



8/15/2021

To: Mary Graham, United Way of Tennessee

From: Adam Sikora [asikora@athleticademy.com / (865) 621-3126]

Subject: Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Project - Afterschool Serves TN Grant

Message to Grant Admin

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Afterschool Serves Tennessee SEL initiative. Our company is trying to build a healthy afterschool program to compliment our drop-in childcare and youth sports coaching services designed for busy families. Our campers and staff got a lot out of this project.

Background on Athleticademy

Opened NOV 2019 at West Town Mall, Athleticademy is a mix of drop-in childcare and youth sports coaching services combined with boutique retail. Our primary service is for developmental ages 3-12, including special needs. Although we are for-profit, our goal is to help as many families as possible.

We use FUNdamental multi-sport coaching as enrichment for our drop-in childcare services, which allow parents to take hassle-free breaks. Safe, inclusive, and adaptable PLAY has significant developmental benefits. We believe that there are additional therapeutic benefits to be explored.

Social Emotional Learning Project

The SEL project was conducted during our Summer Camp, which also has drop-in childcare at all open times. We tried to time important phases of the project when we had a stable group of campers, but it was a challenge due to the dynamic nature of our program. During the investigation stage, the group decided to help with child literacy and create a Little Free Library. Our company agreed to be steward.

In the planning stage, campers came up with different design ideas for a spare shelving unit. They decided on a "learning tree" which would require multiple art and construction projects. The 3 shelves would be organized by reading level and the space around would be outfitted as a nook.

Our participants varied in age from 2 to 12 with the majority being 3 to 8 and grades Pre-K to 2nd. This was a younger target then the program questionnaires, so a lot of the content had to be explained. We also had a varying number of participants, typically 10-15 at a time with a total of 52 campers throughout the project lifespan. We tried to maintain as much consistency as possible.

Some of the art and construction projects became a bit cumbersome for the campers, but everything came together nicely. Several of the families donated books for the Grand Opening, which was a bit later than planned. We have had several kids use it since the opening, and we hope to increase use.

Our [Little Free Library](#) is registered with the organization and located on their map. We have notified some nearby communities with Facebook Groups and hoping word-of-mouth continues to build awareness of this new resource. We are also trying to get West Town Mall to send out notifications.

Project Media

We collected a lot of great media during the project, which can be accessed [here](#). All of our guests sign a digital release disclosure, but please notify us if anything gets distributed.