



**Disability Aware Youth
Rich Collins Community Leadership
Impact Fellowship Final Report 2023**

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I. Introduction

The project I led and organized was the Disability Aware Youth Project, which aimed to raise awareness of disability and promote inclusion and diversity in our community. My role in the project was as the project leader and organizer, responsible for overseeing all aspects of the project, from planning to implementation and evaluation. I worked closely with a team of volunteers to design and execute the project, as well as liaising with our community partners to ensure that the project met their needs and aligned with their goals. As the project leader, I was also responsible for facilitating communication and collaboration among team members, as well as managing the project budget and timeline. Overall, my role was to ensure that the project was successfully implemented and achieved its goals of promoting disability awareness and inclusion in our community.

II. Implementation of the project

Timeline, Milestones, Partners, and Participants:

The Disability Aware Youth Project lasted for three weeks and included three sessions. Our community partner was Stanley Middle School, and our participants included the middle school students and the Brandeis University volunteers. We began the project by meeting with our community partner to discuss their needs and goals, and then



developed a timeline and milestones for the project. These milestones included developing the project curriculum, recruiting volunteers, and planning the logistics for the three sessions. Throughout the project, we maintained open communication with our community partner and adjusted our plans as necessary to ensure that the project met their needs.

Organizing and Leading the Project:

As the project leader, I was responsible for overseeing all aspects of the project, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. I organized a team of volunteers to help with the project, delegating tasks and ensuring that everyone was on the same page. I also held regular team meetings to discuss progress and address any challenges that arose.

One challenge we faced was that some of the content was not age-appropriate for the middle school students, and they found it difficult to understand concepts such as inclusivity. To overcome this challenge, we slowed down the pace of the project and took more time to explain the concepts in a way that was more accessible to the students. We also incorporated interactive activities and discussions to help reinforce the concepts.

Reflecting on my Leadership Style and Lessons Learned:

Through leading and organizing the Disability Aware Youth Project, I learned several important lessons about leadership. One of the most significant lessons was the importance of clear communication and delegation of tasks. By delegating tasks to team



members and maintaining open communication, we were able to work together effectively to achieve our goals.

Another lesson I learned was the importance of adaptability and flexibility. When we faced challenges, such as the content being too advanced for the students, we were able to adjust our plans and find creative solutions to overcome the obstacles.

Overall, I would describe my leadership style as collaborative and communicative. I believe in working closely with my team and community partners to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the project is successful. I also believe in maintaining a positive and supportive work environment, where everyone feels valued and motivated to do their best.

III. Sustainability plan

The sustainability plan for the project is to partner with Spectrum, a Waltham group that advocates for disability. The partnership with Spectrum will provide a platform to expand the project's reach beyond the middle school level and into the high school and college levels.

In terms of future development, I would like to see the project continue to grow and expand its reach to other schools in the Waltham community. I believe that the project has the potential to make a significant impact on young people's understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities. Overall, I am excited about the potential for this project to continue to make a positive impact on the community and look forward to seeing its growth and development in the future.



IV. Conclusion

In summary, the Disability Aware Youth Project aimed to educate middle school students about disability and inclusion through discussion-based sessions. Despite facing challenges such as age-appropriate content and engagement, the project successfully raised awareness and fostered a more inclusive community. The project was evaluated positively, but there were areas for improvement, including involving more community partners and enhancing session materials. The sustainability plan involves partnering with a campus group, Spectrum, and there are plans for future expansion.

Overall, leading and organizing this project was a valuable learning experience for me. I gained important insights into effective leadership, project management, and community engagement. I am grateful for the opportunity to have contributed to the Waltham community and the lives of the middle school students involved in the project. I want to thank the Rich Collins CLIF Mini Grant funder for their support, which made this project possible.