YAMPA VALLEY AUTISM PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

11.26.23

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Yampa Valley Autism began in 2002 as a grassroots support group led by a small group of parents who had children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Their goal was to obtain high-quality, up-to-date services for their children with autism in a small rural community. In 2007, the group, now officially named Yampa Valley Autism Program (YVAP), obtained its 501(c)3 status and expanded its offerings to children with other developmental disabilities. With more demand, YVAP professionalized, transitioning from a working board and volunteers to hiring an executive director and staff. The following strategic plan outlines the broad goals and strategies to ensure the viability and sustainability of YVAP and to increase its support and financial foundation.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

1. **Vision for the Future:** Neurodiverse individuals and families in the Yampa Valley are valued and accepted.
2. **Mission:** Yampa Valley Autism helps neurodiverse youth aged 3-21 by providing individual therapy, social skills integration, community partnerships, community education, workplace readiness, and family resources.
3. **Our Values:** Yampa Valley Autism upholds the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for our employees and the individuals we serve.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

I. Individual Therapy

A. Goal 1: YVAP is able to provide individual therapy for all kids that need it.

1. Strategy 1: Identify the need in the community (how many kids).
2. Strategy 2: Prioritize early intervention, regardless of Medicaid/health care status.
3. Strategy 3: Educate pediatricians, other health care providers, and school districts in Routt County on how to identify autism and refer to YVAP.

4. Strategy 4: Recruit and train more Applied Behavior Analyst (ABA) therapists.
5. Strategy 5: Recruit and train more Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT).
6. Strategy 6: Identify and secure larger office space for individual and group therapy and programming.
7. Strategy 7: Create clear measures of program success beyond clearing the waitlist.

II. Social Skills

A. Goal 1: YVAP provides opportunities for clients (3-21) to practice what they learn in individual therapy in a social setting.
   1. Strategy 1: Combine social skills training with ABA, differentiate from social cognition.
   2. Strategy 2: Adapt social skills therapy with ABA to get reimbursed by Medicaid.
   3. Strategy 3: Create measures of success for programs and individuals.
   4. Strategy 4: Reframe Special Activities Support (SAS) as part of social skills.

III. Community Partnerships

A. Goal 1: Community partners contribute financially to integrate YVAP clients into their programs.
B. Goal 2: Community partners recognize the benefits of working with YVAP.
   1. Strategy 1: Link Special Activities Support, community partnerships, and social skills training.
   2. Strategy 2: Rename SAS to community partnerships.
   3. Strategy 3: Brand YVAP as an asset to community groups
   4. Strategy 4: Let community groups know the benefits of partnering with YVAP based on their values.
   5. Strategy 5: Clarify the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) for community partners.

6. Strategy 6: Continue the process where parents pay for programs (SSWSC, Hockey, running, etc) and YVAP supports with trained paraprofessionals.
7. Strategy 7: Train businesses and organizations on how to work with neurodivergent communities (DEI).
8. Strategy 8: Explore ways partners can financially contribute to working with YVAP and their clients.
9. Strategy 9: Continue and improve the relationship with Steamboat Springs School District.
10. Strategy 10: Recruit and train staff to work with clients at community partner activities.
11. Strategy 11: Develop an evaluation tool to determine the impact of the programs on clients.

IV. Work- Readiness (Strides and Community Cultivation)

A. Goal 1: YVAP partners with local businesses and organizations to help clients get and keep jobs. (18-21)

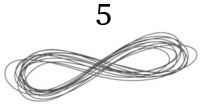
1. Strategy 1: Rename the YVAP program to Work-Readiness and define that STRIDES is part of Work-Readiness.
2. Strategy 2: Integrate Community Cultivation as part of Workplace Readiness in addition to other work options.
3. Strategy 3: Extend Steamboat Springs School District one year contract to three years.
4. Strategy 5: Identify businesses where neuro-divergent populations thrive - tech, music, math, cybersecurity, etc. - and develop ways to partner with them for workplace readiness for YVAP clients.
5. Strategy 6: Communicate the successes of this program to the broader community.
6. Strategy 7: Keep contracts with SSSD and DVR to reduce operational costs.
7. Strategy 8: Determine what staff is needed to comply with DVR and STRIDES contracts (i.e., licensed teacher).

V. Community Education and Communications

A. Goal 1: YVAP is known as the unique leader for neurodiverse youth with therapy and programming for clients aged 3-21.
B. Goal 2: Pediatricians, parents, schools, and organizations recognize and support the uniqueness of YVAP, what it does, and who it serves.
C. Goal 3: Community organizations understand how to work with, teach, and hire neuro-divergent youth.
    1. Strategy 1: Promote the uniqueness of neurodivergent kids and how they benefit the community.
    2. Strategy 2: Publicize what YVAP does well: partnerships, providing services, and community outreach.
    3. Strategy 3: Develop a communications/community outreach plan with target audiences, messages, and messengers.
    4. Strategy 4: Develop communications materials based on the strategic planning process (i.e. updated website, videos, newsletter, social media, etc.)
    5. Strategy 5: Create a way for parents and families to come together. (training, community meetings, etc.).
    6. Strategy 6: Provide resources for parents on the website and at meetings.

V. Organizational Health/Capacity Building

A. Goal 1: Sustain YVAP financially and with the same staff for at least three years.
B. Goal 2: By 2026, build the organization's capacity to serve clients better.
    1. Strategy 1: Move into a larger space to allow for more private meetings and meet the needs of an increasing number of staff.
    2. Strategy 2: Provide enough staff for administrative and specialist support to be efficient and avoid burnout.
    3. Strategy 3: Create organizational charts to make it easier for the board to understand annual potential growth.
    4. Strategy 4: Increase overall fundraising to exceed the actual operations budget.



5. Strategy 5: Create systems and standard operating procedures for staff.
6. Strategy 6: Increase bilingual capability. (Spanish)
7. Strategy 7: Create an evaluation system of all programming to show impact.
8. Strategy 8: Strengthen and expand the board, clarify expectations, and update board contracts.

VI. Funding

A. Goal 1: By 2028, secure enough funding to be at full capacity to serve all neurodivergent kids who need help in the Yampa Valley.
   1. Strategy 1: Set clear numerical fundraising goals for grants, YVGD, events, etc
   2. Strategy 2: Continue to pursue grant funding.
   3. Strategy 3: Double the number of high donors by 2025.
   4. Strategy 4: Increase donations from Yampa Valley Gives Day (YVGD) by 10% annually.
   5. Strategy 5: Clarify how funding will be used to help board members reach out to potential donors.
   6. Strategy 6: Consider ways YVAP can increase Medicaid reimbursement.
   7. Strategy 7: Develop clear measures of success (ROI) for events.
   8. Strategy 8: Continue the annual signature event with the goal of raising funds.

CONCLUSION

YVAP has a strong foundation and has grown exponentially since the first group of parents began meeting. The demand for direct services for neurodiverse youth continues and will expand as the population of Northwest Colorado grows. This plan is the foundation for solidifying what YVAP already does well and how it can expand to serve more youth for the next three to five years. Join us in making our plan a reality!