



## October 2020 Program News

Good afternoon Checkered Door Parents and Caregivers,

As we approach the shorter, cooler days of autumn, we are so thankful to provide a safe, healthy, positive learning experience for all our students. Thank you, families, for your continued effort to protect our community and for encouraging safe participation in our classroom activities. The following message is a program update for all Checkered Door families.

During the October module in the Agents for Change program, our focus has been on self awareness. Through reflective learning, students explored individual strengths, personal challenges and core values that make each of us unique. We discussed why maintaining good character and a growth mindset helps us to become more confident, resilient and stronger individuals, especially when we approach new challenges using positive thinking strategies. We learned that processing our emotions using mindfulness exercises and effective coping strategies enables us to feel better about ourselves and can push us through difficult times. We believe that having an accurate view on how we think, what we feel and how to effectively share our thoughts with others is a critical step to becoming successful social thinkers and engaged community members. Please talk to your son or daughter about what they have been working on during class – their binders are full of completed activities that show their personal growth this month! Next module, we will work on self-management techniques and social communication strategies when faced with increased responsibilities and personal barriers.

Our Independent Mountaineers focused on developing their personal wellness goals in this recent module. Specifically, students were working towards building the functional skill of scheduling and managing appointments with health care providers. We discussed the impact of the transition to adult care and why taking ownership of your healthcare, private medical information and disclosing health concerns with a practitioner is important to well being and long-term good health. Your son/daughter has asked for confidential but vital health-related information to help make informed decisions. Over the past few weeks, students created a My Health Passport profile, practiced scripts in role play scenarios and used personal devices to manage appointments. Students demonstrated they were able to research, gather data, create



an electronic file, schedule an appointment, use a cell phone calendar and created scripts for disclosing a health related concern using clear, specific language to a facilitator. I encourage all caregivers to give your adult child opportunities to book upcoming appointments, speak directly with health care providers and be prompted to ask questions when preparing for future visits with health care professionals. The next module in this series continues with healthy living lessons regarding daily exercise and nutrition.

Finally, our Social Navigators, a teen group of Social Quest Seekers have improved their understanding of social expectations and are learning how to positively respond to the social world around them. Using holiday traditions and the friendship 'Peer A Mid', students explored how relationships change over time, location and with maturity levels. Our group shared ideas for socializing with peers – from what to talk about, how to hang out with different peer groups and how to further develop friendship skills by creating concrete plans to organize a social outing with a friend. Using effective observation skills, body language and perspective-taking, our social navigators have demonstrated a deeper understanding of the complex relationships they have with friends, acquaintances and family members. Stay tuned for upcoming sessions on social problem-solving, organizational tools and self regulation strategies in our next module 'Get Ready, Do and Done' where students will focus on paying attention to social cues, using executive functioning to get personal tasks completed and utilizing self regulation when problem solving.

All of the staff at Checkered Door are pleased with the dedication and commitment that each of our participants and their families continue to make on a daily basis to make our learning space a healthy and happy place to be. We continue to follow health guidelines as set by the province and our local Health unit. At this time, we are offering all of our face to face programs in small groups, while practicing social distancing and proper sanitization methods. If we have further COVID related updates or health advisories, we will inform families ASAP.

Next week we will begin Module 3, therefore the fees for the next set of modules are due by Monday Oct. 26th. Please e-transfer to [director@checkered-door.com](mailto:director@checkered-door.com).

If you have any questions or concerns about individual progress or programming, please email myself or Peggy Crane anytime.

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)

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