



EYD NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022 EDITION

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Updates on Project Implementation-

The Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities (EYD) Research Project is currently completing the Spring Semester 2022.

As the school year is concluding for many of the participating school sites, final interviews and assessments are being conducted to learn about participants' overall experiences. Feedback about the curriculum from students and instructors have informed decisions on how to revise the training and support participating students in the following semesters. Our curriculum team has been working diligently to create a more accessible learning experience for students, which will encourage them to seek opportunities in entrepreneurship. The newly revised curriculum will be implemented in the upcoming 2022-2023 school year. We are actively engaged in the process of recruiting school sites for next year.

The student participants have been working hard to develop business plans and pitches to present to judges in anticipation of earning start-up funds for their new business endeavors. We are engaged in the process of simplifying the business plan to make it easier for students to complete and submit for potential funding (up to \$500 in equipment and/or supplies). A few of the businesses being proposed include a babysitting business focused on recreational activities, sticker business, and yard work and snow removal company.

Stay tuned for how our entrepreneurs will continue to develop!

Interview with Rob Rainey: Interim Assistant Superintendent at Illinois Center for Rehabilitation- Roosevelt (ICRE-R)



- How did you become interested in promoting entrepreneurship for people with disabilities?**

I became interested in promoting entrepreneurship for people with disabilities several years ago as a Rehabilitation Services Supervisor at the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Ford City Office. DRS assists individuals with disabilities become entrepreneurs through education, financing and training. I saw the positive impact on an individual life after turning their passion into a successful business.

- How does ICRE-R support young adult entrepreneurs?**

Currently I am the Interim Assistant Superintendent at Illinois Center for Rehabilitation-Roosevelt (ICRE-R). My mission is to support young adult entrepreneurs by making sure we are providing viable classes that educate students in entrepreneurship. We recently started a Self-Employment class that focuses on entrepreneurship and career exploration. We have adopted the EYD curriculum and receive support from UIC. ICRE-R also provides exposure to successful businesses. When a student identifies a business they would like to pursue, we connect that individual with an actual business owner. This allows the student to see the day-to-day operations and ask questions.

- Why did you want to begin using the EYD curriculum for vocational classes at ICRE-R?**

We wanted to use the EYD curriculum for vocational classes at ICRE-R because it fits our student's needs. The curriculum is easy to follow for our younger learners but also meets the needs of our more advanced learners. The curriculum is also great for those who have not chosen an entrepreneurship path and those with businesses ideas ready for development.

- **What worked well when teaching the EYD curriculum? What have students enjoyed the most?**

The ability to engage and hold the student's attention worked very well with the EYD curriculum. Also, having the flexibility to slow the pace of the EYD worked well for our students. Overall, the students enjoyed the modules and the contents of the EYD curriculum.

- **What supports do you think are the most important for new business owners with disabilities to be successful?**

The supports I think are the most important for new business owners with disabilities to be successful is continued support. Entrepreneurs need a network where they can meet other successful business owners. They need accounting and assistance navigating through the Social Security benefit system for the first two years of operation. New business owners also need creative marketing and an understanding of the importance of social media marketing and networking.

- **What are you most looking forward to for the 2022-2023 school year?**

At ICRE-R, we are looking forward to continuing our Self-Employment class using the EYD curriculum. We are excited about our 14 new students that will be attending ICRE-R. These students will also be introduced to entrepreneurship and the benefits of self-employment.

Our new graduate research team members

Alexis Vittallo is a second-year occupational therapy master's student at UIC. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in developmental psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Alexis is interested in learning about supports and services for students with disabilities once they transition out of the school system.



Alexis Vittallo

Sarah Deangelo is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Special Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Sarah taught both elementary and secondary special education serving students with a wide range of disabilities. Sarah's research interests focus on postsecondary programming for students with intellectual disabilities and autism, and disability justice and identity in special education settings.



Sarah Deangelo

Sarah received her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Iowa State University, with an endorsement in Early Childhood Special Education. She received Master of Arts in Teaching in Special Education from Morningside College with a focus on students with significant intellectual disabilities.

Stacy Hart-Brown is an Special Education doctoral student in the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Education. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from University of Cincinnati and Master's of Art in Special Education from National Louis University.



Stacy Hart-Brown

She has served as a Graduate Research Assistant in the Department of Special Education at UIC. For the past decade, she has worked within the educational field in multiple capacities. Her current interests include opportunities for minority students with disabilities, inclusion, and mindfulness practices for students with disabilities.

Chinmay Wadnerkar is a second-year Computer Science graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the College of Engineering.

Chinmay has interned as a data scientist at a healthcare company and intends to use his knowledge to work in the healthcare industry and eliminate obstacles so people can access better healthcare.



Chinmay Wadnerkar

Sonia Massey is a Master of Healthcare Administration Candidate at the University of Illinois Chicago. She received her bachelor's degree in Biospsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience with minors in Entrepreneurship and Gender and Health from the University of Michigan.

Sonia is interested in healthcare and business and is currently a Research Assistant at UIC's Department of Disability and Human Development and a Data Specialist at Erie Family Health Centers. She also began her preceptor ship as an MHA Fellow at Erie Family Health Centers in the Process Improvement team where she is working on her capstone project.



Sonia Massey



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Principal Investigator: Dr. Fabricio Balcazar
Project Coordinator: Dr. Joanna Keel
Contact: jross7@uic.edu