

Project Independence Adult Day Care

High Quality and Excellence Are Our Goals

2021 Report on Quality Assurance

February 2022

It is our mission to make sure that our participants and families feel respected, maintain their dignity, and experience joy every day no matter what their challenges. In 2021 we worked hard to provide the highest quality care to participants, and support and respite for families. This report talks about how we stay in touch with the needs and wishes of the people we serve. And as always, we want you to let us know how we can do our job better. This is what we have been working on this year:

Re-Opening and COVID Precautions

We reopened our center after 15 months of providing only remote services. In order to provide a safe environment, we held most of our activities outside until October. All participants and staff are vaccinated and boosted; inside we all wear masks except when dining; and we remain distanced except in the elevators. These precautions have allowed us to remain open without outbreaks of the virus, and our participants have benefitted from the chance to get out safely.

Care Management: Quality Help from Your First Call

Our care management team consists of three social workers – Joanne, Eileen and Judy – and two counselors – Dana and Kristin. We continue to receive a variety of calls daily with requests for advice on housing, transportation and care of elders. Our care managers return calls within one day and provide direct support or referrals to other agencies. Care managers also work directly with families and participants at Project Independence: listening, problem solving, and providing support for a wide variety of problems that involve transportation, medical needs, and social-emotional support.

Nursing: Helping you with Health Concerns

Our four part-time nurses – Ann, Maura, Laurie and Vanessa -- worked together to help you when you didn't feel well, needed medication or wanted them to talk to a doctor or family member about a medical concern. Our nurses provide good nursing coverage eight or more hours a day, five days a week. This means not only helping you with your blood sugar before meals, your oxygen tanks, and your medications, but also staying in touch with families, caregivers and doctor's offices to ensure we're all working together to help you feel your best. Nurses have dedicated time to communicate with doctor's offices twice a year during case reviews to make sure your medications and care are up to date. Please think of our nurses as one of your many partners in your care team.

Therapeutic Recreation and Activities: Offering You Interesting Programs

In 2021, we maintained our Zoom programming while rebuilding our in-person programs. For the summer and early fall we enjoyed offering activities outdoors, with lots of live music by volunteers, frequent walks around our beautiful property, and lighthearted sports games. Inside, we offered musical programs without singing by our staff and volunteers, and a diversity of other programs such as armchair travel, all about Vermont, Life Lessons, and more.

Our Bone Builders program continues on Zoom and in person three times a week, and our exercise and walking programs get you up and moving. After three years at the helm of the activities program, Ken Schoen stepped down with more time to offer dynamic activities for you on Zoom and in person; thank you Ken! A team of Anya Schwartz, Ted Davis and Geetha Wunnava, with help from Kristin Bolton, are carrying the torch, coming up with fun things to do. We look forward to more creative programming in 2022!

Our Kitchen: Providing You Delicious and Nutritious Food

After having shut down our kitchen for over a year, our cooks did a deep clean of the entire kitchen to get it back up and running. We love making you delicious, nourishing and well-balanced meals! We enjoy the challenge of accommodating your dietary needs and preferences, working within the nutritional guidelines of the agencies that oversee the meals, while making the meal a highlight of your day here. Head cooks Amy, Missy and Sue kept the good food coming, with a lot of help from the many other staff in the kitchen. We continue to enjoy Friday pizza night, shepherd's pie, and teriyaki salmon as well as a variety of delicious desserts including homemade whoopie pies and cheesecake, along with the old favorites like Lemon Lulu and Mud Pie.

Transportation: Driving You in Comfort and Safety

Joanne Corbett, Eric Covey, Joelle Logan and Carol Weston make up our transportation team and together they work on coordinating rides and keeping our vans clean and safe. Before the pandemic, we had ordered three brand new vans and in 2021 we got to send them out to pick you up. To keep you safe we have you wear masks, seat you far apart and have the windows open to improve ventilation. With help of TriValley Transit (formerly ACTR) we fitted our vans with sneeze guards for an additional measure of safety.

