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CIBACS

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### ***Self-Evaluation***

#### **1. In what ways did this project require you to become a critical thinker?**

The senior project required me to be a critical thinker in various ways. I was constantly coming up with new ideas and better ways to improve my project in order for my goal to be reached. I was forced to overcome many obstacles whether it be working with other companies, finding the perfect venue, managing my expenses, or obtaining an adequate amount of sponsors. As an event planner, I definitely learned how to weigh my options. The time I used my critical thinking skills the most was choosing a location for the event. I visited and researched various locations and had to consider many factors before securing a venue. I had to take into consideration the price, the maximum occupancy, if alcohol and live music was permitted, if the location was accessible to senior citizens, what insurances needed to be acquired, date and time availability, available parking, the overall atmosphere, and unforeseen expenses with lighting and staff members. When it came to booking a venue, I thought I would be able to afford the Senior Center in Central Park. After factoring in catering, decorations, music, and supplies, the overall cost of the event was way over my budget. I had to overcome the obstacle of losing a venue by re-evaluating my options. My next feasible option was the Newland Barn, but there was a

miscommunication with City Hall and once again, I lost a venue. To overcome this major and recurring problem, my critical thinking skills absolutely came into play. I reached out to my mentor to see if she was willing to host the event at her facility and everything fell into place. I secured a venue, free of charge. As a high school student with little income, I definitely had to be careful and evaluate my finances. I had to consider how much I was willing to spend on a venue, but also decorations, supplies, photographers, and a band. I made sure to research each of my options in order to obtain the best price. Also, I used my resources and connections to my advantage and reached out to people that I personally know. Typically, swing bands cost around \$1,000 or more for two hours, but with utilizing my connections, I was able to book a band for \$700. Along with that, I was also able to secure a professional photographer - free of charge. Above all, I learned critical thinking the most with picking a location and along the way to complete my project, I continued to use the skill.

**2. Explain what aspects of the project encouraged you to become creative and self-expressive.**

Due to me being the event planner, I was able to take on the leadership role and be as expressive as I wanted with the project. The event allowed me to be creative through creating my own personalized flyers, donation letters, and website. I was the most creative when it came to the website because I was able to format and create it however I liked. Personally, I like very professional, clean, and easy to navigate websites. Therefore, I made sure to generate the website as to not only how people would like it, but how I would as well. I also felt very self-expressive with the whole idea and goal of my event. It is not everyday that you hear an eighteen year old have a passion for working with the elderly. As strange as it may sound to people, I felt very

proud and happy to express my love for working with senior citizens. Regarding the actual event, I will be able to be creative through setting-up and decorating the event to my liking. All in all, my project allowed me to be very creative and self-expressive in many different ways.

### **3. How did the project help you become a life long learner?**

The project helped me become a life long learner by exposing me to different obstacles and problems. I especially learned that time is limited and to always use my time wisely. I will admit that I did procrastinate on my project and I could have used my time more efficiently. Therefore, I learned that planning and having a schedule can help me immensely. Along with that, I also learned that communication is incredibly critical when it comes to the business world. Although I was the leader of my project, I could not have done it without reaching out and communicating with different people. Another example is dfsdfsdfs

### **4. How did the project require you to become a responsible citizen who contributes positively to the common good of school and society?**

My project required me to become a responsible citizen by contributing to the community and donating all the proceeds of my event towards the Alzheimer's Association, instead of making a profit out of my project. Sophomore year of CIBACS, I knew right away that I wanted make a difference in the elderly community. Not only will I be able to bring the elderly community together, but the Orange County community. By contributing to further research and finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease, I will allow the Alzheimer's Association to put the funds into action. In addition, I took the responsible action of donating the money to a greater cause and thus became more well- rounded and felt pleased I gave back to my community.

**5. Explain how you have become a more effective communicator as a result of this project.**

This project helped me become a more effective communicator, both oral and written. My communication skills progressively advanced through the project which allowed the result of my event to be successful. I expanded my oral communication through face-to-face communication with sponsors and different managers. Along with that, when searching for potential venues, I had to properly communicate with different owners regarding their policies and requirements. I spoke to managers from Sandy's, PetSmart, Mama's, and many more. Along with that, my oral communication skills advanced through holding meetings with my mentor. Not only did my oral communication skills progress, but also my written skills. I learned how to conduct well written and professional emails when reaching out to potential sponsors, communicating with my mentor, and reaching out to different services - catering, band, and photographer. In specific, I have emailed Shari Kowalke and Arlene Erickson regarding CIBACS' insurance and Federal Tax ID. When reaching out to different services, I contacted Kitty's Catering, our photographer, Chris Viola, and the Swing Kittens' manager, Dan Menthe. In regards of venues, I also sent well-written emails to Randy Pesquira for the Central Park Senior Center, Caroline Richards for the Newland Barn, and Marion Miele for Crown Cove Senior Living. I became a better communicator by emailing these different people at the necessary times to complete my project on time.

