



# Participant Handbook

May 2021

## INDEX

Welcome	Page 2
Our Mission	Page 2
Our History	Page 3
Why Sparrow	Page 3
Our Programs – Sparrow University	Page 3
Our Programs – Nest	Page 4
Our Programs – Social Events	Page 5
Our Funding	Page 5
Accompanied vs. Unaccompanied Participants	Page 5
Early Drop-Off / Late Pick-Up Policy	Page 6
No-Call / No-Show Policy	Page 6
Release to Unauthorized Persons	Page 7
Transportation Policy	Page 7
Elopement	Page 7
Medication	Page 8
Behavioral Correction Policy	Page 8
Release of Information for Publicity	Page 8
Abuse Prevention and Reporting	Page 9
Emergency Measures – Incident Report Policy	Page 9
Emergency Measures – Bad Weather Policy	Page 9
Acknowledgement & Waiver of Liability (Participant Copy)	Page 11
Acknowledgement & Waiver of Liability (Program Copy)	Page 12

## **WELCOME**

Thank you for choosing to be a part of The Sparrow Project! We want to welcome you to a great group where friendships are formed, learning takes place, and fun is expected.

In this handbook you will find information regarding procedures and behavioral expectations. We value a safe, quality learning environment that is inviting for all who participate. Whether the group is volunteering, creating artwork, or attending a ballgame, we believe all Sparrow activities are learning experiences. We take this responsibility very seriously and want you to know that we are committed to the safety and success of all our participants.

Understanding that providing the best post high school opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities is a team effort, we believe your participation is essential for each participant to reach his/her fullest potential. Ways in which parents/guardians can participate include volunteering to teach a class, assisting with activities that are more complex, and taking part in fundraisers.

Your involvement also includes making sure the participant attends all classes for which he/she is enrolled. This helps greatly as we often have participants on waiting lists.

Our priority is to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment for all participants. To do this, we ask that you carefully read the handbook and clearly communicate the standards and behavior expectations/consequences with your participant.

We look forward to working with your family as we learn new skills and make memories!

## **OUR MISSION**

To create a safe environment for post high school adults with intellectual disabilities in the community of Moore that promotes happy and fulfilled lives through work skills, life skills, creative interests, and social activities.

## **OUR HISTORY**

Each year school districts graduate students with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 22. These students and their families have had up to 20 years in the public school system to gain knowledge, life skills, and social skills. After graduation, there are limited options in our area for these individuals and their families. Some go to adult day cares, others to sheltered workshops (where there are waiting lists), a handful are able to hold down regular jobs, and many are forced to stay home alone, if independent enough, or with a caregiver. Some families give up an entire income so that one parent can stay home with their child.

This project began with a few families of young adults with disabilities discussing the limited options for our children. The families on the ground floor of this project are as diverse as the disabilities of their children, but the common denominator is, everyone deserves the opportunity to have a fulfilled life.

## **WHY SPARROW?**

Matthew 10:29 reminds us God's eye is on things we deem insignificant. The sparrow symbolizes vigilance, joy, and creativity. These small birds are constantly busy building nests and foraging for food. Sparrows serve as a reminder that every person has worth and that busy hands and minds promote happy, fulfilling lives.

## **OUR PROGRAMS**

### **Sparrow University -**

Sparrow University provides weekly classes for participants in the areas of cooking, creative interests, exercise, life skills, music, work skills, and volunteerism. Class sessions are generally two hours in length.

Sparrow University classes are taught by volunteer instructors and class assistants are volunteers as well. Our instructors are experts in their respective fields. They have a desire to volunteer their time to teach adults with intellectual disabilities. We maintain a 1:6 volunteer/student ratio for unaccompanied students.

All classroom assistants have completed volunteer training and have background and character reference checks. (Volunteer instructors are considered "guest

speakers” and are not subject to background checks.) High School student volunteers are not subject to background checks. However, the students must have two teacher / school administrator recommendations.

It is important to the board of directors that inability to pay does not prohibit individuals from participating. To keep tuition costs low, families may be asked to participate in fundraising activities. Donations are always appreciated and are tax deductible.

Sparrow University is not intended to be an adult day care. However, unless previously identified under “Conditions of Participation,” students who can participate with minimal assistance are welcome to attend without a companion (see page 5).

Because our space is limited and we want to ensure quality standards in our classes, only participants and companion(s) allowed; no children please.

We recognize that everyone has bad days and Sparrow participants are no different. In the interest of providing a safe and enjoyable atmosphere, disruptive behavior will be addressed in a direct, kind, and professional manner with families (see page 8).

Sparrow University enrollment is limited due to space and volunteer availability. Those who enroll in classes and are a no call/no show- will be subject to fees and other consequences

## **Nest -**

Weekend/evening social fraternity designed to provide a safe place for socialization. Nest activities vary and depending on the complexity of the event and/or location companions may be required to attend.

Volunteer ratios are the same for Nest as they are for Sparrow University.

Those who participate in Nest events are required to cover the cost of the event (i.e. movie ticket, dinner, etc.) – this applies to caregivers as well.

