Prepared By:

Annual Evaluation Report 2023

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Mandy's Farm:

Customized Community Supports Program



Executive Summary

Mandy's Farm is a nonprofit located in Albuquerque, New Mexico that dedicates services to people with intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD). These services focus on creating skills and assist clients to live full autonomous lives. These services include assisting with employment, equine therapy, residential services, as well as community support services.

The focus of this evaluation was to implement a relaunch of the Customized Community Support (CCS) program using a process evaluation approach. The UNM Evaluation Lab and Mandy's Farm (i.e., the evaluation team) designed a process evaluation that was comprised of the needs and wants of participants, participant satisfaction, and staff perception. The data collected from the relaunching of the CCS program provides Mandy's Farm with insight to most effectively relaunch and sustain an efficient program.

Mandy's Farm staff facilitated both electronic and paper surveys to gather data. The UNM Eval Lab team then analyzed this data for points of improvement. The resulting work showed an overall satisfaction of the relaunched programs by participants with a few challenges and barrier that arose. These challenges included transportation and accessibilty in the community.

Mandy's Farm should build on ways to alleviate these challenges as well as continue to track attendance at events to determine the demand for each type of activity. Because Mandy's Farm is still in the relaunching of the CCS program, it is essential to alleviate any barriers to promote attendance and growth. Tracking attendance in the future would be useful to analyze social groups that are being fostered at Mandy's Farm and cultivate connections between the clients, staff, and community members.



Organization: Mandy's Farm is a not-for-profit organization that began in 2000. Mandy's Farm is an organization dedicated to providing individualized support for adults with disabilities in Albuquerque, NM, to live full, autonomous lives (Mandy's Farm, 2022a). Their programming includes residential facilities, employment preparedness and job placement, as well as agricultural and animal programs. Mandy's Farm is able to provide many of their programs and services to participants for no cost through their contracts with the Developmental Disabilities Support Division through the Department of Health. Additional programming support comes from donations, grants, and volunteer support.

Evaluation Context: This year, the Evaluation Lab team will be focused on the Customized Community Supports (CCS) program. This program is for "individuals 18 years of age and older who have an intellectual or developmental disability and currently receive DD or Mi Via waiver services" (Mandy's Farm, 2022b) The CCS program focuses on providing inclusive, facility free opportunities for individuals to build relationships, develop physical strengths, and to participate in activities of personal interests. CCS activities may be provided individually or in small group settings. This program was paused during the pandemic due to physical health risks. Mandy's Farm is preparing to relaunch the CCS programs in 2023. Some participants will be returning to CCS and Mandy's Farm will also be recruiting new participants.

Mandy's Farm is working to reintroduce their CCS program. The literature on the topic shows just how important this type of program currently is. COVID had a detrimental effect on everyone, but especially on people with disabilities. Jesus et al. (2021) shows that people with disabilities experienced restricted access to healthcare, social isolation, lack of personal assistance, and reduced employment, among other problems. All these issues directly affect the clients of Mandy's Farm. Now that the pandemic is ending, Mandy's Farm is seeking to restart their CCS program in order to meet some of these needs, namely as an answer to social isolation. Oh et al. (2021) also shows why the CCS program is so sorely needed. This article establishes just how important community engagement is for adults with disabilities. Without socialization and community engagement, these adults are in danger of losing their self-identity. After such a prolonged period of isolation, it has been too long without this much-needed engagement. The activities that are selected for the CCS program will need to include a high degree of community socialization.

The relaunch of the CCS programs will focus on organizing inclusive, facility-free programing. This is a shift from the last version of the CCS program. Where the earlier version centered Mandy's Farm as the main location, this version will focus more on connecting individuals with activities and programs around Albuquerque. Mandy's Farm aims to center the specific

interests and goals of participants in the planning, which aligns with best practices noted in Shogren et al. (2018), an evaluation of interventions aiming to support individual agency and goal-setting and achieving of people with disabilities. The other main thing to consider is the places in which these activities will take place. Dashner et al. (2019) talks about the needs of disabled adults. Specifically, when it comes to transportation, both the vehicle and the destination need to be accessible. Mandy's Farm has their own vehicles which are wheelchair accessible, but the destinations are also under consideration. To get participants from either their homes or Mandy's Farm to the community-based events, there may be specific transportation needs and there may be accessibility considerations of the specific venues.

