Horticulture Therapy Internship
Erika Winters Heilmann
Goal: 1,000 hours at Legacy Health in Portland, Oregon to become Board Certified as a Horticulture Therapist
Oregon State University: graduation date 6/2024
Therapeutic Horticulture degree option

7 Therapeutic Garden Characteristics
1. Scheduled & programmed activities
2. Features modified to improve accessibility
3. Well-defined perimeters
4. Profusion of plants & people/plant interactions
5. Benign & supportive conditions
6. Universal design
7. Recognizable place-making

Examples of practicum sessions:
1. Sensory stimulation: smell, touch, sounds, sights
2. Cognitive stimulation: engage in plant legends & lore
3. Memory stimulation
4. Nature crafts
5. Rehabilitate fine motor coordination
6. Rehablete standing/walking endurance
7. Socialization
8. Respite from trauma

Populations served this summer:
1. Pediatrics at Randall Children’s Hospital
2. Older adults at West Hills Senior Village

Populations to be served fall, winter, & spring:
1. Legacy RIO rehabilitation patients
2. Legacy Unity behavioral health patients
3. West Hills Skilled Nursing Facility

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Benefits of Horticulture Therapy:
1. Reduced heart rate
2. Reduced blood pressure
3. Reduced cortisol levels
4. Improved strength
5. Improved endurance
6. Enhanced cognition/memory
7. Improved social skills
8. Improved problem-solving

Support gratefully received from the E.R. Jackman Friends & Alumni Internship Support Program
Special thanks to my supervisors, Teresia Hazen, HTR and Meghan McKiernan, HTR for all their support and guidance!

Summer Intern Responsibilities:
1. 3 hour pediatric shift/week
2. 4 hour senior shift/week
3. Monthly team meetings
4. Bi-weekly supervisor meetings
5. 8 hours/week garden work
6. Weekly resource share with team
7. Weekly plant ID for what’s in bloom
8. Extracurricular lectures & trainings
9. Advanced study & readings:
   a. Patient-Practitioner Interactions
   b. Therapeutic Recreation Processes & Techniques
   c. Developing Professional Behaviors
   d. Therapy Dictionary, 2nd ed.

Horticulture therapy is programmed, nature-based activities, conducted in tandem with the rehabilitative medical team to meet clinical physical, cognitive, emotional, and/or social goals.