



## November 2020 Program News

The month of November has been a busy one for all our program participants. Each program we offer, has a unique set of learning goals and activities where students engage in life lessons that support personal growth in functioning at home more independently, increasing social-emotional awareness and for building character. Each week, we continue to see students make smart choices based on social observations, learned experiences and thought-provoking discussions. Our monthly newsletter provides an overview of learning activities we completed over the past several weeks.

During weekly *Social Navigator* meetings, our facilitators have been impressed to see the social and personal growth demonstrated by the teen participants. We are seeing friendships forming, the Aha moments happen and social thinking questions firing! This group is inquisitive, open-minded, and willing to practice the skills we are learning in the group sessions. Participants have focused on problem solving with friends, family members and even the enemy (bullies and jerks). We are using the Social Thinking™ strategy of measuring the size of the problem and how big our emotional reactions are. Students are given scenarios to solve, then we discuss how to think and react to these problems and emotional triggers using a helpful visual tool that deepens understanding. The Social Fortune/Social Fate graphic novel continues to be a hit for grasping social thinking™ concepts. In one example, we studied the chain reaction of thoughts, feelings, and actions, and how this affect others and in turn, how we feel about ourselves. Ask your teen if they have had any social fortunes or fates in their day – listen to their stories, talk about their emotions, and examine different ways of solving the social problems they encounter. Following up at home will strengthen their coping skills, expand their emotional vocabulary, and support confidence in social problem solving.

Our *Agents for Change* participants have been focused on getting in touch with their Zones of Regulation and exploring emotional regulation tools during each session they attend. Students developed a series of selfies for each zone, which demonstrates how their body language and facial features can express a range of emotions. By exploring nuanced facial expressions, body language hints and conversation starters, our Agents for Change students have a better understanding of when and how to engage with others – based on social emotional cues. Moving from theory to practice, we are using socially distant games, personal interactions, and digital games such as Kahoots to get a solid understanding of the Zones, which supports self-regulation, positive feedback, and relationship development using a color-coded system. This module was also a reflective one, where we took time to honour our fallen heroes on Remembrance Day. We carved out time to practice mindfulness, connecting with our thoughts, feelings, and everyday activities to look at ourselves, through our own camera lens, and become more self-aware of our emotional state and what we are grateful for each day.



Our *Independent Mountaineer* class sessions were focused on Nutrition and Healthy meal planning. Students explored a variety of digital and literacy-based resources for planning, preparing and safely cooking healthy meals for themselves, family, or friends. Each student built a portfolio of recipes, made concrete plans, used checklists, and learned how to shop on a budget. We discussed how to be safe in the kitchen, shop smarter at the grocery store and be mindful (and social) before, during and after meals with others. Hopefully, you have seen the pictures, tasted the food and witness a little more ‘help in the kitchen’ lately. We are looking forward to seeing the photo showcase of healthy foods our students have carefully and thoughtfully prepared for their families in the last few weeks. Eat well, Be well.

Our last module of this year is quickly approaching. Not only do we have a new series of social learning exercises in store, but we are also looking forward to our Christmas Cheer Project. Keep an eye out for our digital ‘Community Christmas Cards’, which students will be creating each week in recognition of COVID 19 essential workers from our Checkered Door network. Sharing our good cheer using social media and through your own contacts is a wonderful way to support our Checkered Door participants, community partners and fellow families during a challenging holiday season. Our next module will be from Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> to Dec.16<sup>th</sup>. After which we will pause for Christmas and a New year break. Please provide fees for Module 4 prior to Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>.

It is our hope you continue to feel confident, safe, and secure that your son/daughter is in good hands in our classroom. We continue to be diligent in following health guidelines and keep abreast of news that may affect our programming in the coming weeks. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of our team members via email or phone.

You can now find our Monthly Program Newsletters on the Checkered Door website. Check out [www.checkered-door.com/news/monthlyprogramnews](http://www.checkered-door.com/news/monthlyprogramnews)

Take care and be well,

*Genevieve Buss*

Program Developer