Evaluation goal: The purpose of this year's evaluation is to evaluate the relaunch of the CCS programs. Mandy's Farm aims to conduct a process evaluation throughout the relaunch in order to optimize the experience for all participants. Mandy's Farm has not participated in a process evaluation before, so this year will build their capacity for process evaluation, which allows organizations to better understand the strengths and areas for improvement of the implementation of their programs.

Evaluation questions: The process evaluation questions are developed from process evaluation guidance from the Rand Corporation's program evaluation resources (Ebener et al. 2017). Our team has one overarching question, which will guide the evaluation, and four sub-questions to guide each of the types of process evaluation strategies:

- How will Mandy's Farm successfully relaunch the Customized Community Support (CCS) program?
 - o What do participants need/want from the CCS program relaunch?
 - o How effectively is the CCS relaunch program going?
 - o How satisfied are participants with the CCS program relaunch?
 - o What are staff perceptions of the CCS program relaunch?

How it will be used and by whom? The results of this process evaluation will be used by Mandy's Farm staff to prepare for the relaunch of the CCS program, to identify opportunities for improvement throughout the beginning period of the relaunch, and finally to document the success, as measured by attendance and satisfaction, of the CCS program relaunch.

Evaluation Team

Melissa McCue, Executive Director: Melissa McCue joined Mandy's Farm as Executive Director in 2012. Since that time, Melissa has expanded programming significantly, launching the Mandy's Farm employment and VAMOS programs, as well as building community partnerships supporting the New Mexico AgrAbility Project and expanding the Mandy's Farm Medicaid services. Melissa holds a Bachelor's Degree in Human Rehabilitation Services and Communication Disorders and has more than twenty years' experience in executive and senior management within organizations supporting individuals with developmental

disabilities.

Bernadette Garcia, Program Director: Bernadette Garcia has been a member of the Mandy's Farm team since 2014. She immediately fell in love with the organization, the people we support, and being part of a work family that knows how to have fun! Bernadette has served within a variety of roles at Mandy's Farm: Direct Support Professional, Leadership Coach, Program Manager, Program Coordinator, and Program Director. Bernadette loves the opportunities she has to support the growth of the staff and clients at Mandy's Farm.

Amy Berman, Development Director: Amy has over 20 years of nonprofit development experience and is certified in organizational management. She will assist Mandy's Farm in strengthening its programs for individuals with developmental disabilities by building relationships and expanding individual, corporate, and foundation support.

Sophie Trusty, Program Director: Sophie joined Mandy's Farm serving as an AmeriCorps member in the VAMOS Program before moving into roles as Program Coordinator and Program Director, supporting the growth of the VAMOS and AgrAbility Programs. Sophie holds a Bachelor's degree in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems with an emphasis on "Community Based Education and Change". Prior to her work at Mandy's Farm, Sophie worked within a public schools setting supporting individuals with developmental disabilities for several years. Sophie is proud to work in an organization that honors and prioritizes the individuals we serve.

Kelli Duran, Evaluation Lab Fellow, MHA Candidate: Kelli Duran is in her second year of her Master of Health Administration. She is working with Mandy's Farm as part of the UNM Evaluation Lab.

Kate Cartwright, PhD, MPH: Dr. Cartwright is a returning EvalLab mentor. She is an Associate Professor in the UNM School of Public Administration and a 2016 American Evaluation Association Minority-Serving Institution Fellow.



In order to assess the implementation of the new version of the CCS program, this year's Evaluation Lab team gathered data from several different priority groups at various points throughout the process.

