

# Northeast Arc Journeys Day Program

## Behavioral supports and reinforcements

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### Introduction

The Journeys Program is facilitated by Northeast Arc and aims to deliver day supports and skills needed to access the community in a safe and professional manner to the individuals in the program. Work supports help individuals in the program to acquire skills and or develop skills in order to receive employment from; supported employment, supported group employment, and community-based employment.

- Skills Training Exploration Program (S.T.E.P.) is used to support the individuals in the Journeys program and help develop work and life skills so they can become productive members of their communities.
- Northeast Arc also offers two hands-on individual employment training options:
  - Project Perk: Breaking Grounds Café in downtown Peabody that offers a plethora of employment training and education for individuals who want to work in food service, hospitality, or customer service.
  - Project Parcels: Located in the Liberty tree mall that offers individuals with an interest in retail to work and develop skills for a retail worker. This is owned by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. (Northeast Arc, 2023)



### Internship Project Objectives

- To encourage positive behavior in the Journey's program while creating and displaying the proper behaviors expected of the individuals at the Journeys program.
- To create an understanding of what proper behavior should be and hopefully set good behavioral habits for the individuals.

### Related Literature

- "When the brain is exposed to a rewarding stimulus, it responds by releasing dopamine, a neurotransmitter. In fact, the mesolimbic dopamine pathway plays a primary role in the reward system, as this circuit detects a rewarding stimulus". (Laguipo A. 2018, September 28, para 8)
- "Journeys helps individuals develop the skills needed to access the community safely, become a productive member of the community, and build and maintain employment and life skills. The program offers individuals diverse opportunities to volunteer in the community and work at local businesses". (Northeast Arc 2023, June 28, para 2).



### Materials & Methods

#### Materials Created

- Created and hung up acceptable behavioral posters around program rooms.
- Created a shop with the different levels of prizes.
  - 10 tickets: 3 pieces of candy, sunglasses from dollar store or bracelet from dollar store
  - 25 tickets: 5 pieces of candy and either the sunglasses or bracelet
  - 50 tickets: Pick a movie for the group to watch together
  - 100 tickets: Get to select their favorite staff and go out on a 1on 1 lunch
  - 250 tickets: Pizza party for the program
- Created blank daily "ticket" sheets for staff.
- Create a "ticket" progress board for the individuals in the program
- Created a binder to track the saving and spending of tickets and notes from staff members

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

VIDEO OF: \_\_\_\_\_

# OF TICKETS AT START OF THE WEEK \_\_\_\_\_

# OF TICKETS SPENT \_\_\_\_\_ # OF TICKETS AFTER SPENDING \_\_\_\_\_

MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	

# OF TICKETS AT END OF WEEK \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE:	STAFF:			
NAME	# OF TICKETS	REASON FOR EARNING	NOTES	

**What Is Good Behavior?**

- Listen to staff!
- Wash your hands!
- Be a good friend to others!
- Keep your hands to yourself!
- Be kind to everyone!
- Be respectful in the community!



#### Methods Used

- Handed out "tickets" to individuals who displayed good behavior during the program.
- Recorded how many "tickets" each individual received or spent in the day.
- Completed daily ticket sheets were collected in an envelope and
- Tallied up individual's "tickets" at the end of the week and used this data to see the difference on a weekly basis.
- Created individual daily ticket envelopes, to give a sense of reward for displaying a positive behavior while also keeping the tickets in an organized fashion.
- Stored individuals' daily ticket envelopes in a bin for staff to collect at the beginning of the day.
- Created small envelopes with a preset number of tickets to allow staff to just grab one quickly at the start of day.
- Created a staff impressions box, where staff could write down suggestions to improve the project for days, I was not in.

### Intervention

**Pre-intervention impressions from staff:** Overall consensus from staff was that the individuals in the program all have different things that they can work on to improve their behavior. Overall making sure that the individuals are listening to the staff and being respectful in the community were identified as most vital.

**Mid-intervention Impressions from staff:** Make it clear to the individuals that not every good behavior will be rewarded. Allow staff to award more than one ticket for a specific behavior. Reiterate they will need to work together to get the bigger prizes that are offered. Implement a weekly award to the most outstanding act of kindness from an individual worth 10 tickets.

