

ATI Final Report

Narrative of the Project:

The original goal of ATI was to support a community of people who have often been overlooked and ridiculed in our society. While people love to claim their support for the neurodiverse community, not many companies or organizations actually take the time to cater to the needs of the community. Growing up with neuroatypical siblings personally taught us this fundamental attribute of society which was the driving motivation for the creation of ATI. We wanted to be able to support this community by teaching them the fundamentals of the technology used in the job field, in hopes that one day they will be able to use these skills to further their careers. While our community partner search/confirmation was initially troubling, we ended up connecting with Opportunities for Inclusion (OFI). Through OFI, we were able to host a resume workshop for a small group of neurodiverse community members. During the workshop we discussed the importance of a resume and how to build a resume. By the end of the workshop, all of our group members had a resume and felt more confident in their ability to use it in a job setting. This not only was an indication that our project was successful but, it also opened the door for us to continue with this program in the future. While ATI was a project that was started through the Rich Collins program, we plan to continue our work with OFI for years to come.

Evaluation and Assessment:

The process of building this program was more difficult than expected. Originally we wanted to pair up with The Autism Higher Education Foundation because they had set programs that helped people with autism get less labor intensive jobs. Unfortunately, due to a schedule overload on their end, they stated that they were not going to be able to support us and our program. Given that this notice was communicated after our project got approved, we had to pivot and find a new community partner. After talking with a few community members, we were able to build a new connection with OFI. The OFI team was very supportive of our project and was constantly communicating with us to ensure we had everything we needed. Originally, we were hoping to pair up with a Waltham Group organization but, due to the timing of our meetings, that pairing never took place. This was definitely unexpected but once again, we were able to adjust our program to fit the new parameters.

The main way that we were able to assess our program was through surveys. At the beginning of the workshop, every group member was given an anonymous survey to fill out. The pre-workshop questions asked them about their confidence with resumes and the work-field as a whole. Then, once the workshop was complete, the group members filled out the other side of the survey, a post-workshop survey, which consisted of similar questions. Overall, we were able to see that our group members found the workshop to be very helpful in helping them understand the importance of a resume and how to build one. This was an amazing indicator that our lesson was effective and fun.

After the resume workshop, OFI stated that they would love it if we were able to come up with more workshops like this to present in the future. We plan on attending OFI's "Watch-City Meetings" each month to present new workshops to the neurodiverse community. OFI outlined some of the topics they would like us to focus on such as, cashier training, Gmail, Word, etc. So once we have a clear understanding of their needs, we plan on making more presentations to present at the workshops.

Personal Takeaways:

Group Takeaways-

As a group we truly learned the importance of teamwork and communication when working on projects of this sort of scale and importance. Both of us deeply care about the autism community because of our brothers and the ways in which it affects them in their everyday lives. At the beginning of the project we kind of broke it up into you do this and I do that and were not nearly as cohesive as we became at the end of this project. We learned how to bounce ideas off of each other and take other perspectives into consideration. We also learned the importance of saying no when we thought an idea wasn't that good because we both knew that this project was more important than our egos. Over a period of time our trust with each other grew and it made working together much easier. Ultimately, this project allowed us to build essential teamwork skills that we will be able to carry wherever we go.

Individual Takeaways-

- Safdar: The creation of the Autism Technology Initiative program through the Rich-Collins fellowship has allowed me to improve my professional skills in a myriad of ways. Before I began this program I was a shy, timid individual but due to the challenges I faced in this program, I was forced to grow my communication and overall networking skills. During this program, we lost our community partner just as the second semester was starting. This forced us to adapt and find new partners who we could work with. This forced me to get out of my comfort zone and start emailing and pestering new people that we could possibly work with. Throughout my time in high school this much responsibility was never placed upon me so I was never made to deal with adversity in such a way. I really feel like having to go through a professional struggle like this will have given me invaluable experience.
- Yohana: This experience, through the Rich Collins Program, really helped me develop my communication and teaching skills. When initially building this program, I didn't factor in all the challenges we could hypothetically face. So, during the challenges, I definitely had to learn how to adapt and communicate our needs effectively. Another big takeaway from this program was the teaching aspect. While I was my brothers' main caregiver throughout their childhood, I had never really worked with many high functioning people who had autism. This experience allowed me to meet and learn from a whole new group of people that I had never really been exposed to before. Through the workshop I was able to learn how to effectively communicate information with/to them

along with just learning more about how they view the world. I'm very excited to continue this program in the future!

Final Budget:

Remaining Expenses

Item	Total # Needed	Cost per Item (If Applicable)	Estimated Cost
ChromeBooks https://www.amazon.com/HP-Chromebook-14a-na1043cl-Diagonal-Display/dp/B09RD2JX4P/ref=sr_1_4?crid=2Y8ZZEJNPUU8P&keywords=chromebook&qid=1650984239&sprifix=chromebook%2Caps%2C74&sr=8-4	6	\$134.00	\$804.00 (Before Tax)
Computer Mouse https://amzn.to/2Xv6C1f	8	\$6.94	\$55.52 (Before Tax)
Computer Mouse Pads https://amzn.to/3IU1A7L	2 packs (6 included)	\$16.99	\$33.98 (Before Tax)
Notebooks https://amzn.to/3AWFGVH	2 Packs (6 Included)	\$4.79	\$9.68 (Before Tax)
Pencils https://amzn.to/3n9AxVC	2 packs	\$4.99	\$9.98
Totals			\$913.16 (before tax)

Before and After Budget

	Initial Cost	Final Cost	Reason for Difference
Computers	\$888.00	\$804.00	We were able to find a discount later on in the year that would allow us to buy 6 chromebooks for a cheaper cost

Mouses	\$63.78	\$55.52	The price of the mouses decreased from when we originally checked in October
Mouse Pads	\$15.99	\$33.98	We decided to get an extra set of mouse pads in case they got too dirty or worn out since they were very cheap and we had a little extra money in our budget
Name Tags	\$3.28	None	The name tags were originally going to be for our other volunteers but we were unable to use them because we did not host the session at Brandeis but instead hosted the session at OFI
Pencils	\$4.99	\$9.98	Much like with the computer mouses we decided that we should get an extra set of pencils because they are easily lost and cost little money to get extras
Room Rental	\$0-900 (Total of 6 sessions)	None	OFI provided us a room in which we were able to host our session.
Projector	\$89.99	None	OFI had a TV in which we were able to project our lesson onto allowing us to not have to use a projector

Certificates of Completion	\$13.99	None	The program scope changed slightly so we were unable to do all of our intended sessions and we
Session Snacks	\$100	None	OFI provided food for after our resume presentation
Notebooks	\$4.79	\$9.68	Similarly to the pencils and mouses, we just doubled our order as it was a miniscule extra number of money
Uber	None		We originally thought that we were going to host this session at Brandeis so we did not need to factor in the price of the Uber but since we moved it to OFI we needed an Uber to get to their facilities
End of Session Picnic	\$200	None	Sadly since we only had one session and it was much later than we originally anticipated we were unable to find a time and place to host an end of session picnic.
Final Cost	\$1,284.81-2,184.81	913.16 + Uber + Tax	