If a participant needs a companion for Sparrow University, he/she will require a companion for Nest activities as well.

Children are not allowed at Nest activities unless otherwise noted.

The behavioral correction policy that applies to Sparrow University participation applies to Nest participation as well.

### **Annual Social Events -**

Held at least once a year, The Sparrow Project hosts a large event, dinner, and/or dance. These events are designed for families and all participants must be accompanied.

*Note: Due to liability insurance restrictions, all programs will be “alcohol free.” Alcohol will not be served or allowed during program activities.*

### **OUR FUNDING**

The Sparrow Project is funded through donations and fundraisers.

### **ACCOMPANIED VERSUS UNACCOMPANIED PARTICIPANTS - (COMPANION REQUIREMENTS)**

The Sparrow Project will accept applicants according to program specific eligibility criteria. Companion requirements will be evaluated prior to the participant being accepted into any of The Sparrow Project programs.

Companions are “required” if the participant falls into one of the following categories:

- Requires toileting assistance
- Is a “runner”
- Requires medical assistance for breathing
- Tends to be disruptive in group settings
- Has a medical condition that requires skilled services
- Has significant mobility limitations
- Is non-verbal

Companions are “not required” if the participant falls into one of the following categories and does not fall into any of the categories requiring a companion:

- Requires minimal assistance with activities involving fine motor skills (cutting, gluing, etc.)
- Requires minimal assistance with activities involving gross motor skills (basic dance steps, exercises, bowling, etc.)
- Requires minimal assistance with basic office tasks (shredding, stapling, etc.)
- Requires minimal assistance in following basic directions

### **EARLY DROP-OFF / LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

Out of respect for our volunteers, we ask that you refrain from arriving at or dropping a participant off for an event more than 10 minutes before the event start time. Likewise, we ask that you pick the participant up from the event at the time the event ends, and no longer than 10 minutes after the event ends.

In the occurrence that a participant is dropped off more than 10 minutes early or is not picked up within 10 minutes of the end of an event, there will be an early drop-off / late pick-up fee assessed in the amount of \$20.00 per occurrence.

### **NO-CALL / NO-SHOW POLICY**

Many of our activities and classes have waiting lists for those wishing to participate. With this in mind, we ask that the participant attend those activities and classes for which he/she is enrolled.

We recognize that life can, at times, require a change of plans. When these times occur, we ask that you give us as much notice as possible should you need to cancel an activity or class. This will allow us to give another individual the opportunity to attend.

When cancelling a class, we request a minimum notice of 24 hours when possible. If a participant is a no-call/no-show for the class (no advance notice given), then

there will be a \$20.00 “No-Show Fee” assessed for the next activity or class for which the participant enrolls.

## **RELEASE TO UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS**

It is the policy of The Sparrow Project to not allow program participants to leave the premises in the company of individuals who are not listed on the program participant’s registration form as being authorized to pick them up from Sparrow functions. A program participant shall not leave the premises in the company of individuals if previous arrangements have not been made through The Sparrow Program staff.

In the event that a program participant either requests or is requested to leave the facility with an unauthorized individual, a program staff member shall be notified immediately.

In the event that the program participant is not his/her own guardian, he/she shall not be released under any circumstances to an unauthorized individual without the expressed consent of the guardian.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

The Sparrow Project does not allow board members or volunteers to transport participants on behalf of or as a representative of The Sparrow Project. Should a board member or volunteer agree to assist a family in transportation for a participant, a signed Transportation Waiver of Liability Form must be in the participant’s file before such transportation takes place. Please see the Program Director should you need a Transportation Waiver of Liability Form.

## **ELOPEMENT**

Program volunteers will ensure and monitor the safety of unaccompanied individuals upon arrival and departure from The Sparrow Project functions. In the specific instance of elopement, volunteers will follow these steps required when an elopement situation occurs. Elopement is defined as an attempt to slip away or run from something or someone. It is an attempt by a participant to leave the Sparrow function without giving someone notice, and thus putting himself/herself in danger.



Whenever an elopement situation arises the following action will be taken:

1. A volunteer will attempt to persuade service recipient to return to the designated area.
2. The Program Director will be alerted.
3. The Program Director will contact the participant's guardian.
4. An incident report will be filled out in detail regarding the incident and placed in the participant's file.
5. If participant is in imminent danger, 911 will be called.
6. The Sparrow Project reserves the right to discontinue services to any participant when elopement becomes an on-going issue.

## **MEDICATION**

Under no circumstances shall a Sparrow Project volunteer handle, store, or dispense medication to program participants.

## **BEHAVIORAL CORRECTION POLICY**

Any participant behavior that puts the participant or others at risk of injury will not be tolerated. Additionally, behavior that disrupts the environment or impacts the ability of others to be successful in the environment will be addressed using a progressive discipline process as follows:

1. First Incident - the participant will be verbally warned to correct the offending behavior.
2. Second Incident - the participant will be required to be accompanied by a companion for future events.
3. Third Incident - the participant may be asked to refrain from event participation for 30 days.