**6. Summarize your research.**

The main research I did during the project was towards booking a venue (see #1). A lot of my project required researching different options for venues, food, and service. As a high school

student with limited expenses, I had to research different companies in order to obtain the most affordable option. I mainly used Yelp and Thumbtack to research different services within Orange County. Yelp is a review service that allows consumers to rate companies on their personal experience. Whereas Thumbtack is an Internet service that matches a buyer's request to a professional service. I mainly used Yelp to research different catering companies. In order for the event to be professional and well liked, I needed to research people's personal experiences with the many catering options. I utilized Thumbtack to research the pricing on local swing bands and different photo booth companies. Aside from researching needed materials for the event, I also researched the Alzheimer's Association and their goals as an organization. As a non-profit event, of course I needed to further research what the funds were going towards.

**7. Explain the stages, or phases, involved in your project and estimate the hours spent on each stage.**

There are three main stages to my project - preparation for the event, the day of the event, and after the event. So far, the longest stage has been preparing for the event. This stage of the project consists of booking a venue, securing a swing band, finding sponsors, promoting the event, creating a website, organizing raffle baskets, emailing various people, and securing a photographer. The time spent on preparations for the event started in August and went all the way to April. Thus, an approximation of time would be eighty hours. The way I calculated these hours was adding up the time spent on activities for the event in my activity logs. Due to me still preparing for the event, there will be more hours spent towards preparation. On the day of the event, May 10th, guests will have 3-5 P.M. I will prepare and set up the venue one hour before and spend another hour after the event to clean up. Thus, a total of four hours will be spent on the

actual event date. Due to the event not being held yet, I am unsure how many hours will be spent after the event. After the event, I will have to meet with the CIBACS President or Treasurer and give either of them the proceeds from the event. From there, they will be able to write a check with the proceeds I raised from towards the Alzheimer's Association. Also, since my event is after April 23th, I must upload pictures from the event as evidence towards my Senior Plan Written Report. Therefore, for the stage after the event the approximated time should be at most five hours. Finally, the total approximated time for all three stages is about 89 hours.

**8. Describe the materials and/or information most essential for successful completion for your project.**

There are many materials that are needed in order for *Senior Swing* to happen. The needed materials include a venue, tables, chairs, gift baskets, acquired donation items, swing band, sound system, table cloths, utensils, cups, food, drinks, napkins, vases, flower arrangements, raffle tickets, the *Senior Swing* Wix website, and bowls for raffle tickets. All of these materials are essential for the day of the event to be successful. Due to *Senior Swing* being the first event I have ever planned, almost all of the items were not in my possession. Thankfully, my mentor was able to provide the majority of the needed materials with no cost for me. The information needed for a successful completion of my project mainly came from my mentor, Marion. She provided me with information on what companies to reach out to and ask for donations, information on the Alzheimer's Association, and what to include in an event.

**9. Who were your most valuable human resources? And why? Please explain.**

The most valuable human resources consist of my mentor, Marion (see #8) and my advising teacher, Mr. Strachan. Marion was the number one guide when preparing for the actual event.

When it came to writing my papers and figuring out the kinks of my event, Mr. Strachan was definitely the one to help me the most. Mr. Strachan provided me with meetings to proofread each of my papers before they were finalized. Mr. Strachan also shared critical information and suggestions. I would not have known to go to the CIBACS Treasurer and President when it comes time to donating the money I raised from the event. Without him, I also would not have known that all donations must be made out to the CIBACS Foundation and not the Alzheimer's Association. Lastly, one of the most important suggestions he shared with me was the option of serving alcohol at the event.

**10. Would you recommend your type of project for future seniors? Please explain.**

Of course I would recommend my type of project to future seniors, but only if they were passionate towards the cause. When first deciding on what my project would be, I found it incredibly critical to have my project be something that I am passionate about. I have always loved helping and being an aid for the elderly so I was very set on having my project involve the elderly. I also believe my project was the perfect blend of creativity with a leadership role and also involving business tactics. If a future student is looking to take on the leadership role while benefiting a cause, then a non-profit event would be ideal. Personally, I would recommend my particular project to future seniors, but only if they were passionate about the overall project.

**11. What specific personal satisfactions or knowledge have you gained from this experience?**

There has been many personal satisfactions that I have gained from this senior project experience. First and foremost, my event was able to benefit a cause that I have always been so passionate about - the elderly. It was also incredibly satisfactory to see how excited my

classmates and peers were about my event. When seeking potential sponsors, it always made me happy to see how impressed those were when they heard I was only a senior in high school and planning such an elaborate event. Seeing how impressed everyone was, I became extremely confident and proud of my event. The most valuable knowledge that I received from this project was to manage time wisely and to never give up on yourself. I had an incredibly difficult time trying to find a venue at an affordable price. After my plans fell through with the Newland Barn, I began to think this project was not for me. The disbelief in myself led to my lack of time management. In the end, everything eventually worked out and fell into place perfectly. Therefore, I learned to never give up on myself.

