Volunteerism is a huge part of Project SEARCH Southern Miss initiative. Volunteering is one of the most beneficial ways for the students to get out into their communities while learning. In the classroom the students learn about workplace social skills that include communicating with others. Community volunteer events assist the students with developing their social skills through ‘real world’ experiences. Volunteerism by individuals with disabilities can be individually meaningful while adding real value for the community. Social inclusion can help the students develop personal happiness, a sense of belonging, shape positive behaviors, and create a sense of belonging and independence.

Volunteerism also assists with developing marketable skills and job opportunities. Through their participation in the volunteer events, the students are able to practice their skills they have learned in the classroom. Volunteering helps to increase marketable job skills while making community connections.

References:


The Project SEARCH students teamed up with IDS Gulf Coast Project STICK staff to host a Halloween haunted house event. Project STICK coordinates community events to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Funded through the Mississippi Council for Developmental Disabilities, the project’s slogan is “sticking together through recreation to enhance quality of life through recreation and education for individuals with developmental disabilities”.

The project SEARCH students served as volunteers for the event. They assisted with decorations, dressed up in Halloween costumes, worked in game booths, and welcomed the many visitors. The event had over 70 participants that included children, families, students and the Long Beach Mill Creek residents.

If you have information or news you would like to include be included in the next newsletter, please email information to jin.mcclendon@usm.edu by November 20.

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