

Activities are an Integral part of Learning and Independence

By: Maura O'Brien

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“Participation in sports and extracurricular activities provide important “whole child” health and social benefits to all students, even more importantly to students with disabilities. The benefits include heightened self-esteem, understanding the importance of teamwork, sensory relief, fitness, and mental and physical health.”

Maura O'Brien



- B.S. Exercise Science
- Job Coach at the Cotting School
- Summer Fitness teacher at Cotting
- Therapeutic Recreation Therapist at EMARC
- Executive Board Member for The Love is Magic foundation
- Human Rights Committee member Shore Collaborative

Meet Neal



- Friend, Son, Brother
- Pediatric Brain Tumor Survivor
- Former Coting School Student
- Mass Hospital School Graduate
- Horseback rider
- Athlete
- Inspiration
- My hero



<https://vimeo.com/145263543>

Quality of Life



Definition according to Oxford Dictionary:

“the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group.”

“the things that are needed for a good quality of life”

Horseback Riding



A Holistic Lesson (Strongwater Farm Tewksbury)

- The combination of kinesthetic activities (touching, grooming, riding, etc.) allows clients with different abilities to:

- Feel grounded in their senses
 - Internalize their experiences and then share them with others
 - Many options to express what they think and feel
- ### Benefits
- Fine and gross motor skills
 - Increased Range of Motion
 - Relaxation through breathing and grounding techniques
 - Improve language abilities
 - Boost self-esteem, Increase energy, Empowerment and self-awareness

Team Hoyt New England



"Yes you can"

Team Hoyt New England's mission is to raise awareness of inclusion, educate, inspire and enrich the lives of individuals, families and communities by pairing athletes of differing abilities in endurance events to promote the Team Hoyt motto, "Yes, You Can!"

Love is Magic 5k



Summer Fitness



- Nature Walk
- Warm Up
- Exercise of the Day
- Work out of the Day
- Exercise Dice Game
- Cool Down Stretch



Exercises:

- Jumping Jax
- Push Ups
- Squats
- Sit Ups

Workout 15-10-5



In the Classroom



- Movement break
- Nature Walks
- Smart Moves
- Meditation
- Group projects
- Community Trips



After School Activities



- Sports
- Art
- Music
- Cooking
- Hula hooping
- HorseBack riding
- Fitness
- Yoga
- Dances
- Ski Trip
- Disney

Basketball & Cheerleading



- 56 Students participate in the Cotting Basketball Program
- Practice weekly
- Games away and home
- Alumni Team



Ski Trip



- 3 nights 4 days at Mount Sunapee
- NEHSA Ski Instructors
- Award Banquet



Social Clubs



EMARC

- High School Club
- Young Adult Group
- Young Men's group
- Young Women's Group
- Out and about club
- LEAP
- After school Programming



Recreation

- Bowling
- Swimming
- Fitness
- Floor Hockey
- Sib Shops
- Basketball
- Laser tag
- Cooking
- Out to eat
- Rock Climbing
- Movies
- Tennis
- Paint Night
- Museum Trips
- Hiking
- Snow tubing
- Shopping
- Theatre
- Karaoke
- Music Therapy
- Paddle Boarding
- Kayaking
- Soccer
- Water Aerobics
- Dances

You name it we can do it!

Conclusion

In conclusion Activities are an integral part of learning and independence. That independence may look different from student to student. For Some it may be as simple as initiating a greeting or advocating for oneself. Others may develop a passion for a sport or attend overnight trips with their peer groups. In the classroom students can utilize resources to help them self regulate and focus. It is through these activities and tools that students learn who they are, what they like, and are able to achieve the best quality of life possible.

Thank You



Resources

mobrien@cotting.org

<http://www.loveismagic.org/>

<http://www.teamhoytnewengland.com>

<https://theemarc.org/our-services/recreation/>

<http://www.strongwaterfarm.org/>

<https://unifiedhp.com/>

<https://www.bestbuddies.org/>

<http://www.specialolympics.org/>

<http://www.accessportamerica.org/>

<http://nehsa.org/>