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### **Written Report: Club Inclusion**

My placement this semester was at Club Inclusion Halifax. Club Inclusion is a registered charity-based organization that operates in both Halifax and Dartmouth. Club Inclusion runs programs for youth or adults that have varying degrees of abilities and challenges. Through these programs, members are a part of a warm and inclusive community and they get to learn life skills and have fun with other members. The goal of Club Inclusion is highlighted in its mission statement, “ Club Inclusion provides social, cultural and recreational programs accessible to all people with disabilities. We enrich lives by building friendships, community, and success” ([theclubinclusion.com](http://theclubinclusion.com)). Besides doing programs, Club Inclusion hosts many events and undertakes many projects throughout the year. With Covid, it has been difficult to do events of this nature. However, I was lucky enough to participate in the early rehearsal stages of the play that they are planning to put on in June. I worked every Wednesday participating in both day-program and then theatre club during my placement. These sessions started online over Zoom but then changed to the optimal format of in-person after a few weeks. During the course of my placement, I kept a weekly journal that entailed everything I did that week at Club Inclusion.

January 12th was my first day at Club Inclusion. I had been in contact with the general manager Jackie Rivers throughout the weeks prior to the start of my placement but never met in

person. Unfortunately, it had to remain this way as my first week at the Club was done through online Zoom calls due to the spike in Covid cases. I hopped on the Zoom call five minutes before it was scheduled to begin and was pleasantly surprised to see Jackie there. We chatted briefly about what today was going to entail before letting in the rest of the people into the Zoom call. After a quick introduction, Jackie left for the day and the online activities began. For the first hour, they played music and the members of the Club along with the staff danced along. Following this, we did more ice-breaker-type activities that were fun and light. This went on for a few hours until 3 pm when we received a 30-minute break until the next session. The later session was quite similar as we played interactive online activities and I started to get to know more of the members better. At 6 pm, the session was over for the day and everyone said goodbye. It was a very fun and light first day at the club. However, I did wish I receive more direction and guidance on what my role was going to be at the Club for the next few months. Instead, I did not really have a chance to chat with anyone one on one about this and instead was kind of just left to learn on my own. Talks about the Club resuming in-person sessions soon was exciting as I believe it would be a better experience to have in-person rather than over a zoom call. All in all, a good first day and I hope to receive more guidance in the upcoming weeks especially when it becomes in-person sessions.

Today was January 19th and my second day at Club Inclusion. Much like the previous week, the sessions were held virtually on zoom. Some of the members were in person at the Club but the majority seem to be online. However, there is optimism going around that we may begin in-person small group sessions starting as early as last week. My first session which started at 1 pm only had 10 zoom participants including myself and a few other workers. This surprised me

as last week we had close to 30 participants. Today we did an online drawing tutorial as well as a karaoke activity. It was really fun and more engaging with only a few participants. After a short break, the next session started and the turnout was much higher. With almost 20 participants we played larger role-playing activities including dungeons and dragons which everyone seemed to enjoy. Being online is fine but I believe in-person would make it infinitely better. Once again I did not receive a ton of direction from any of the staff and I just helped out with the undertaking of the pre-planned activities. Very fun day and I feel more comfortable now that I know mostly everyone at Club Inclusion.

January 26th. Today was my third week at Club Inclusion and my first time being in person. The Club is located beside the church on Joseph Howe Drive near the Armdale roundabout. However, my first session of the afternoon was online through Zoom. We did some fun activities that included making our own homemade Play-doh. Also, we did some interactive storytelling games and the members really enjoyed them. After my zoom session, I headed down to the actual Club Inclusion for the drama club session which was from 4-6 pm. I was met at the front door by Jackie which was nice since it was my first time actually meeting her face to face. Jackie gave me a quick rundown on how things operated in person and then gave me a rapid Covid test to do to make sure I was negative. After that, she introduced me to everyone else and it was nice to meet everyone in person finally after many Zoom sessions together. They were very Covid cautious at the Club as we were divided into three groups separated by plexiglass and each given individual desk spaces to sit at. Even in our groups we still participated in activities altogether and it was really fun. One project we worked on was coming up with ideas for the music video the drama club was going to shoot in the upcoming months. After the activities for the day, we

sanitized everything and made sure everything was cleaned up. Overall I really enjoyed being in person over the Zoom session. At some points, it was a bit awkward because I did not know how everything operated and what the protocols were so I felt a bit useless. However, as I get more familiar with the place it will begin to feel natural. All the members and workers are lovely people and I cannot wait for hopefully more in-person sessions soon.

February 9th. Today was my first time at Club Inclusion in two weeks. I had a family emergency last week so I had to miss it. I offered to work during Dalhousie's reading week to make up for this missed time and Jackie agreed. Today started once again with the first session being an online zoom call. We played an icebreaker warmup game to start and then we had a guest singer. She sang and played the guitar for an hour while taking requests from everybody, it was called "music therapy". Today's evening session was called "theatre club" and it was held in person. When I arrived I had to take a Covid test and then I helped set up for today's activities. Today's activities consisted mostly of just improv. We took turns using props and acting out situations like a commercial. Once again I preferred the in-person session way more than the zoom one. I'm starting to get more familiar with the members, workers, and the building itself.

