culp said. "With United Way funding, those Greene County residents are able to make the trip to Johnson City and benefit from the services of Adult Day Services."

In order to achieve the goals and purposes of Adult Day Services, clients are provided with the following services:

WORK ACTIVITIES

When appropriate, work activity will be scheduled so that the client is "able to constructively use energy, resulting in individual pride and self-satisfaction and a more fully functioning person," Culp said.

Participants and staff work together to establish goals that help motivate clients to participate in work activities. Staff often participate or supervise these activities to teach skills that can be used outside of the



Participants in Adult Day Services program enjoy physical activity while playing the Noodle Game.

facility to maintain participants independence.

NUTRITIONAL SERVICES

Each client receives breakfast, USDA senior-diet approved lunch, and an afternoon snack.

All meals are prepared on site. It is the responsibility of clients and staff to prepare, serve and clean up after each meal and snack. Staff is encouraged to participate in meals with clients in order to maximize contact, observe the clients' eating habits and assist in feeding clients as necessary.

Also provided is health education and nutritional education from the community such as the county extension agent for the county.

LIFE ENRICHMENT

Activities include games, both indoor and outdoor, some requiring physical dexterity while others are quiet.

Daily exercise classes help to promote physical well-being, while self-help skills include cooking, personal hygiene and

hairdressing will be taught.

A therapeutic arts and crafts program aims to encourage creative self-expression. The programs also include music and singing. TV is available and time is provided in the schedule for rest and reading when needed due to health issues. Gardening, art therapy, music therapy and pet therapy are also provided.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

If the client's individual service plan indicates the need for literacy classes, GED, Braille, sign language training or speech therapy, the staff will either provide the service or make a referral. Clients are also provided education on services within the community and how to meet their changing health needs.

HEALTH MONITORING

Program staff and volunteers monitor daily behavior and physical condition; observe medication use and daily medicine reminders; and communicate with family and health care professionals when problems are noted.

The staff regularly charts weights and blood pressures and assists in therapy plans. A license practical nurse dispenses medications as needed and all staff are trained to provide first aid and CPR. Staff can also assist with trips to the pharmacy, calling doctor's offices for refills, working with pharmacies and securing financial assistance to procure needed medications when financial means are not available.

Clients are provided door-to-door transportation as needed.

Day care vans are also used for field trips, trips for needed social services, medical services inside the city of Johnson City when other transportation cannot be arranged, shopping trips, library trips, bill paying trips and pharmacy trips whenever possible.

COUNSELING

Individual counseling is provided to each client as needed or by referral when appropriate due to mental health issues that require more intensive treatment.

SPEECH, HEARING SERVICE

Community volunteers provide speech and hearing services and refer clients for evaluation and services when appropriate.

NURSING SERVICES

A nurse provides regular blood pressure and weight checks and prepares weekly medicine dose packs for those participants who have no family to do so. The nurse distributes medications as needed, does first aid and wound treatments and does daily nurses notes on V.A. participants.

CAREGIVER SERVICES

Counseling with caregivers helps them deal with participant behaviors, connecting them to community resources to relieve stress sources such as financial issues, needed medical treatment, support groups and more.

"This often includes just being a listening ear for a caregiver who is often shut off from other community contacts due to their caregiving role," Culp said. "This often includes encouraging caregivers to take care of their own physical and medical needs so they can be effective caregivers."

Rural Resources Makes Food Prep, Farming Teen-Accessible

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Since 2008, Rural Resources has been engaging teenagers who qualify for free and reduced lunch in learning to grow and prepare food and in farm and food entrepreneurship in the Farm & Food Teen Training Program.

"We aim to impact Greene County teens and our community by equipping young people with the tools they need to raise themselves and their families out of poverty," said Executive Director Sally Causey. "This includes providing a base of skills around growing and preparing food and then using that knowledge to develop and launch a business. Not only do we want to teach young people how to fish, so to speak, we want to impact them in ways that they can teach others how 'to fish' as well."

This program happens outside of the school system, although it is very much approved and aided by the schools.

Food-insecure teens come to the Rural Resources Farm in groups of 10-15 students two times a month and weekly during the summer. The farm is a "safe space" for teens to learn about and grow food.

"They take ownership in their activities as they find their spark, their voice, and build relationships — the keys to taking charge of their lives, recognizing opportunities, and ultimately attaining greater food security," Causey said.

All transportation is provided for the activities via a retired school bus donated by Greene County Schools. Teens are paid a small stipend for hands-on learning. Every teen coming into the program establishes a garden at their home: a raised bed, containers, or an in-ground garden depending on their circumstance.

Currently, the program takes them through four years of experiential learning, plus an internship.

In year one, teens get hands-on experience raising fruits, vegetables and livestock (rabbits, chickens, pigs and cows).

In year two, they focus on food preparation and preservation.

In year three, they plan a farm- or food-related business, and in year four, they implement their business.

After they graduate from the program, students have the option to interview for a farm or food-related summer internship with community business mentors or at the Rural Resources farm.



AmeriCorps member Taylor Boles teaches a group of youth to construct inexpensive worm composting boxes as part of the Farm and Food Teen Training Program at Rural Resources. Pictured from left to right are Kellen Rice, Jacob Butler, Molly Bauer, Boles, Kristi DeVoti and Phillip Blair.

Throughout the program, teens give back to the community. Examples include preparing and serving a Thanksgiving meal to the residents of Plaza Towers, helping children at local farmers' markets plant seeds, and hosting workshops to share what they have learned.

United Way provided its first grant of \$1,500 to the Food & Farm Teen Train-

ing Program in 2018.

"United Way funding will be used to improve and refine the program," Causey said. "Next steps for the program include creating a written curriculum for the program and exploring credentialing and credit options for participants to further build their resumes."

These opportunities may range from receiv-

ing school credit for the business creation portion of the program to receiving other certifications for food safety or other skills.

"We are also currently working with community members and teens to start an anchor business for the program that will be a training ground for the teens in every stage of the program," Causey added. United Way was interest-

ed in funding this program, because it provides skills that allow teens to make a better life for themselves and their families.

The Farm & Food Teen Training Program is an education program of Rural Resources. Based in the agricultural heartland of rural Appalachian East Tennessee, the program works to connect local farms and food with families.

"Our region has traditionally been one of small scale subsistence farms where nearly every family milked a cow, kept some chickens, and grew a garden. In recent generations, we've seen a growing disconnect between our families and the food we eat," Causey said. "The results are an aging farming population, and a new culture of diet-related health illnesses including obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and more."

"We want to change all that," Causey added. "Using our community farm as home base, we want to help people of all ages experience where your food comes from; growing it, cooking it and eating it. We are involving youth in the experience and working with local growers to promote real, nutritious food to families all around our hometown of Greeneville and beyond."

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