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High Impact Practices Student Showcase Fall
2024

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There's No Place like UCP Central Florida!

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Recommended Citation

Isidor, Tamar and Sparrow, Natalya, "There's No Place like UCP Central Florida!" (2024). *High Impact Practices Student Showcase Fall 2024*. 59.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/hip-2024fall/59>



UCP CENTRAL FLORIDA

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Abstract

- UCP Charter School is an inclusive program that seeks to provide education to “empower [students] academically and socially” (“UCP Charter Schools: Tuition-Free Charter Schools”).
- UCP has multiple campuses, ranging from early childhood to high school.
 - Ages from six weeks to twenty-one.
- The organization also supplies additional programs such as physical, occupational, & speech therapy. Family Services & Counseling is another program they provide.



Community Impact

- As a volunteer, you are to help make it easier for the administration, staff, and teachers. This allows them to fulfill the organization’s mission which is to “empower children with and without disabilities to achieve their potential by providing individualized support education and therapy in an inclusive environment” (“Our Mission | UCP of Central Florida”).
- As a result of our commitment to the UCP community, the change includes the increased strength for teachers to continue their passion for helping children get an education.
 - Teachers often become overwhelmed by the pressure of providing an education while controlling the behavior of students at a not-so-high pay rate.
 - This stress often leads to an increased rate of teachers leaving the profession.
 - In August of this year, an average of 51,000 teachers and staff left the education profession in the United States (“Quits among educational staff U.S. 2024”).
 - Volunteers help teachers control the chaos and teachers can focus on the curriculum that students need to understand.



Civic Responsibility

- The role of assisting at the front desk and school business manager typically includes distributing papers received from the front desk to designated classrooms, creating notes per student on campus to give to their guardian/parent and so much more.
- Assisting teachers in the classroom involves helping students understand the curriculum, distributing coursework/toys to students, and maintaining a calm environment so the teachers can fulfill their own goals for their students.
- The 21st Century After Care program required volunteers to engage with the students and ensure their safety before getting picked up by parents. This includes playing games with the students, overseeing the students, and guiding them to and from different areas of the school



Course Connection

7 Cs

- **Consciousness of Self:** Identify teachers’ values, beliefs, and actions that relate to their goals for the classroom on that day.
- **Congruence:** Check in with teachers often to ensure that the actions reflect the values of the school/classroom.
- **Commitment:** Taking time throughout the day and intentionally interacting with the students.
- **Collaboration:** Working alongside others passionate about serving the special needs community.
- **Common purpose:** By working alongside volunteers and staff, we all worked to contribute to the education and safety of the students.
- **Controversy with civility:** Providing a new perspective to a student who may be experiencing conflict with another student/teacher.
- **Citizenship:** Serving the community by voluntarily helping UCP teachers and staff.

FISH Method

- Smiling and maintaining positive behavior even when overstimulated by children screaming and running around the classroom.
 - Ex: Park Cancellation Incident
- Remain patient with the children by asking them what they want and showing understanding of their emotions.
- Leaving the stress of midterms, exams, and assignments at home to have an uplifting mood when entering the classroom.
- Make jokes and build connections with the teachers to help them not feel stressed from the chaos in the classrooms.
- Compliment students, teachers, and staff’s outfits/hair to brighten their day.

Reflection



- During our time volunteering at UCP, we got the opportunity to learn about the environment of being in school from a worker’s perspective. Some skills have been improved, which include patience and quick problem-solving. Those have evolved due to the attention of children and the attempt to maintain calmness in the classroom.
- Our involvement has fostered civic responsibility through collaboration/teamwork and personal reflection. (i.e journal assignments).
- We believe that this service learning project has helped us become better citizens through Character Development. The skills mentioned before are now being used outside of classroom settings and more in our personal lives.

Reference(s)

“Our Mission | UCP of Central Florida.” UCP Central Florida, <https://www.ucpcf.org/mission>. Accessed 2 November 2024.

“Quits among educational staff U.S. 2024.” Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1316372/number-quits-educational-staff-seasonally-adjusted/>. Accessed 2 November 2024.

Acknowledgement

Dr. Stacey Malaret - Instructor
Matt Hartigan - Community Engagement Manager
UCP Central Florida