February 16th. Today was very exciting! It was the first time that the day program session was in person. I went down to Club Inclusion around noontime and talked with everyone, including Jackie until the members came at 1 pm. Once everyone showed up we did activities involving the gym equipment, decorating cookies, and playing a dice game. Today there were more members in person due to Covid restrictions loosening. This was nice because it gave me the opportunity to be responsible for many of the members on my own. Previously, we sometimes only had a few members show up so it felt as though I was not contributing much to

the activity. Following the day session in person, I hurried home and did the second session online through Zoom. It was a shorter one in which we came up with skits based on the Disney movies. There is optimism around Club that we will have large in-person groups starting in two weeks. This is really exciting because I haven't yet experienced the normal/full Club Inclusion experience yet.

February 23rd. Today I had a full day in-person session at club inclusion. Today was probably my favourite day here so far. Each time I am getting more familiar with how Club runs and feel more useful in turn. The members are getting more comfortable with me also I believe as almost all of them remembered my name and I have had long conversations with them. Today we had Steph come in and sing songs for us on her guitar. After that, we painted with everything but a paintbrush. This was chaos. The paint was everywhere as staff and members used their feet to paint a huge canvas. The evening session was once again drama club and we did little skits and dancing as usual. With Covid restrictions easing in Nova Scotia we'll continue to have larger and larger groups which will be nice.

March 2nd. Today was the largest group I've seen so far at Club Inclusion. More staff and members so it was a little hectic but felt more normal. It was my favourite day here so far. We painted rocks, had chair races, and played some music guessing games. The second session was online so I went up to the office and did it from there. Also, we had a staff end-of-the-day meeting which was nice as it felt nice to hear some feedback and tips. Jackie also mentioned that she would love to have me stay at Club Inclusion following the end of my placement. Glad this class has led me to this opportunity as I would love to stay here and get more experience.

March 9th. Today was once again all in-person. We painted rocks, had storytime, and played some role-playing games. After doing the painting I cleaned up all the brushes and plastic plates with the dishwasher. It was nice as I was getting more familiarized with the kitchen and where everything belonged by doing the dishes. The second session was drama club and we were together as one big group. We shared how our week was going and then we did an acting game. Following that, we rehearsed a skit from our upcoming play which was exciting. Today was really busy, and many of the members were misbehaving, but it was still fun!

March 16th. Today was a routine day. Almost all of the same members and workers for the day program were there today. Once again we were confined to two sides of the gym and I helped the members on my side. Feels good to be in some sort of routine and learn more about members and the club itself so I can pursue tasks on my own. In the evening drama session, we played drama games and worked on our upcoming play! Fun but an ordinary day here at Club Inclusion. Sad to see my placement come to an end soon but I hope that I will remain here in some capacity.

March 23rd. When I walked in today it looked much different. We had couches and a bunch of comfy chairs on one side of the hall, while the other side was dedicated to the regular desks. We did some fun hands-on activities like dodgeball and also some drawing. Before the final theatre club session, I had a chat with Jackie about my future here. She offered me the opportunity to stay here at the Club and become part of the staff! This was great news. I will be working full-time for their summer camp programs and a few days of the week this spring. I really have enjoyed my time here at Club and was not ready to say goodbye yet so I am really happy about this opportunity. My time here for my placement was great. The first couple of weeks that

were all done on Zoom were admittedly not the best. However, once it became in-person sessions, I began having so much fun.

March 30<sup>th</sup>. Today was a very informative day. As I will begin to work at Club Inclusion following my placement, I had to do some more hands-on training. One of today's biggest tasks was to learn all about how to take care of a certain member who comes to the day program every Wednesday. I shadowed my co-worker Tamara as she taught me how to use the feeding tube as well as give the member their medications. I also observed two other co-workers give personal care to some of the members because I will be called on soon to perform these duties when I start working. We also did fun activities today which included throwing paint at a large paper mural outside. As the weather continues to warm up, the number of options for activities grows exponentially because they love going outside for activities at Club Inclusion.

My time working under my placement at Club Inclusion was great. All the members and staff here made me feel welcome and I have made a genuine bond with so many people. Admittedly with my placement being at Club Inclusion, it was not the most stressful or academic placement out there. However, that does not mean that I was not met with zero challenges. Being at Club, really forced me to break out of my shell as you have to commit to let loose if you really want to engage with the members. You cannot be a very serious and humourless person as the members would not respond positively to that. My role during my placement was to help the other staff run their sessions. I assisted them with setting up, working individually with members, trying to keep everyone engaged, and keeping the building clean. As my time went on I began to have a larger role as I was more confident with knowing what had to be done. However, I never undertook a specific individual project, instead, I was there to assist the staff.

They have a good system in place and I worked only once a week so understandably it was hard to really get in the groove of things. However, as I am joining the permanent staff following my placement, I know I will take on a larger role as working at Club becomes an almost everyday routine.