

# SPACS NEWS

A YEAR IN REVIEW

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## Top stories in this newsletter



**SPACS VR EXPERIENCE**



**AUTISM CERTIFICATION**



**COVID PROTOCOLS**



**RE-OPENING FOR IN-PERSON SERVICES**

## THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

Since this time last year, we have been working vigorously to produce an alternative that would be conducive to our in-person experiences at the physical locations. We have been running our virtual experience on the Zoom platform for a year now, and it has grown into a rave worthy program!

We will continue to offer this program after we open our doors for in-person services as an option. We look forward to continuing serving our community members in either capacity!

## IBCCES AUTISM CERTIFICATION

We did it! The Smart Place is now IBCCES Certified as an Autism center! This means that the company is equipped to better serve those individuals on the autism spectrum. This certification allows the staff to be abreast of the latest and most efficient knowledge to use in our professional practices.

We welcome all individuals with cognitive disorders as well as sensory disorders and others that may go unnoticed. Our goal is inclusion and acceptance for those that are a part of these communities.

## COVID PROTOCOLS

Within the last year, our world as a day support provider has drastically changed. We have been taking many precautions to safely reopen and serve our communities of individuals. The CDC guidelines for our type of service is very strict and are similar to those for other healthcare workers (essential workers) and public schools.

We are still preparing for the buildings to be in much better shape as well as the staff fully trained to efficiently handle the new protocols and instruct our participants differently.

## RE-OPENING SOON!

The new year will bring a new and improved SPACS! We will be reopening our services and offering so much more! Services will take place in at least 2 locations and 4 forms of services. CAG is still our mainstay, but locale will be split into CAG Glenfair and CAG for inclusion at Linecrest. Also we will offer CLS and the virtual experience.

We are on target to open our doors in January 2022! We hope to see our returning participants and new starts to the program.

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## **WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!!!**

The Smart Place Virtual Experience has been an awesome outlet for the participants to engage with each other as well as the staff they are familiar with! It offers multiple subject matters as well as games and entertainment factors. Some of the things that are featured on the sessions are the news report which includes hot topics, sports, weather and current events as well as virtual field trips and sign language lessons.

Currently the program is a two hour long program that will be expanding to six hours per day once the new year arrives. The platform used for the virtual experience is Zoom which offers such features as annotating and breakout rooms that allow us to tailor lessons to each individuals needs for personal engagement. The lessons are delivered by staff as well as outside entities like YouTube and Netflix.

As the expansion of the service starts we look to add home engagement virtual lessons that will require downloadable apps to be used in session. This will add another layer to the experience that allows for a better evaluation process of progress of each participant. We hope that our efforts in this service continue to give our community a safe, socially distant and productive environment to thrive in.

## **CERTIFIED!**

IBCCES stands for The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards. It provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders. This was important and imperative for SPACS to have because it allows us a branch of expansion and knowledge that will create a more professional environment and staffing module.

All of our current staff members are Autism Certified and are recognized as professionals in that area. They will be responsible for the support and services provided to our individuals with autism. The goal is to provide a well rounded multidisciplinary training program and ensure updated best practices. This certification helps our instructors and administrators to recognize and address the issues of communication and behavior in whole new ways they have never had training for.

## **FOLLOW THE LEADER**

The CDC is our lead on what recommendations are made for our type of facility. They have given us a wide spread of specific procedures and methods for cleaning, program area staging and social distancing guides for the participants we serve. Our goal is to use the vast majority of the recommendations and make them workable for our environment.

Our spaces will be adjusted to accommodate our participants based on 6ft social distancing concepts. We will gradually reduce to 3ft social distancing as the CDC recommends. All staff will be trained on CDC recommendations for environmental cleaning. The buildings will also have social distancing markers for participants and staff to follow. We are taking all the proper precautions to ensure we open with ease and safety because it is important for our community.

## **OPEN! OPEN! OPEN!**

It is almost that time for us to open our doors to in-person services and we can't wait for you to see what we have changed! First of all, the structure of the business is different. We will be equipped to accommodate our regular population but in multiple ways so that everyone is serviced.

We will offer in person services to our medically fragile and high risk participants at the upper level of the Glenfair location. Our Level 1 Autism individuals and moderate to high functioning developmentally disabled individuals will be serviced at our community inclusion center at Linecrest. Our CLS and summer participants will be serviced at the lower level at the Glenfair center. We will also offer an expanded version of the virtual experience that will extend to regular program hours 9am-3pm.

We are so happy and anxious to serve our participants again. We will be releasing multiple surveys to ensure that we serve your needs properly and efficiently. If you are new to The SPACS program, and are interested in enrollment, please contact Lisa Tanahill at [ltannahill@thesmartplace.org](mailto:ltannahill@thesmartplace.org)