



ALTERNATIVES COMMUNITY PROGRAM SERVICES “Building Community for Belonging, Acceptance and Growth”

Learning is a lifelong journey; we need it to grow and thrive.

There are many different life skills that are essential to living. We take the skills we learned wherever we go and apply them to all aspects of life. Just as there are many different skills to learn, there are many ways for everyone to learn and understand the essential skills we need. I don't think a lot of people or organizations realize that.

However, this is not the impression I perceived when I walked into Alternatives Community Program Services, to observe a baking group they were running for people of various developmental abilities. This program runs once a week at their new location. I spoke with Kimberly, the coordinator for the group, who explained the objective for this group is “socialization and learning baking basics (Kimberly, personal communication, October 23rd, 2019).”

When I walked into the spacious, newly renovated room, the students seemed elated to be there. The room was somewhat noisy, but not in a bad way. The room was busy and filled with conversation, laughter, and was overall a joyous atmosphere. I hesitantly wandered to the kitchen located off the back of the room, where some of the students were baking. I was hesitant because I was there to observe, and I didn't want to interrupt.

I sat in a chair off to the side, out of the way to complete the task at hand. I was informed by one of the students, that they were making s'mores cupcakes, for another student's birthday. Each student was assigned a task, such as pouring batter in the cupcake cavities, or melting chocolate, or cleaning. The students seemed excited and eager to work on the tasks. It was a fun atmosphere the students were making jokes with their peers and staff. The students really seemed to be in their element.

After the baking was done, the students sat down to eat their creation. During that time, I had a brief chance to converse with Kimberly, and ask her a few questions. This was kind of difficult to do because of the busyness of the room. I noticed that she wasn't really focused on me when asking questions which is understandable, because she was in charge, and was overseeing the students in the room. I was curious to what a typical day looked like in the program, Kimberly simply explained that “ Each week we come in, make sure everyone has a certain task to do, eat, then listen to the students input on what types of things they would like to make for the following week. (Kimberly, personal communication, October 25th, 2019).”

Cooking is a life skill that everyone should know at least the basics of. In Lisa Pulsifer's article, Teaching Cooking to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, she states that, “...teaching cooking to persons with intellectual disabilities is a functional skill needed to maintain a high quality of life. It not only allows them to be independent, it also gives them an opportunity to put other skills like shopping, basic math and reading to use in a functional way that will benefit them (2010).”

Alternatives Community Support Program is proving that everyone can benefit from learning life skills and doing it with a fun and engaging approach. I can see myself working for an agency like this in the future.

Pulsifer, L. (2010, December 30). Teaching Cooking to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities. Retrieved October 25, 2019, from <https://www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-inclusion-strategies/101233-teaching-cooking-to-persons-with-intellectual-disabilities/>.

This month's story was written by Tisheena, a current student at Fleming College and also a participant in our Individualized Services for the past 3 years.

Tisheena graduated from Peterborough Alternative & Continuing Education (PACE) with high marks, granting her acceptance into Fleming College. Our story this month is Tisheena's actual class assignment.

Tisheena was so taken by this experience that she has decided to volunteer in the Simple Meals program with Alternatives, furthering her experiences.

We are very excited to be witness to Tisheena's accomplishments; a young woman that is both talented and inspirational.



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Alternatives Community Program Services (Peterborough) Inc. is a not-for-profit, charitable organization governed by a committed volunteer Board of Directors.

Alternatives strives to inspire and excite people of all abilities to enrich their skills, celebrate life and have fun with families, friends and neighbours by;

- ⇒ Fostering real friendships
- ⇒ Valuing personal and informed choices
- ⇒ Honouring personal worth and citizenship
- ⇒ Promoting life-long learning
- ⇒ Respecting personal safety and security
- ⇒ Enjoying healthy and active lifestyles

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For over 30 years **Alternatives Community Program Services** has been passionate about improving the quality of life for people living with developmental challenges, supporting about 250 individuals and their families annually. Our gifted and energetic employees provide opportunities for experiences and participation in the areas of employment, volunteerism, recreation and learning new skills while fostering a sense of 'community and belonging' for people of differing abilities.

Alternatives is so proud to be awarded the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce—Business Excellence Award in October 2019 in the non-profit category. I thank everyone at Alternatives for all their hard work, the category sponsor **Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough** and wish all the nominees and recipients our congratulations.



It is with tremendous thanks to Ontario Trillium Foundation for granting us \$97,000 that we can expect to announce the completed renovations to our 'community space', the former Chapel, at a ribbon cutting ceremony coming up in February.

I also want to thank all those that have already or that plan to join our growing list of amazing donors. For just \$100 your name will be engraved on a 'leaf' and added to our Donors 'Giving Tree'.

Be part of something great, be a good neighbour and be proud that you BELONG.

I wish everyone all the best in this New Year.

Vikki Eтчells
Executive Director



Acceptance Builds Community.....
the ABC's of Alternatives

www.alternativescommunityprogramservices.ca