



**Learning Through Assisting: A Service Learning Model linking high school students and youngsters with developmental disabilities. Fresher-Samways K & Roush SE. Institute for Quality of Life; Providence RI**

A collaboration with  
And  
Federal Administration on  
Developmental Disabilities,  
Washington DC

**A. INTRODUCTION**

**Learning Through Assisting** provides a community learning opportunity for high school students to learn about developmental disabilities (DD). The model was the vision of the Individual & Family Advocacy Committee of the RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RI-DDC). In 2002, the RI-DDC established a five-year grant to develop a prototype service learning experience that would facilitate the interaction between high school learners and youngsters with DD. With assistance from the Institute for Quality of Life, the RI-DDC submitted the model to the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, US Department of Health and Human Services, where it was accepted as a Project of National Significance.

**B. PARTICIPANTS**

- Leadership Academy, JROTC Hope High School Providence, RI



• <u>Community Partners</u>	<u>Service Placement sites</u>
Family Service of RI	Early Intervention Pool
Rhode Island Hospital	Therapeutic Play Group
Providence Center School	Waiting room
Mt. Hope/East Side Y	Speech Therapy
	Swim Program
	Child Care Center

3. Additional contributors

- Lifespan, Inc.
- University of Rhode Island
- “Family & Friends” CPR
- Adapted Swim Aide training & certification

**C. OUTCOMES**

**1. High school learners:**

- gained knowledge, through a didactic and experiential curriculum, of DD, normal & delayed development in the



- gross motor function
- fine motor function
- speech & language
- psychological



- gained valuable skills, including
  - CPR
  - Adapted swim Aide certification
  - Activity modification

c. explored disability-related careers



- developed inclusive attitudes towards persons with disabilities

**2. Youngsters with developmental disability**

- increased their participation in community-based activities,



- gained advocates in the community through self-promotion.



**D. USING THE MODEL**

This model can be adopted or adapted to fit your student and community agency needs. It has already been modified to be used as an adjunct to a special education internship program and conceptualized for elementary to middle schoolers by using local developmental advocacy agencies and nationally available health and safety promotion programs. Service can be through books and games, swim programs or other modes such as adapted sports or pet therapy.

Please contact us at [www.RIDDC.org](http://www.RIDDC.org) for a curriculum resource guide or for technical support.