First, to gather information about participants' needs, the Evaluation team created a survey which was sent to over 20 potentially returning participants. This survey reflects both participants' needs and their family's or caregivers' needs as well. The team sent out an initial survey to former Mandy's Farm clients to collect interest in events and time/day availability. With the results of this survey, Mandy's Farm was able to implement activities based on interest and availability. Participants were given the opportunity to respond from Dec. 15, 2022 through Jan 30, 2023. (See Appendix A for Survey)

Second, to assess participants' satisfaction with the CCS program relaunch and to engage participants directly, a brief participant satisfaction tool was developed, which was used at all activities from 3/6 to 3/23. Paper surveys were out concluding every activity. This survey will have a "happy" face or a "frown" face that the participants will choose in relation to how they felt about the activity. While initially, we had discussed using iPads to do this, it became clear that this was not feasible due to the wide variety of activities and the number of staff involved. The paper survey is easy to copy and to send with staff regardless of where the activities take place. (See Appendix C)

Third, staff perceptions and needs are assessed though a staff survey. The decision was made to send this survey first to staff who have participated in CCS before (about 12 staff members). This survey is completely anonymous and only the UNM EvalLab team has access to the raw data. (See Appendix B)

Finally, in order to assess the success of the CCS relaunch, all data will be gathered (the number of activities from January – March 2023, the number of participants at each, the number of staff engaged, etc.).

Each set of information is examined independently and holistically.



To analyze these data, we followed the RAND process evaluation approach for implementation. This is a multi-step process evaluation guide that assists how well plans are being put into action and helps monitor several areas of a program implementation to make the program a success. Process evaluations are designed to give evaluators information on how well the implementation, or re-implementation, is going and how the plans were put into action. To do this, we collected direct participant satisfaction information as well gathered staff perceptions on what went well or could have gone better.

Results:

Detailed analysis results:

Before assessing what challenges and barriers staff and participants experienced in the community, the evaluation team sent out surveys to collect data on what participants were hoping to get out of the CCS relaunch. This was assessed by a four-question survey which asked key information about desire, availability, as well as transportation plans. This survey was sent to 30 participants and 27 responded (90% responded). The 27 respondents are made up of previous Mandy's Farm CCS program attendees and current Mandy's Farm participants. This survey aimed to answer the evaluation's sub-question number 1 which is What do participants need/want from the CCS program relaunch?

Question 1: Which of the following activities are you interested in? Select all that apply. Question 2: What day(s) of the week would you like to receive support from Mandy's Farm? Select all that apply.

Question 3: What time(s) of day? Select all that apply.

Question 4: Select your mode of transportation to the activity.

The activity interest from participants (Question 1) is a critical question when considering which programs to relaunch or if participants even wanted to participate in a relaunch of the CCS program. As depicted in the figure 1, out of the 27 respondents there were 24 Mandy's Farm participants that selected that they would like to participate in Community Activities which shows a need for the CCS relaunch.

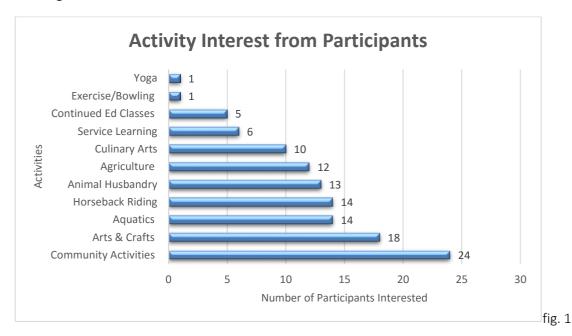
Questions 2 and 3 focused on participant availability for activities. figure 2 depicts day of the week preference which overwhelmingly shows that weekdays are preferred. figure 3 illustrates that 22 participants prefer the time period 9 am -1 pm while 11 respondents preferred 1 pm -5 pm.

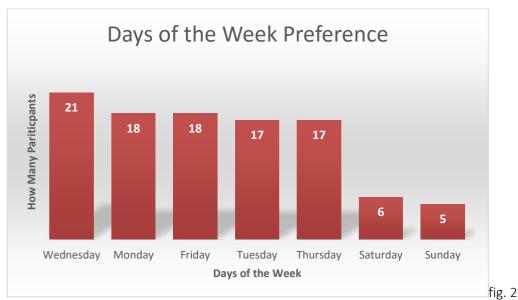
Question 4 aimed at assessing how participants would arrive at the activity (figure 4). This is essential when planning the relaunch because it affects how many participants are able to go and also leaves room for challenges/barriers if they are relying on transportation. 17

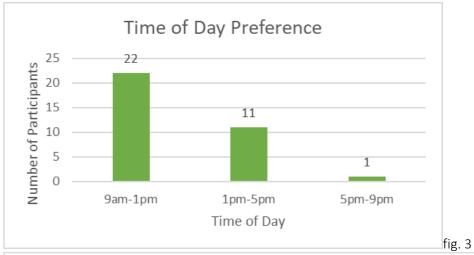
respondents answered that their preferred mode of transportation would be a care provider while 6 responded family/friend and 6 responded that they would prefer to use the Sunvan.

