KCART - October 19, 2013
Introducing today’s speaker...

Sarah Mai, MOT, OTR/L

Graduate of the University of Kansas

Occupational Therapist and Assistive Technology Specialist

Worked for The Mission Project part-time for 7 years facilitating the Problem Solvers group, designing & implementing the iPad program, and providing ongoing consultation for programming, independent living skills, and behavior modification.

Currently serving as the Program and Care Coordinator.
The Mission Project – a GREAT option!

- Live in a local community where she/he is accepted
- Where she can safely walk to stores and recreation
- Able to live alone in her own apartment
- Access to jobs, and help finding one
- Transportation when needed
- Organized social activities and a group to hang with
- Regular physical exercise and mental stimulation
- Minimal, but effective and protective oversight
- Helpline to call 24/7 answered by someone she knows
- Family involvement in her life, but not intrusive
The Mission Project is...

• A parent-organized, grassroots organization
• Dedicated to providing a safe environment
• Where their adult sons and daughters can live independently
• With individualized supports to meet their needs
• And providing opportunities for social and educational opportunities, recreational, fitness, cultural activities and an active and varied social life
The History

- **2004** – Three couples and parents of young adults with developmental disabilities share concerns about alternatives after high school. Spent a year developing the structure and determining where it would be established.
- **Summer 2004** – First participant moves into chosen apartment complex.
- **2011** – 18 participants living in Mission.
- **2012** – MP2--New replication group in Mission, KS
- **2013** – Total of 26 participants living in Mission, KS (MP1 & MP2)
Who’s Involved...

- Young adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities
- Parents, families, guardians and friends.
- Dedicated professionals who provide support
- Advisory board
- Supporting members in community and volunteers
What happens in the Mission Project?

• Young adults with disabilities (participants) are located in apartments within the community of Mission Kansas
  • Live among other members of the community (same-aged peers, young families, older adults)
• Participants receive individualized independent living and job supports that are contracted by individual families
• Participants work in the community with transportation provided by the Mission Project
• Mission Project Steering Committee & part-time Program and Care Coordinator coordinates multiple activities to support participants’ growing independence and active involvement in community activities
Core Values of The Mission Project

1. **PARENTAL INPUT**—bi-monthly parent steering committee and executive board guide every aspect of the program and every parent has a job (fundraising, website developer, organizing the Helpline, putting out the newsletter)

2. **CONTINUITY**—each family has a “successor plan”

3. **SAFETY** – 24 hour help line and regular safety training

4. **PROMOTING GROWTH IN INDEPENDENCE, ATTAINMENT OF NEW SKILLS**—emphasizing with support staff that they should be teaching/modeling and not “doing for”

5. **HEALTH AND FITNESS**: Many activities available at Sylvester Powell

6. **OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT** – Social activities organized by parents/guardians, Service Provider, Sylvester Powell and informal opportunities

7. **OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT**—Reliable transportation and “Jobs Club”
MP Participants have wonderful opportunities within these key areas...
The iPad Initiative

Every MP1 member has an iPad
BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN PROBLEM SOLVERS
The Problem Solvers

- Meet every 1-2 weeks for one hour duration
- Located in participants' apartments (occasional group outings) with a designated host each week
- Emphasis on social skill development: building friendships, conversational skills, conflict resolution, building community, etc.
- Primary intervention tool – The Hidden Curriculum concept
- The leader, the “social coach” (myself), individualizes social instruction, continually reinforces positive & appropriate social behaviors, and maximizes on teaching moments that occur naturally.
- Social skills are broken down into concrete instructional steps, modeled, practiced repetitively, and reinforced.
- The participants learn and improve through this format.
- Problem Solvers has often been referred to as the “glue” of the community.
Enjoying a baseball game during a fun trip in Chicago
Social Hour at Lucky Brewgrille
Exploring the community together
Admission Criteria

1. Must function moderately autonomously with some supports rather than full time, 24-hour supports
2. Must demonstrate capacity to participate in activities of The Mission Project
3. Must be able to function in cooperative and non-endangering manner to self and others
4. Must be capable of comprehending and complying with established Behavioral Guidelines for Participants
5. Must contract with a licensed service provider for independent living supports
The Mission Project relies on ACTIVE parent participation

- Every Parent (Guardian) Member has a job – some examples are:
  - Steering Committee Officer
  - Fundraising
  - Newsletter/Publicity
  - Recruitment/Membership
  - Transportation
  - Government Relations
  - Education
  - Creation of Calendar of Activities and Social Events
  - Physical Fitness
  - Helpline

- At least 4 hours per month is expected
Funding

• Mostly funded by annual fundraising events

• Private donations accepted!

• Funding is used for...
  • Transportation—2 vans and 2 drivers that get participants to their jobs across the community
  • Part-time employees: job coach, Program & Care Coordinator, Problem Solver facilitator, public relations, grant writer
  • Eventually a Full Time Director of Development
Participants pay or arrange for...

• Housing and Food
  • Each Participant contracts for and pays own rent
  • Each Participant pays for own utilities and food
• Classes and events they chose to participate in
• Case management and individualized assistance

• Paid for by SSI/SSD, job earnings, Medicaid Waiver, family and Special Needs Trusts
Let's hear from Kelly
Shooting pool at the Neighborhood bar & grille
Reading and discussing one another’s contributions to the newsletter
Practicing their self-advocacy skills
Let's hear from Susan
Getting perspective on relationships & the different interactions we have in our daily lives.
Women friends enjoying one another’s company while relaxing at home
Let's hear from Greg
Who votes that we go eat now?!
Social learning in the context of conversation games
Let's hear from Amelia
Let's hear from Ellen
Learning new technology skills
Let's hear from Leighanna
Building friendships through conversation over drinks at a local restaurant
Let's hear from Lauren
Let's hear from Shannon
The JOY and PRIDE that comes from living Independently!!!!
About the Mission Project (2013)

PURPOSE
The Mission Project enables capable adults with developmental or cognitive disabilities to live independently and safely in community with minimal support.

GOALS
Mission Project participants live full lives in a supportive community. They have numerous opportunities for growth and development, including:
- Finding and maintaining meaningful employment
- Socializing with peers
- Learning new skills in a variety of classes, including acting, karate and computer use
- Participating in recreational and cultural activities
- Getting and staying fit and developing healthy, safe lifestyles
- Developing leadership skills and giving back to their community
- Honing social skills and resolving interpersonal challenges

WHO’S INVOLVED
Parents, guardians, families and friends of adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities, as well as dedicated professionals, have joined forces to realize the goals of the project.

WHY MISSION, KANSAS?
The Mission Project, Inc. is based in Mission, Kansas, because it’s a well-run community that has jobs, services, entertainment and a community center within walking distance of apartment complexes.

For more information, visit: http://themissionproject.org