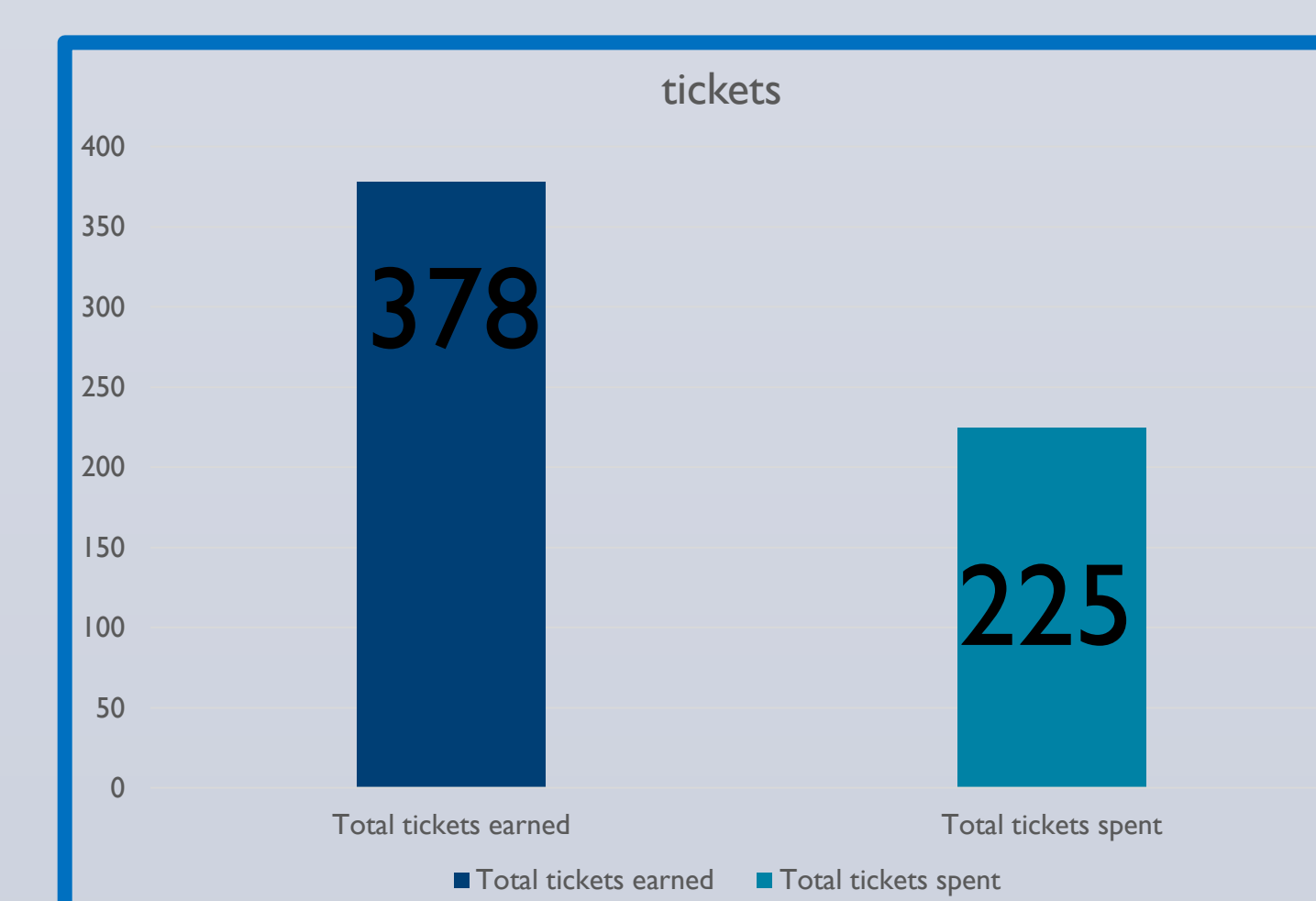
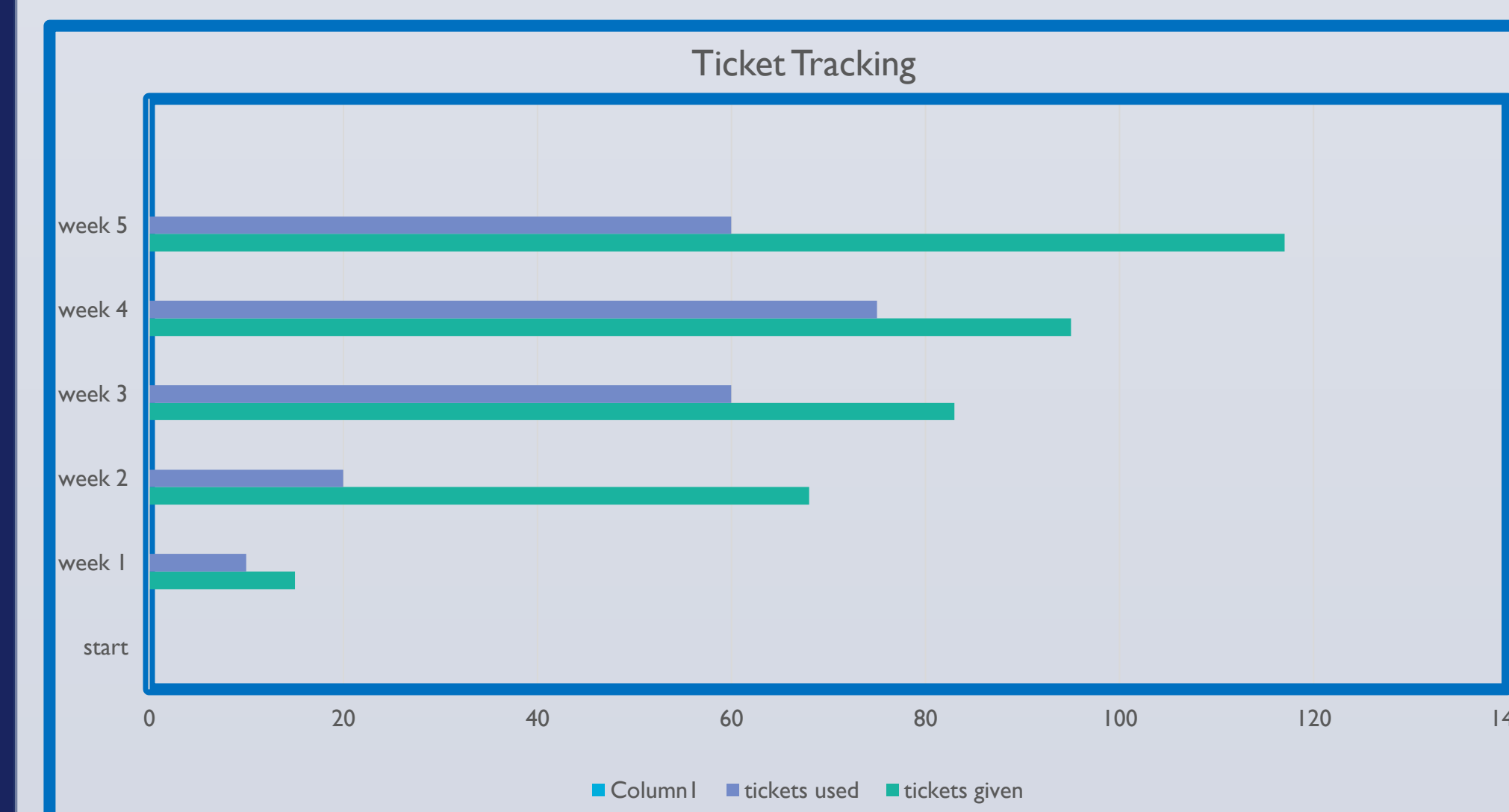
**Post-intervention Impressions from staff:** The consensus from staff was that this was a fun and fresh way to reinforce good and appropriate behavior from the individuals at Journey's. Moving forward, the envelopes used to carry their tickets will be stored in their behavioral binders, making it simpler for staff to find them. Also, the weekly ticket tracker sheet will be replaced with one of their weekly attendance sheets because the layout is much easier to navigate.

