





“Equal opportunity
for everyone”



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Arts-Based Education for special learners

In the heart of Oranjestad, Aruba is situated Muchila Creativo. Fundacion Muchila Creativo (FMC) established in 2003 as a non-profit organization to promote the arts and culture in the Aruban community through courses, lectures, presentations, workshops, seminars, and expositions for children, youth, and adults in the fields of music, visual arts, dance, and theater.



Diversity and Inclusion into an Arts-Based education"

Muchila Creativo has provided well attended, inclusive opportunities for the community. New programs were launched based upon the societal need for them after almost two decades of reaching audiences from birth to senior citizens through its varied and unique music and arts enrichment programs.

Muchila Creativo noticed that it could do more for its youth in special education; they did not have accessibility to certain opportunities in Aruba. Greater accessibility was needed. Driven to fill the educational gap in Aruba, in 2020 Fundacion Muchila Creativo opened the first Secondary Arts-Based school, first of its kind in the Caribbean.

Muchila Secondary Arts-Based school for students with disabilities, age 16 -25, is designed with a three-year prevocational Learn and Work training program. It features a holistic curriculum which includes skill-based classes to foster independence by building fundamental skills which raise their self-esteem to competitively prepare them for success in the workplace. Our school offers arts-based education for engagement, social emotional wellbeing, cognitive growth, purpose, service, and joy. The curriculum goes beyond the academic, educating the whole person beyond any presumption of limitations, and offers equal chances no matter the students' background.



2

Program

The program is geared to prepare the students to not only be functionally integrated into Aruban society, but also to contribute to the community in several very specific vocational and artistic career pathways.

The program of instruction is adapted to the learning styles of the students. The way the teachers engage the students in the learning process, makes it possible for the students to be involved with every cognitive instruction and a variety of hands-on activities.

Every student has a say and makes their own choices within the learning process. This process builds confidence, optimizes potential, opens possibilities for growth and self-improvement, improves abilities to communicate effectively as they practice working as part of a team.





The Arts-Based education program offers the students opportunities to demonstrate their accomplishments in all kinds of manners. Through this artistic program they will receive a quality boost to function in the community and prepare themselves to participate for employment. Our program consists of the following educational contents:

- 1 Online Program (Math, Languages, Science)**
- 2 Cognitive activities (Reading, Writing, Social life skills)**
- 3 Social Emotional Learning & Civic Skills**
- 4 Digital & Social Media**
- 5 Learn & Workplace Internships**
- 6 Music (Instrumental and vocal) Percussion Ensemble**
- 7 Theatre & Puppetry**
- 8 Visual & Media Arts**
- 9 Dance, Sports & Movement**
- 10 Performance (Musical & Social Activities)**



3

Internship

During the three-year program, the students will not only be involved in the learning processes in the school, but it is also important that the students experience the learning process in the working environment. This we call “learning on location at the workplace”. In the workplace the students do not learn only knowledge and skills, but they also learn to apply their knowledge and skills in a meaningful context.

The students will participate weekly in duo’s or individual in internships. Muchila has developed partnerships with different types of businesses, where the students can grow individually within his or her own possibility and tempo.

Each business requires individuals to demonstrate flexibility while learning different tasks and responsibilities and allow students to practice basic work and social skills.

They will have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and talents and will be challenged to make their own decisions and find solutions to problems.

They assist each other, and everyone is considered equal. The internship opportunities provide a safe nurturing environment to support success for each student.

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Art disciplines

Artistically, the students learn the basic elements of the Arts disciplines in weekly group practice. The students will get the opportunity to regularly perform for their peers and community.

These experiences give students the chance to demonstrate their musical and artistic growth and practice their social skills, including stage presence. Sharing their passion on stage raises their visibility in the community. It promotes acceptance and helps in changing negative perceptions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



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Project-based learning

During the three-year education program, projects also form an important part of the curriculum. During project-based learning the students incorporate different learning styles so that everyone in the class is involved, even students with language-based learning disabilities, so they will be able to shine by showcasing interpersonal and artistic talents. They can learn in a digital environment. Project based learning approach in the curriculum offers benefits to students with either academic or social/ emotional disabilities.



6

Coaching

In the coaching and music therapy program, the students can express themselves with the personal coach or therapist who has direct contact with the students, where she works mostly one on one or in small groups. The coach discusses all aspects with the students, not only their behavior or attendance, but also on their academic learning and their progress, and how they are doing in their day-to-day lessons.



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Vision

The vision of our school is that the students who follow this prevocational program will be able to get work in the community. We try to enhance the quality of life of these students. They will be fulfilled for life in terms of knowledge, skills, and gifts to look forward to. It makes students understand that there is a path to follow.



8

Prevocational training

Muchila Creativo will offer a pre-vocational training for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities to expand their social, vocational and life skills prior to their work at the workplace in an arts-infused environment.

During the pre-vocational training the students will build fundamental skills and will receive a variety of hands-on activities helping them to grow their knowledge base and identify where their strengths and interests lie. They will develop their confidence as they practice working as a team, managing time, and communicating effectively.

The instruction will focus on the practical application of core topics, including nutrition, hospitality training, how to make chocolate, money management, social skills and performance of music, theater, art, and handicraft, to express their creativity which contributes to the continuance of culture.

Life centered educational curriculum prepares students to live with greater independence and personal fulfillment through daily living skills, self-determination, interpersonal skills, and employment.

The students will receive a variety of programs and incorporate interactive activities to meet the needs of individuals with different learning styles.

Training exercises demonstrate how to interact with community members and respond to unexpected situations.

It is proven that creativity and music, theater, dance, and art help special learners to express themselves, and it is a fantastic field that has work wonders in many people's lives. It also can help to ventilate and express emotions and improve self-esteem, especially by youth with developmental disabilities.



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Learn & Workplace

Youth with special needs will often need life-long guidance with different basic needs: not only during school, but also to recruit a position at the workplace. Assisting to and maintaining with work is not enough. Some of these youth will not be able to obtain a permanent job on the workplace even with the guidance of a coach.

Students with disabilities have problems finding appropriate work. Therefore, it is important to monitor and guide them into the workplace. They need extra practice towards improvement of their social and labor skills. These skills need to move on as a red line true the teaching career and the career of the special youth. The practice of these skills needs an important place during education and during the assistance of these youth at the workplace.

Regular employers in the society normally don't have the time or knowledge to create a workplace and to offer sufficient guidance to these special learners. The Learn and Workplace can play an important role in this.

During the school years students will practice various basic skills during internship in several workplaces and at school. After they finish school the transition to work is often difficult for students with disabilities. Many of them get no work or stay at home. After some time without continued support, they will lose their acquired skills which they learned at school and fall behind making it difficult to build an independent path of life.

It is important to understand the issues of these youths so one can provide them with the right guidance in their work.

Therefore, Muchila Creativo will start in 2022 - 2023 with a *Learn and Workplace* opportunity for students who complete the three-year program of the secondary Arts-Based school for special learners, so they can continue to develop their abilities in the workplace.

During the Workplace they will develop life skills within a multifaceted approach to increase everyone's ability to live with greater independence. The underlying objective is to provide innovative choices for every individual to pursue meaningful, paid employment, instilling in them a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, and promoting independence as a contributing member to the Aruban economy.



“Diversity is key to a successful community”

“Arts-Based Education - Key to Success; Model of Practice: Aruba (Dutch Caribbean).”
April 2022



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