



WHERE ABILITY MEETS OPPORTUNITY

To Whom it may concern,

Re: Tidewater Arts Outreach application for Virginia Commission of the Arts Grant 2015

I am writing as the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) for Versability Resources, formerly known as the Arc of the Virginia Peninsula, primarily located in Hampton, VA, with other sites throughout Hampton Roads, to provide services for individuals with intellectual disabilities that focus on working, playing and living fulfilled lives in the community.

In my role, I work closely with administration, managers, individuals, families, specialists, direct support staff and the community to increase the types of opportunities, programs, and experiences that lead to a higher quality of life, engagement, inclusion and a purposive leisure lifestyle. I work directly with TAO to provide programming to two of our 3 day program/business services sites that is focused on using "the arts" to provide these types of experiences for approximately 70-80 adults with intellectual, physical and medical disabilities that focuses on skill development, increasing engagement, increasing leisure interests, connecting with the community, self-expression and increasing the participation in high quality & purposeful activities the day.

We have been partnering with TAO for a number of years and many of our staff & leadership team are personally connected with TAO and I have been on board since Aug 2013. In that short time, together we have transformed the process from expensive activity planning to planning therapeutic and beautiful moments of engaging, purposeful and interaction with the arts, the process behind creation & self expression and been able to change the way we think about the role of the arts for all people. We continue to explore adaptations, mediums, techniques and relationships that enhance that experience of art. Together, Versability Resources & TAO continues to work together, collaborate and share ideas and insight on how to make stronger communities, and experience the arts in new ways for all people. We are grateful for the partnership of another agency that is helping our mission as well as allowing us to be a part of theirs.

Please consider TAO when it comes to financial granting, we are in a fortunate position where our involvement is backed financially and supported by our upper management but not every agency is that lucky. With further grant support, an agency that is already doing such great work on a shoestring budget can be empowered to be able to do even more and continue the cycle of bringing beautiful art experiences to all people and working towards more connected, inclusive and beautiful communities.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on our partnership-  
Sincerely,

*Ashleigh R. Diehl, CTRS 2-20-15*

Ashleigh R, Diehl Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)