**12. What do you consider the biggest challenge you overcame while completing your project?**

The biggest challenge that I overcame while completing my project was definitely booking a venue (see #1). I had to re-evaluate my venue options several times due to my limited finances as a student and/or not meeting all my desired criteria. I overcame this challenge by utilizing my resources and reaching out to my mentor, Marion. She was able to provide me with a venue for free.

**13. We can learn a lot from how we overcome obstacles. Describe some problems you encountered.**

(See #1 and #12) Besides finding a venue, another problem that I encountered was obtaining sponsors. I emailed and hand delivered over twenty donation letters to different companies. Very little companies were willing to donate or even email me back. Another problem I encountered was having my event date past the due date of our project. The only available date to rent the



Newland Barn was May 11th, therefore I went ahead and attempted to book the venue. I worked at a pace that would allow me to complete everything before the event date. Like I mentioned earlier, my plan fell through with the Newland Barn and then I had the option to host my event before the due date of our project. Due to me working towards the day of May 11th, I felt very stressed as to whether I should move the event day forward.

**14. How did you handle these problems?**

(See #1) Since a lot of companies were unwilling to donate, I had to go out and speak to more companies than I had expected. I went towards the smaller and more local businesses that were willing to support those within their community. In regards to the event date, I evaluated my project and realized that my event would be much more organized and successful if I kept the date in May and not before April 23rd.

**15. How is your project original or creative?**

My project is original and creative because I have not heard of another high school student in Orange County who planned an event generated towards senior citizens. Typically, adults are in charge of booking events like *Senior Swing*. Along with that, a lot of senior centers have a team of people that work together to generate an event for their elderly. Whereas, I took on the leadership role without other team members and only at eighteen years old. My project was not only original, but also creative because I was able to design the event as to however I envisioned it. I was able to pick the theme of the event and design my own donation letter and website. In less than a month, I will also be able to be creative when it comes to setting up the actual event.

**16. If you had the chance to do it over, what would you do differently now that you know what you're doing?**

If I had the chance to do it over again, I would most definitely manage my time a lot better and documented more evidence. Due to my poor time management at some stages of my project, I was much more stressed than I needed to be. The stress I put upon myself led me to feel less confident in my project at times. I began questioning if I would be able to fulfill my goals of the project. With that being said, I would have avoided the stress and managed my time more wisely by following my timeline. Although I do have evidence, I wish I took more video logs to truly document my progress.

**17. What is the best part of your project?**

I believe the best part of my project was the personal satisfaction of knowing that I hosted an event to benefit the Alzheimer's Association. Like I said above, I knew that I wanted to make a difference in the community and put something towards a cause I am very passionate about (see 11). Knowing that I will be able to aid in the research of finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease just lets me know that all of my hard work, stress, and obstacles were all worth it. As a high school student, I am able to say that I directly benefited the Alzheimer's Association in a big way. In the future, if a cure for Alzheimer's disease is found, I will know that I donated towards that cause.

**18. What is the most interesting new thing that you learned about yourself while doing this assignment?**

While doing this assignment, the most interesting new thing that I learned about myself was my love for event planning. I always knew I enjoyed taking on the role of the leader, but never thought to plan and host an event. I absolutely loved being in charge and having control over everything. Being an event planner let me be creative, in charge, and work towards something I

am passionate about. I had never planned an event prior to *Senior Swing*, but after all the joy it has brought me, I definitely look forward to planning another event in the future.

**19. How does your final product measure up to what you pictured in your mind when you first thought of it?**

While visioning the final outcome of my project back in August, I believe the event some what measures up to my standards. I envisioned charging guests a fee to enter the event. I planned on having ticket fees cover the cost of renting a venue, desired services, food, drinks, and decorations. I definitely got a little ahead of myself and forgot to take into consideration that I am a high school student with very little expenses. Due to my event being held at Crown Cove Senior Living, I no longer need to charge guests to enter because I obtained the venue, food, drinks, and decorations for free. The name of my event was originally *Senior Prom*, so I also first envisioned my event as more like a Prom with a much more whimsical theme. Although my event does not pertain these ideas that I envisioned, the final product measures up to the overall goal : simply hosting an event to celebrate the elderly while benefiting the Alzheimer's Association.

**20. Look at the rubric. Is your project exceptional, strong, capable, or weak? Be specific as you justify your opinion.**

I believe my project is between exceptional and strong, but also could have been better. I turned in all of my required papers on time and attended every provided meeting with Mr. Strachan. Also, I used each meeting to my advantage by revising my papers where constructive criticism was given. I will admit, my time management could have been up to exceptional potential if I had planned my time out better from the beginning. Though, I am an extremely hard worker, but

of course I make mistakes. I learned so much from the mistakes I made in this project, as well from the obstacles and challenges I was forced to overcome. My learning stretch in this project is shown through my more efficient communication skills, as well with my more abundant knowledge of hosting an event. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my project and believe my hard work and passion will pay off.