

Dear Parents,

Welcome back for the 2011-2012 school year. We hope everyone had a great summer and looking forward to the new year ahead. We will once again be involved in many new and exciting activities. This will be the beginning of our third year focusing primarily on vocational and daily living skills training. This class was developed to prepare your child for adulthood and the possibility of gainful employment. This year, your child will be learning an array of different skills that will enable him/her to become more independent.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce the vocational classroom team. Our lead teacher this year is Neil Tumarkin. Assisting Neil will be Carlos Figueroa who has been working at the center over nine years. We are even more excited about the possibilities this new arrangement will bring and look forward to preparing your child for adulthood and independence.

During the course of the year, your child will be engaged in the areas of: Communication, Daily Living Skills, Employability or Vocational Skills, Self Help Skills, Transportation and Physical Education. Our communication curriculum will focus on greeting, making eye contact, providing personal information for appropriate situations as well as learning skills necessary during a job interview. This past year, the students did a wonderful job shaking hands and making eye contact. We are confident that your child will only improve in this area this upcoming year. In addition, the students will participate in some written communication which will be integrated into all other subjects throughout the year.

Our employability/vocational skills curriculum will include completing a job application, visiting different job sites, as well as adult day training centers. This past year, we were able to go to Marshalls where the students had the opportunity to work like an employee of Marshalls and learned to prepare store items and put them on display. Some of the students did a terrific job at Marshalls and we are very confident that all the students will become much better this upcoming year. We plan to participate at Marshalls much more often this year than last. This will allow the students more time to experience what it's like working in a department store. At the center, students will be learning office skills such as filing papers in their work folder, making photo copies at the copier, faxing work from the fax machine, using a three hole puncher and using a stapler. The students may also have the opportunity to listen to professionals in other lines of work as they speak to the students. In addition, staff will be photographing students participating in activities. These photos will be placed into a portfolio of each child's work. Our students will also be working on contract employment provided by local businesses or other outside sources. We ask parents to let us know of any local businesses or organizations that need services we can provide.

The Daily Living Skills curriculum will include sorting laundry, using a washer and dryer, folding and hanging clothes, ironing, preparing simple meals and snacks, putting things away after use, creating a shopping list, making purchases at the grocery stores, and ordering items from a menu at a restaurant. In order to accomplish these goals, we will need your help. For a

list of personal hygiene/other items we will need, see the list attached to this letter. This first quarter the students will be involved in a thematic unit called " Shopping Smart" which focuses on skills needed when going shopping at a grocery store or department store. These skills can be also applied to most places you visit in order to make a purchase of some kind.

Our Physical Education curriculum will involve learning basic skills from a variety of sports (football, basketball, soccer, etc.), and exercising to improve health. Last year, the students did a good job becoming familiar with some of the different sports and improving on their gross and fine motor skills in the process. We will also be swimming again this year. The students really enjoyed this activity and should show even more improvement this year. In addition, the students will also have an opportunity to go horseback riding.

The students will also be able to learn and practice self help skills. These skills include brushing their teeth, flossing, brushing or combing their hair, shaving for some of the students, putting on deodorant, etc. This is very important for the students to be able successfully perform these tasks as they get older.

The students will also be able to take public transportation (bus, metro-rail, etc.) to specific community outings. They will also learn the schedules of buses or trains needed, as well as the cost for each. This will help them become more independent in the community when they are adults. Last year, the students experienced taking the metro rail downtown and using the metro mover. The students enjoyed it very much and efforts will be made to participate on these same field trips.

We would also like to ask parents to assist children with homework that will be assigned throughout the week (with the exception of Fridays). In addition, I want to inform all parents that school begins at 9:00 am. Any parent who is dropping their child off after 9:00 am must wait in our lobby until our next class begins. That means you must wait with your child and he/or she will not be permitted into class until 10:00am. It is very important that school begins on time and that when students start showing up afterwards, it can disrupt the flow of the class. On another note, we encourage parents to volunteer on any outings we go on in the community. In addition, please make sure your child wears his or her orange t-shirt. Please bring a change of clothes just in case of an emergency. We will be scheduling an appointment with the parents to review last year's IEP and prepare their goals for this year. We are very excited about the upcoming year and looking forward to seeing the students.

The following is a list of supplies your child will need for the upcoming semester:

- 1) 1 toothbrush
- 2) 1 tube of toothpaste
- 3) 1 bottle of mouthwash
- 4) 1 roll of dental floss
- 5) 1 stick of deodorant
- 6) 1 comb or hairbrush
- 7) 1 set of plastic hangers (quantity 6-10)
- 8) 1 bottle of liquid hand soap
- 9) 1 box of personal wipes
- 10) 1 box of Kleenex/other facial tissues
- 11) 1 bag of disposable razors or an electric razor

- 12) 1 can of shave cream or gel
- 13) Any unwanted or unused clothing

The items on this next list are not mandatory, but would be helpful to us in our efforts to educate your child. We ask for donations of (items you may already have):

- 1) Any pens or pencils you can spare
- 2) Markers you can spare-especially dry erase.
- 3) Any unwanted (but functional) office machines or supplies.
- 4) Blank white copy/printer paper and lined paper

We realize we are asking a lot; however, we feel that these supplies will assist your child in certain aspects of the curriculum and their individual growth. Staff will be available for any questions you may have from 3:15-4:15 pm each school day at the number listed at the top of this letter (middle/high school campus). We look forward to having a wonderful year with your child.

Respectfully yours,
The Vocational Classroom Team