**Pre-intervention numerical data:** Data was collected for 28 days, over the course of 5 weeks. 0 tickets were given out to start the data collection.

**Mid-intervention numerical data:** At the end of week 3 a total of 166 tickets were given out and 90 tickets were spent, which is 54% of tickets given out being spent. A consistent number of tickets were awarded to individuals, and there was a steady increase in the weekly amount handed out. Individuals spent their tickets as soon as they had enough for prizes.

**Post-intervention numerical data:** From the start of week 4 to the end of week 5 a total of 212 tickets were given out and 135 were spent, which is 64% of tickets given out being spent. The total number of tickets given out over the course of the 5-week data collection period was 378 tickets and 225 tickets were spent, which is 59% of tickets given out were spent.

### Results



### Conclusion

Objectively it can be said that the Behavioral supports and reinforcement project conducted at the Journey's day program was a success in respect to the projects' main goals; of encouraging positive behavior in the program while habits of said positive behaviors were being created. Over the course of the 5 weeks that the project was in effect there was a positive trend of tickets being handed out on a weekly basis. This was substantial data that indicates that more positive behavior was being observed by the staff and that the individuals were displaying and behaving positively more frequently. With more tickets being handed out it is safe to conclude that these reinforcements are resulting in positive habits amongst the individuals. Over the course of the project there was also a positive trend of ticket spending, which shows that the prizes were desirable and attainable for the individuals. With constant feedback and collaboration from the staff in the program many helpful changes were adopted which resolved issues that arose and simplified the data collection. Staff made it clear when something was not being understood by individuals and worked on a way to address why that might have been occurring, and then tackled the root of the issue as a team, making it easier to handle. On the final day of data collection, staff expressed how this project has benefited the program as a whole and plan to continue to use it for the foreseeable future.



### References

- Laguipo, A. B. B. (2018, September 28). *The reward system and autism*. News Medical Life Sciences. <https://www.news-medical.net/health/The-Reward-System-and-Autism.aspx>
- Northeast Arc. (2023, June 28). *Employment Training & Placement*. Northeast Arc. <https://ne-arc.org/services/community-employment/>

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