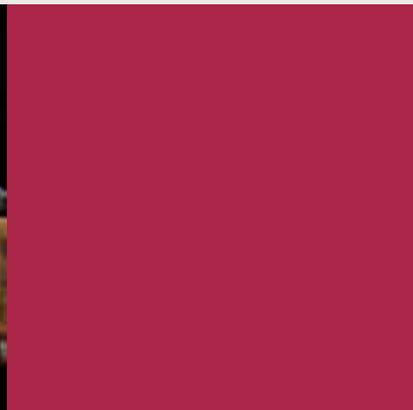




SOCIAL / RECREATION

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES



INTRODUCTION

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Moving into high school, on to college and into employment will cause your life to be quite busy. Your mind and your body can become stressed. So take time away from these busy things and make time for some fun! There are sports and activities that are designed specifically for you. In this section you will learn about different ways to make your life more enjoyable and meet new friends!

Learn about:

- Networking sites where people just like you come together to discuss social activities, disability activism and much more.
- Adaptive sports that exist for people with many different kinds of disabilities and about how you can become involved.
- The easiest ways to travel with a disability.

PARENT'S SECTION

TIPS FOR PARENTS



Getting your child involved

in sports and recreational activities will help them grow as a person. Transition into adulthood is not an easy thing to do; having something in common with people of their same age group can greatly enhance your child's self-esteem, independence and self-worth. There are wonderful programs specifically designed to meet your child's needs and will allow them full participation.

Things to consider as a parent:

- Encourage your child to get involved in as many different activities as possible.
- Your child's health, well-being, and self-esteem will grow as they become more involved in their community.
- Research transportation options to ensure your child is able to participate.
 - Are there buses available?
 - Can they utilize paratransit?
 - Will you be driving them?

GET INVOLVED

There are many ways for you to have fun! A variety of sports and recreation activities exist for people of every age and with every type of disability. Join a club. Get involved in disability activism. Explore the world of arts, or find an adaptive sport that fits your needs. Attend various camps, or travel and explore the world around you. Your school also offers a number of activities that will give you a chance to become involved. Get involved in student government, attend school dances and other activities or just hang out with your friends.

Arts & Dance

Creating art and dancing is a great way to express yourself. It offers you an opportunity to discover and explore the world around you. These are a couple of the programs that can point you in the right direction.

Very Special Arts (VSA) – Very Special Arts believes that every young person with a disability deserves access to high-quality learning experiences in the world of art. They sponsor and promote many different areas of artistic discovery. Express Diversity is an exciting and educational resource! This program provides interactive arts-based activities and is designed to provide you with tools to develop your disability awareness, communication and self-esteem. Learn more about their program. Log on to their website: <http://www.vsarts.org>

Axis Dance – Axis Dance is designed for people with disabilities who want to explore a fun and exciting world of dance. Express yourself and be a part of a dance group containing people with and without disabilities. Get started by visiting their website: <http://www.axisdance.org>



ADAPTIVE SPORTS



If you have a disability that limits your involvement in sports, you do not have to feel that way anymore! You can participate in sports such as Power Soccer, Skiing, Snowboarding, Cycling, Golf, Tennis and much more! Try it out and have some fun! You may also want to consider volunteering for one of these organizations if your disability does not limit your involvement in sports. It can be a great way to get involved in the disability community!

Power Soccer – Power Soccer is the first competitive team sport designed and developed specifically for power wheelchair users. It is played on a regulation size basketball court and is a great way for you to learn strategy and be a part of a team. To learn more about their program, check out their website: www.powersoccerusa.org

Regional Programs

Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program (BORP) – If you are in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and are interested in accessible sports and recreation opportunities for children and adults with physical disabilities. Look into their programs at www.borp.org

Access Leisure, The City of Sacramento – Access Leisure offers a variety of adapted sports programs such as Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Softball, Power Soccer, Access Aquatics and even a cheerleading team. For more information, visit www.accessleisuresac.org



Disabled Sports USA – Disabled Sports USA can help you become involved with many different sports in your area. Becoming involved will give you confidence, independence and help you live a healthier life. To find a chapter near you, go to www.dsusa.org

Special Olympics – The Special Olympics provides opportunities for those with developmental disabilities to feel empowered and included by being involved in sports. You can compete in over 30 different sports! Have fun and build your self-esteem by becoming a Special Olympian! To find a training program near you, go to www.SpecialOlympics.org

