

CORSE and rec department collaborate

**Teen
volunteers
doing some
crafting
with little
campers.**

[COURTESY
PHOTOS]



By Elizabeth Holthaus

This fall, 83 students have returned to school with more confidence and tangible job-readiness skills because they took part in a new training program for summer volunteers at Scituate's summer recreation programs. This collaborative initiative between CORSE (Community of Resources for Special Education) and the Scituate Recreation Department, funded in part by a Scituate Education Foundation (SEF) grant, was developed to fill a need for more solid employability skills for teens, both with and without special needs, who are trying to gain work experience through volunteering.

We asked Tracy Johnston, CORSE president, to tell us



Summer volunteers and kids work and play together at rec department camp.

more about this Integrated Summer Volunteer Training Program. She explained that, for many years, the Recreation Department summer program directors and counselors (both paid positions) have simply not had the time to provide enough supervision and guidance for the summer student volunteers, especially those with special needs. As a result, CORSE had received several requests to provide training assistance and support for these volunteers. Thanks to additional funding for summer 2018, a new volunteer director was hired to oversee all aspects of the integrated volunteer program.

Johnston described the program for us: "Our volunteer training program lasted six weeks and covered many Scituate Recreation programs ranging from the primary Little People, Morning Adventure and Young People Day Programs to summer basketball, soccer and other sports programs. We

had 83 teen volunteers take advantage of this program which consisted of a formal orientation, observation and supervision from a volunteer director, weekly de-briefing sessions for volunteers to ask questions and get more hands-on training as well as an evaluation tool to provide volunteers with specific feedback on their performance."

So, with the first summer of this new program wrapped up, how did it go? Johnson reports, "It's a win-win for ALL teens interested in working at Scituate Recreation to gain job-readiness skills and give children on IEPs the supportive environment they need to successfully access these job skill training opportunities."

The student volunteers, their families, and the camp directors and staff all benefited from this collaboration between CORSE and the Rec Department. The volunteers enjoyed working with more

structure and receiving constructive feedback. Families of the volunteers on IEPs were very pleased that their kids had the opportunity to gain skills in such a supportive environment. The camp directors and staff valued having a Volunteer Director who could provide direct support to volunteers that was just not possible before this program was created.

Scituate Education Foundation is proud to have contributed to this important and productive collaboration that is bringing these Scituate teens skills that they will need to succeed in the real world.

The complete list of SEF 2018 grant recipients can be found at scituateeducation-foundation.org/2018awards/.

To stay informed, sign up for the monthly e-newsletter at scituateeducationfoundation.org/contact/.

*Elizabeth Holthaus for the
Scituate Library Foundation.*

