



Utilizing Community Service for Successful Transition

EPIC's Mission

Empowering People for Inclusive Communities (EPIC) prepares young people with disabilities to be actively engaged community leaders through education, leadership development and community service.



Programs

EPIC Community Trainings provide individuals with and without disabilities with opportunities to explore topics such as:

- Disability Awareness
- Ableism 101
- Inclusion
- Self-empowerment
- Working with youth with disabilities
- Teaching Self-Advocacy





EPIC Youth Support Groups

Youth Support Groups meet monthly for youth with disabilities
between the ages of 14-24

EPIC Youth Nights: Self-Advocacy
Training, Game Nights, Leadership
Workshops, Karaoke Night

Third Friday of Every Month



LGBTQ Youth Group: Healthy
Sex/Sexuality Training, Activism,
Recreational Activities,
Leadership Training

First Friday of Every Month

EPIC Service Warriors

EPIC Service Warriors is a community service and leadership development program for youth with disabilities.



*“Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.”
~Dr. Martin Luther King Jr*

EPIC Service Warriors

Service Projects Include:

- Preparing meals for those in need
- Cleaning up Boston parks
- Painting Murals
- Holiday Toy Drive

Service Warriors serve with organizations such as:

City Year Boston, Community Servings, Boston Parks Dept, Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston Public Schools

Leadership Development Days

- Team Building
- Political Literacy
- Disability History
- Financial Literacy
- Personal Safety & Self-Advocacy
- Leadership Through the Arts

Service Reflection

1. What is a service experience you have done that had an impact on you?
2. What did you gain from this experience?

Disparities

- 35% of youth with disabilities are completely uninvolved in their communities
- Youth with disabilities are 4x more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system
- 22% of youth with disabilities do not complete high school
- In October 2014 20% of American's with disabilities were engaged in the labor force
- 80% of youth with disabilities who do not have paid employment before graduating high school will never enter the workforce
- People with disabilities are the largest minority group living in poverty today.

Why Community Service?

- The chance that a young adult is disconnected from work or school drops in half if they volunteer
- Research shows that volunteering increases self-esteem, future earning potential, socio-economic status and occupational prestige
- People who volunteer are 27% more likely to find work
- Youth who perform voluntary community service are more likely to show academic progress and are 19% more likely to graduate from college
- Youth who volunteer are 50% less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or engage in destructive behaviors
- Community service connects young people to their communities, fosters leadership and develops an interest in making a difference

74% of youth with disabilities are not engaged in community service

- Low expectations of adults
- Low self-esteem and increased stressors
- Inability to self-advocate
- Unaware of one's own abilities

EPIC Results

- 100% of EPIC graduates have a more positive view of themselves & their disabilities
- 100% report they have learned more about their skills & abilities
- 100% have an increased knowledge of the City of Boston and the resources available to them
- 100% of graduates over the age of 18 are registered voters and have voted
- 90% of graduates and current Service Warriors that are post-secondary school are employed or are currently perusing higher education
- On average EPIC graduates have a 12% increase in personal & social responsibility, a 10% increase in school engagement, & a 14% increase in leadership skills and awareness

Maximize Employment Skills

- Research volunteer opportunities in desired field of work
- Set up interviews, informational interviews or tours
- Submit resume & cover letters
- Set goals of skills to learn, people to meet, etc

Meet Pat

- Self-Advocacy
- Culinary Arts
- Independent Transportation
- Social Skills
- Teamwork





Maximize Independent Living Skills

- Do not provide transportation (if possible!)
- Work with youth on time management
- Budgeting
- Reflection to make connections to Independent Living

- Budgeting skills
- Accommodations
- Cooking
- Scheduling

Meet Isaias





Maximize Community Engagement

- Participate in service outside of school
- Participate without parents or siblings
- When possible have youth engage in projects with teams vs. individually

- She has joined two community boards
- Networking skills
- Public speaking skills

Meet Kamisha



Tips to Maximize Service

- Youth driven, adult supported
- Do your research to find the right fit
- Goal setting
- Limit the amount of accommodations prepared ahead of time
- Regular community service over one-time volunteering
- Reflection, journaling



Community Service Programs





Community Service Opportunities

- Shelters
- Community Servings
- Cradles to Crayons
- Food Banks
- Places of Worship
- Disability Organizations
- Community Centers



Online Volunteering Resources

BostonCares.org

VolunteerMatch.org

Idealist.org



Contact Info

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