Environmental Traveling Companion (ETC) – ETC can help you access the wilderness and the excitement of a shared adventure. Whether it is skiing, kayaking or white water rafting, this organization will provide you with life changing experiences. Start your adventure by contacting them at www.etctrips.org

Society for the Blind – Are you interested in being a part of the blind and low vision Olympics? The Society for the Blind can help. They are also a sponsor of a summer retreat for transitioning youth who are just like you. Learn more about these opportunities at www.societyfortheblind.org



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & DISABILITY ACTIVISM



Another way to reach your full potential within your community is to connect with people your age who share your same life experiences. Organizations such as YO Disabled & Proud!, the National Youth Leadership Network, Participants in Progress, CalVolunteers and People First provide opportunities for you to learn about disability history, organize with other youth and take action on the issues affecting your life. You will also have the chance to join various clubs and volunteer within your community.

Helpful Links:

YO Disabled & Proud! – Becoming involved in YO Disabled & Proud can help you learn about the disability rights movement, disability history, disability pride, disability organizing and advocacy. Opportunities exist to connect with other youth with disabilities. Develop a sense of history, leadership, and a positive disability identity. Organize and mobilize on issues that affect your life. Get involved, visit www.yodisabledproud.org

National Youth Leadership Network – The National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN) is dedicated to advancing the next generation of disability leaders. It helps promote leadership development, education, employment, independent living, health and wellness among young leaders just like you! These are opportunities for you to become involved in all aspects of society at national, state and local levels. Learn about issues important to you and the policies and practices that affect you. Find out more about National Youth Leadership Network on their website: www.nyln.org



Cal Volunteers – Volunteering is a fantastic way to learn a new skill and help others. Cal Volunteers offers a number of programs including AmeriCorps, the California Volunteer Matching Network, and the Green Jobs Corps, which provide opportunities for you to become involved. For more information log on to www.Californiavolunteers.org

People First – People First of California provides role models for people with developmental disabilities and offers opportunities for personal empowerment, leadership, and advocacy. This is a great way for you to learn how to speak for yourself, learn what your rights are, and become involved in the disability advocacy movement. Find a chapter in your local area at www.peoplefirstca.org

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) – YLF is an exciting five-day leadership program for California high school juniors and seniors that provides information on a wide variety of topics including: independent living, disability advocacy, employment, technology and resource agencies and much more. Create a “Personal Leadership Plan” to help you reach your future education and career goals. This five-day forum is held once a year at Sacramento State University. Learn how to apply at www.calf.org

Regional Programs

Participants in Progress – Participants in Progress (PIP) is a Sacramento-based social support group dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities. This group meets once a month and is open to you, your friends and your family. PIP will give you a chance to become more social and share information with others. To learn more, please visit: www.pipweb.info



TRAVEL



There is no better way to learn about the world around you than to get out there and see for yourself! Traveling with some types of disabilities can be a challenge. However, you should not let your disability hold you back from going where you want to go. Most major cities offer full access for travelers with disabilities. The majority offer wheelchair accessible taxis and most hotels can accommodate any type of disability. A number of travel agencies and companies can help you find the services you are looking for and make your travels easier.

Helpful Links:

Disabled Travelers – Disabled Travelers is a great website that provides information on travel agents who specialize in travelers with disabilities. You can find information on adventure travel, accessible vans, and airline travel. Begin your travels by checking out www.disabledtravelers.com

Disabled Travelers Guide – If you're looking for information on how to travel anywhere in the world, then this is the site for you. The disabled traveler's guide is a free publication providing real-life experiences from travelers with disabilities who have visited places throughout the world. You can learn more about this guide at www.disabledtravelersguide.com

Access Travel Center – The Access Travel Center website is loaded with many helpful links for those traveling with a disability. There's information on a number of topics including: accessible cruises, accessible vans, hotel access, airline access, ground transportation and much more. To visit their site, go to: www.accesstravelcenter.com



CONCLUSION



Getting involved in your community can be a rewarding experience. Your life will be better as you take on new adventures. So, if you want to participate in sports, community activities or just travel and see the world, remember to take advantage of all of the various programs available to help you make your dreams come true!. Get out there and explore the world around you!



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