

Camps provide support, positive experiences

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Dozens of young people in our area have enjoyed a busy summer thanks to an ongoing partnership between NRVCS and several local public school systems.

Students from Montgomery and Pulaski counties and the City of Radford have been participating in a Therapeutic Day Treatment (TDT) camp facilitated by NRVCS. Camp participants are students who received day treatment services from NRVCS during the regular school year.

“The kids we work with often have a difficult time in school due to a variety of behavioral and emotional issues,” explains Rebecca Cutter, NRVCS Clinical Program Manager.

“Unfortunately, when they are home for the summer, most of them don’t have a lot of outlets,” adds Cutter. “So, we really try to give them opportunities that they might not have otherwise - while also working on things like anger management and improved social and interpersonal skills.”

The TDT camps last for six weeks and are typically conducted four days per week. Camps are staffed by NRVCS clinicians, their supervisors, and day treatment counselors. In all, Cutter says it takes nearly 90 people to run the camps, which this year covered 14 different sites.

“Camp looks a little different every year - we tend to morph things as we go - and it seems to grow each year,” says Cutter.

Community outings are a key component to the TDT camps. Some of the experiences this year have included: swimming at Randolph Park, visiting the Radford University Planetarium, movies at Frank’s Cinema, a day at a local petting zoo/farm, and trips to various public libraries. Students have also been able to interact with local businesses during camp. Groups have made their own pizzas at Sal’s Jr. in Fairlawn, baked cookies at Crumb & Get It Cookie Company in Radford, and some



Hands-on experience: Some local students recently had the opportunity to make their own pizza in the kitchen of Sal’s Jr. restaurant in Fairlawn. This activity is one example of the many experiences students enjoy as part of NRVCS’ Therapeutic Day Treatment summer camps. (Photo - M. Wade/NRVCS)

“It’s incredibly rewarding when you get to see a child grow and develop and reach a point where they become a mentor and are actually able to help other students.”

**- Rebecca Cutter
NRVCS Clinical Program Manager**

even received manicures at Polished, a nail salon in Blacksburg.

Activities are made available at no cost to the students. NRVCS also provides transportation and meals each day, which includes a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack.

Cutter notes that each week of the camps - which serve students at the elementary, middle and high school level - has a different focus, emphasizing themes like friendship, communication and conflict resolution.

“Each day, we conduct two therapeutic activities,” Cutter explains. “Those range from structured, planned out activities like journaling and art therapy exercises to more immediate therapeutic activities such as crisis intervention or redirection.”

The groups at each camp site are kept relatively small by design. Because of their emotional and behavioral needs, TDT students require more individualized attention and support.

“One of the biggest benefits to a student involved in TDT camp is the ability to maintain a relationship and have regular



Cleaning up: On June 15, the high school group of TDT camp went to Gatewood Park in Pulaski County. They rented boats, picked up four bags of plastic and metal from the water, and enjoyed some fishing. (Photo - Dwayne Martin/NRVCS)

interaction with our staff over the summer,” adds Cutter. “I really think that makes it easier for the students to transition back to school in the fall.”

“During the school year, our interaction with the students is a bit more restricted,” Cutter continues. “So, it’s nice to get to work with them away from the school setting and the academic pressures that come with that and instead be in an environment where they can have more movement and freedom.”

Cutter explains that since most of the TDT staff are experienced in working with this particular population, any behavior issues that might come up during camp are quickly resolved.

“Our team really knows these kids well and we take a proactive approach that hopefully allows us to catch things before they happen,” she says. “If something does happen, we find creative ways to turn those around and make them something positive.”

School personnel and families of those students involved continue to give positive feedback about TDT, so Cutter believes the program will only continue to grow in the coming years.



“Personal” pizza: A student enrolled in NRVCS’ Therapeutic Day Treatment summer camp proudly displays the pizza she made during the camp’s recent visit to Sal’s Jr. restaurant in Fairlawn. (Photo - M. Wade/NRVCS)

Home is where the HART is.

Our HART (Healthy Alternatives to Residential Treatment) program is actively seeking New River Valley residents who would be willing to open their hearts and homes to young people in need.

HART “parents” receive compensation, 24-hour support, and most importantly, an opportunity to make a real difference in the life of a young person.



To learn more or apply, visit nrvc.org/hart or call Angela Goodpasture at 540-835-8095.

PROGRAM FEATURE: CLAREMONT THERAPEUTIC DAY TREATMENT PROGRAM



The Claremont Therapeutic Day Treatment Program, located in Pulaski, provides a structured environment to students who have been placed on homebound instruction by their primary school. Claremont first opened in 2013 and currently serves students from Pulaski County, as well as the counties of Floyd, Giles and Montgomery, and the City of Radford.

Through daily treatment interventions, participants learn the skills needed to be more successful in the school setting. These skills include, but are not limited to: conflict management, social skills, and feeling identification.

Benefits of the program

Attending Claremont allows students to learn the skills needed to be more successful in the school environment, while teaching them the skills needed to interact appropriately with peers and adults. The program increases student achievement, school and parent communication and cooperation, as well as school and community coordination of services by matching students with appropriate referrals.

Eligibility

Students must be placed on homebound instruction by their school, have a mental health diagnosis, as well as two of the three criteria listed below:

- Difficulty with relationships to a degree that they are at risk of hospitalization or out-of-home placement because of conflicts;

- Difficulty in cognitive ability to a degree that they are unable to recognize personal danger or recognize inappropriate social behavior;

- Exhibit such inappropriate behavior that repeated interventions by the mental health, social services, or judicial system are necessary.

Referrals

Students can be referred by schools and mental health professionals. Referrals can be made by contacting Dwayne Martin, Program Supervisor, at dmartin@nrvc.org.

What happens after the referral?

Information will be gathered from the student's school to determine whether Claremont is an appropriate referral. An interview is then set up with the child and parent/guardian to tour the Claremont building and to further discuss treatment needs.

Before starting the program, participants who will be Medicaid funded must set up VICAP assessment through NRVCs to ensure that the child qualifies for services provided at Claremont. This assessment can be scheduled by calling NRVCs at 540-443-7524.

Claremont is available to any student placed on homebound educational services or on long-term suspension within the New River Valley area that meets eligibility criteria. Homebound instruction can be provided at Claremont if those arrangements are made by the school district.



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Pulaski schools conduct student services summit

PULASKI - Officials with Pulaski County Public Schools conducted their first-ever Student Services Summit on June 14, 2016.

The goal of the summit was to articulate the school system's vision for student services and to also document how staff perform their duties.

Representatives from six of the county's eight schools attended, including school counselors, a school psychologist, special education staff, a school social worker, and school administrators. Also participating were representatives from various community agencies that work directly with the school system, including NRVCS.

"We felt it was important to have our community partners involved in the summit since they are an integral part of our student services team and in line with our philosophy of an interconnected systems framework," noted Jennifer Polanco, Project AWARE Coordinator for Pulaski County Public Schools.

To learn more about Pulaski County Public Schools, visit www.pcva.us.



Defining a vision: NRVCS staff were among the participants in Pulaski County Public Schools' first-ever Student Services Summit held on June 14. Representatives from six of the county's eight schools also attended the event. (Photo - M. Wade/NRVCS)