We gained friendly, personable new drivers (Ron H and Lucy) and were fortunate to have many of our wonderful drivers return when we reopened (Ron T., Jim, the two Bruces, Gail, and Bob) and continue to rely on other staff who also drive. We continue to comply with the government requirement that our drivers undergo periodic random alcohol and drug testing, including pre-employment testing of one new driver. We also oversee the many rides and drivers we request from Tri-Valley Transit. We urge you to let us know how your rides and drivers are doing.

Keeping our Building and Grounds Inviting

We took the opportunity before reopening to do some deep cleaning and painting so that the building looked fresh and new for you when you returned. We rented tents for the summer so that we could enjoy being together mask-free outside. You enjoyed the fresh air and the time outside. Outside, you saw Cecilia, Sean and Jeff care for our beautiful gardens and landscaping. During your walks you enjoyed something in bloom throughout the growing season. Inside, we benefitted from our newly cleaned and upgraded HVAC system and kept our newly refinished floors clean from snowy boots with boot slippers.

Community Partners Appreciate What We Do

In 2021, we continued to work closely with our community partners including the Veteran's Administration, Counseling Service of Addison County, Addison County Home Health and Hospice, SASH, United Way of Addison County, Community Health Action Team and UVM Health Network Porter Medical Center.

Volunteers Who Share Their Time

Throughout 2021, we appreciated the talents of many volunteers who shared their talents over Zoom and in person. Many volunteers offered their musical talents over Zoom and then in the tent. Others shared their interests and travels, and yet others joined us in walks and games every week. While we've had to limit our volunteers to a limited group who adheres to our COVID protocols, we are deeply grateful for their presence with us.

Wonderful Staff for Your Care and Enjoyment

Hiring loving, good-natured people is key to the quality of Project Independence. In 2021 we were blessed to have a large core of staff who have worked here for many years; we also said good-bye to many who retired. We welcomed 2 wonderful new employees. Most of our training addressed our COVID protocols, to adapt to the everchanging pandemic requirements.

2022 Quality Assurance Goals

Here are the goals that we'll be working on in the coming year:

Care Management

- Complete Care Manager Certification program for care manager staff
- Experiment with family caregiver training
- Promote counseling to PI participants, families, and community members
- Improve referral/inquiry tracking and statistics
- Improve outreach and serve more people

Nursing & Health

- Evaluate hydration strategy
- Evaluate role of nursing in family support

Participant Care

- Create a succession plan for coordinators and begin training staff to become substitute coordinators
- Continue to adapt care to prevent transmission of the virus
- Increase attendance and evaluate ability to safely care for participants with greater needs
- Evaluate need for toileting support for specific participants
- Promote hydration throughout the day

Activities and Programming

- Attentively manage and support activities staff to develop interesting programs
- Cultivate enthusiastic team approach to program planning and create succession plan for activity leaders and activity planners
- Continue to expand Zoom program attendance
- Increase volunteer participation in our program as COVID protocols permit
- Continue to offer outdoor programming May - October

Kitchen

- Develop innovative menus to help participants enjoy food and promote physical comfort (digestion, elimination).
- Provide additional training on cooking skills and SafeServe
- Use fresh herbs from the on-site herb garden

Transportation

- Continue to build out routes to support increased attendance
- Evaluate and adapt routes as new participants enroll
- Create a succession plan for transportation coordination
- Assure strong transportation planning staff and driver staff

Environment, Buildings, Grounds

- Get an energy audit and evaluate next steps to improve energy efficiency
- Participate in a pilot program with Green Mountain Power to lower energy costs through a Flexible Load Management plan
- Improve our HVAC maintenance
- Create an attractive approach to outdoor activities
- Continue to innovate in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability

Do You Have Any Comments or Suggestions?

Thank you for reading this report. Let us know of any comments or questions.

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