## **RELEASE OF INFORMATION FOR PUBLICITY**

The Sparrow Project fully respects each individual's privacy. All participants and legal guardians must have signed the acknowledgement form in the back of this book.

## **ABUSE PREVENTION AND REPORTING**

The Sparrow Project does not tolerate abuse of individuals. As per Oklahoma Statutes (43A Okla. Stat. Ann. §§ 10-103, 10-104; 63 Okla. Stat. Ann. §§ 1-1902, 1-1939), program volunteers are considered “mandatory reporters” for known or suspected abuse of vulnerable adults. **“Vulnerable adult”** means an individual who is an incapacitated person or who, because of physical or mental disability, including persons with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, incapacity, or other disability, is substantially impaired in the ability to provide adequately for the care or custody of himself or herself, or is unable to manage his or her property and financial affairs effectively, or to meet essential requirements for mental or physical health or safety, or to protect himself or herself from abuse, verbal abuse, neglect, or exploitation without assistance from others.

Volunteers must report suspected or known abuse to the Child/Adult Abuse Hotline (1-800-522-3511) immediately and should notify the Program Director of any suspected or known abuse immediately.

## **EMERGENCY MEASURES - INCIDENT REPORT POLICY**

In the event of an emergency (significant injury, seizure, etc.) the volunteer or Program Director will call 911. The volunteer and/or Program Director will contact the participant's guardian and complete an incident report which will be placed in the Participant's file.

In the event of non-emergency situation (sudden illness, behavioral changes, minor injuries, etc.) the volunteer or Program Director will contact the participant's guardian and complete an incident report which will be placed in the Participant's file.

## **EMERGENCY MEASURES - BAD WEATHER CLOSURE**

We take the safety of our participants seriously. Sparrow events may be rescheduled or cancelled due to weather.

We generally base our cancellations on Moore Public Schools weather closures. However, we reserve the right to make closure or cancellation decisions that exceed those issued by the schools.

If a weather event occurs during an event, we will follow the policy/procedures of the facility.

Facebook is the best resource to obtain cancellation or rescheduling information. Refunds will be given for cancelled programs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT (PARTICIPANT COPY)**

The information contained in The Sparrow Project Participant Handbook applies to all participants and is presented as a matter of information only; the contents of this manual should not be interpreted as a contract between the participant and The Sparrow Project.

I have received, read, and understand the Participant Handbook. Any question I had about the Participant Handbook has been explained to me. I agree to adhere to the terms of the Participant Handbook as a condition of my participation in The Sparrow Project activities and functions.

I hereby grant The Sparrow Project and its respective licensees, successors and assigns, the right and permission, with respect to those photographs, video recordings, and/or audio recordings taken of me [or the minor] named below on whose behalf I am signing, and with respect to any printed and/or electronic matter in connection therewith, to do the following:

1. To include such photographs, video recordings, and/or audio recordings in all promotion of this university event and/or in all media (print/online), and advertising, publicity, and promotion thereof.
2. To use my name [or the name of the minor], on whose behalf I am signing, in connection with the foregoing.

I hereby release, discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless The Sparrow Project and its successors and assigns, from all claims and demands whatsoever arising out of or in connection with the foregoing, and waive any right to inspect or approve the same. Additionally, by signing I understand there will not be any form of compensation for the usage of the photographs.

Furthermore, this is to certify that I will hold harmless The Sparrow Project and all providers of facilities (including Moore Public Schools) regarding liability for any accident or injury that may occur through my participation in The Sparrow Project activities and functions.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Guardian

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT (THE SPARROW PROJECT COPY)

The information contained in The Sparrow Project Participant Handbook applies to all participants and is presented as a matter of information only; the contents of this manual should not be interpreted as a contract between the participant and The Sparrow Project.

I have received, read, and understand the Participant Handbook. Any question I had about the Participant Handbook has been explained to me. I agree to adhere to the terms of the Participant Handbook as a condition of my participation in The Sparrow Project activities and functions.

I hereby grant The Sparrow Project and its respective licensees, successors and assigns, the right and permission, with respect to those photographs, video recordings, and/or audio recordings taken of me [or the minor] named below on whose behalf I am signing, and with respect to any printed and/or electronic matter in connection therewith, to do the following:

1. To include such photographs, video recordings, and/or audio recordings in all promotion of this university event and/or in all media (print/online), and advertising, publicity, and promotion thereof.
2. To use my name [or the name of the minor], on whose behalf I am signing, in connection with the foregoing.

I hereby release, discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless The Sparrow Project and its successor and assigns, from all claims and demands whatsoever arising out of or in connection with the foregoing, and waive any right to inspect or approve the same. Additionally, by signing I understand there will not be any form of compensation for the usage of the photographs.

Furthermore, this is to certify that I will hold harmless The Sparrow Project and all providers of facilities (including Moore Public Schools) regarding liability for any accident or injury that may occur through my participation in The Sparrow Project activities and functions.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Guardian