

imagine
POSSIBILITIES

WE IMAGINE
POSSIBILITIES
EVERY DAY.

November 2017
Growing at IP



Focus on Employment

For the last six months Imagine Possibilities has been implementing a state funded transformation grant to develop an Employment Department. This program will allow the participants in our Day Support Activities the chance to learn jobs skills, enhance their lives and eventually search for jobs in the community.

“People tend to think that success brings happiness, but actually it is the other way around. Happiness fuels success,” said Rena Van Meter, who joined IP in the role of Employment Consultant last summer. Rena can most often be found working one on one with IP participants who are interested in pursuing their dreams of community based work.



Rena Van Meter
Employment Consultant

“I think employment at IP is a vital part of our mission to provide inclusion in the community. It is not only having new experiences. It adds enrichment to life. Work and productivity are part of a whole life balance. Working at something you enjoy doing makes you feel good about yourself.”

One thing that has been clear from the start of this project is that having dreams makes life more fun. Rena recounted stories about the participants who have been working with her. Dambar Rizal has shown a great aptitude for helping maintain operations at IP. Rena sees his potential to take this success into other settings.

“For Dambar the sense of belonging is very important. He helps us out tremendously. He could be doing even more,” Rena said. Understanding what motivates someone, how a job could help open their life to more fulfillment, is the core of art of developing employment opportunities.

Mastering new skills is a part of this process. Rena cited the recent achievements of Roberta Ellis, who learned to knit with the staff at IP and has been ever more willing to try new activities. IP is unique in seeking to provide access to opportunities to explore employment as part of a Day Support Activities program. The goal is to enhance, not replace our current programs.



Some of you may have had the experience of calling IP and speaking with Ariel Albright, a participant who spends a few hours a week helping in the office. Ariel dreams of working in an office, perhaps as the assistant to a wedding planner. “When Ariel answers the phone and gets (her phone prompt) script right she gets this look of absolute triumph,” Rena said.

Finding employment for individuals experiencing significant disabilities is a challenge, a challenge Rena has accepted with a smile and a great deal of determination.

“The world is filled with employment. I refuse to believe that someone is not going to get a job. More and more big companies are attending events promoting employment for the diverse community.”

Rena Van Meter can be reached at rena@imaginepossibilities.net if you have any ideas or suggestions or would like to get involved in IP’s Employment Program.

Yoga Group

“I love teaching at IP because there is a lot of joy I get to witness when IP’s participants are doing yoga. I get to see the world with a different set of lenses, and see people change and progress.”

Every Monday at 2:30 a group of dedicated IP yoga practitioners gathers in our community room to enjoy classes lead by Cindy Hurlbert of Yoga Visual. IP’s yogis lay out their mats and stretch, stand, bend, breath and meditate under Cindy’s watchful gaze.

A yoga teacher for four years, Cindy also works for the Beaverton School's Community Transition Program. She sees every day how yoga can help all people confront life's challenges and find calm and joy.

"Initially I was attracted to the physical challenge of yoga but as I studied I learned it was helpful for calming the mind," Cindy said. She has found yoga brings benefits like increased body awareness and strength, calming of the nervous system and helping concentration to yoga practitioners with and without special needs.

"(Teaching yoga) is always a process of looking at each person's needs. We incorporate some functional movement to the classes at IP. I always look at breathwork, how to use breathing for calming," Cindy said.



The essence of yoga is small changes repeated over time. By this process practitioners expand their awareness and confidence. Cindy said she has seen this happen at IP; she cited watching Sam Moothart set his feet in warrior one, and seeing Kavita Singh standing up in a way that is more aligned as examples of how small changes over time let IP's yogis experience confidence and joy.

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The class has been a big hit and helps our participants find time to get relaxed on their back or stand one legged in a tree pose. In the summer they stretch in the shade of the trees and they always finish by lying still and resting. If you are ever in the neighborhood on a Monday afternoon, feel free to drop by and join us.

Staff Profile: Sandra Mandujano

Sandra Mandujano first came to work at Imagine Possibilities in 2001. Now a lead staff with responsibility for opening the building, for leading community based activities and assuring daily routines operate smoothly, Sandra is a vital part of what makes Imagine Possibilities a special place.

As IP has grown over the last three years we have seen a heartwarming spectacle, repeated time after time. A participant who left IP as a child and is thinking of coming back to the program comes for a tour - they enter the building a bit nervous, confused, the rooms are bustling, so many new faces, *could this be for me?* Then they see Sandra and their eyes go wide with delight and their arms open wide. It is time for a big hug and all those years melt away. They are back.

Growing up Sandra helped care for an uncle who experienced significant disabilities so coming to work at what was then called the ARC was a natural step.



Sixteen years ago many of IP's participants were children. Sandra met Sam Moothart and Briano Huante when they were eight, Renee McCue when she was only six years old. "I love the participants. Some days they come in and give me a hug."

Originally born and raised in Mexico, Sandra has been helping lead a Spanish language and culture group each week. They learn phrases and go out on outings to stores and restaurants that reflect Spanish language and culture.

While Sandra helped IP's participants grow up, IP has helped shape her family. Her daughter Yareli worked at IP and found a love for the caregiving professions. "The participants changed my daughter's life. She came and played with Sam (Moothart) and Margaret (Rogers). She helped them grow up." Now a young adult herself, Yareli recently completed nursing school and got her first job as a nurse for Washington County.

Imagine Possibilities

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