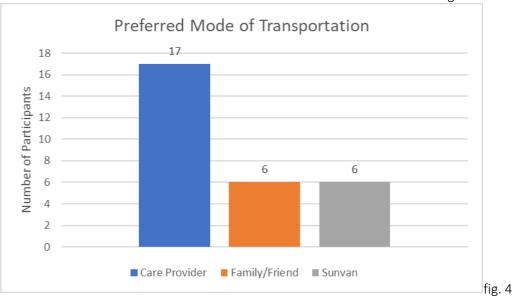
With these initial questions, Mandy's Farm staff could assume that the CCS program had enough interest to relaunch, that activities would be most attended on weekdays from 9 am -1 pm, and that most participants would be relying on their care providers for transportation however a family/friend or the Sunvan could potentially be utilized.

When reviewing these results, Mandy's Farm leadership noted that there are some conflicts because while weekday mornings may be the most accessible for many participants due to transportation issues, many of the activities that participants are interested in are more likely to occur during late afternoons or evenings and on the weekends. Also, Mandy's Farm leaders noted that before pandemic it was more common that Mandy's Farm would provide transportation to the farm for activities, but that this is less feasible in the relaunch due to staffing and vehicle resource limitations.









Also included in the survey was an open-ended question that focused on any comments or thoughts about the relaunch of the Mandy's Farm CCS Program.

Answers to Open-Ended Comment Section:

"Looking forward to returning!"

"[She] will be happy to return to Appaloosa and looks forward to outdoor community activities! Naturally, we are concerned about large indoor groups for her so we are so glad that your revised program will consist of one-on-one or participation in a group setting of 3"

"Missing coming..miss everyone"

"I'm really excited about it because I can go out in the community again and be happy again"

" We will love it if Mandy's farm. Would open up again.

"I like living at Mandy's Farm:

"This sounds like something that will work very well for [him]!"

"[He] really got a lot of support and was able to make friends and improved."

"I put all days because it doesn't matter what day of the week, any one would be fine"

"I am so happy to hear the support will be more customized to the individual!"

What the team was able to conclude from the open ended question was excitement and the desire for Mandy's Farm CCS program to relaunch. These comments reiterated that many participants have missed the services since the close during the pandemic and get a lot of support from these services. Although some responses were from caregivers and not participants, the themes remained the same.

Participant Satisfaction Survey:

A paper survey (see Appendix C) was handed out during a one-week period from March 15, 2023 through March 22, 2023. This survey was designed to collect direct participant information post-activity to assess if the participant liked or disliked the activity. Activities that were provided included, but is not limited to, going to the mall, visiting the community center in Belen, playing board games, watching tv, attending music classes, and also visiting the library.

In total there were 56 completed surveys that yielded 109 results. Out of the 109 responses, 5 of them indicated a "frowny face," 6 were left blank, and 98 of them indicated a "smiley face" in response to if they enjoyed the activity or not. With this information, the evaluation team can answer evaluation question number 3: *How satisfied are participants with the CCS relaunch?* 98 out of the 109 (90%) activities depicted that participants were satisfied with the relaunch. This was not an unexpected response as most participants are eager and excited to do these activities. While these survey results may not show high levels of variation, Mandy's Farm leadership noted that this participation survey was straightforward and accessible. All participants were able to use the survey.

Staff survey

A staff perception survey is recommended in a process evaluation to catch anything that could be perceived as a challenge or barrier for making the implementation of a program more effective. The evaluation team sent a four-question survey to twelve staff members who had participated in at least one CCS-type activity pre-pandemic, and five staff members responded (41%). The staff members were assured that their responses would only be seen by the UNM Evaluation team to ensure honest responses.

Question 1: What did you enjoy most about the Customized Community Support Program?

Mandy's Farm staff who responded enjoyed a range of activities. All five responded that they enjoyed the being out in the community, and swimming and activities related to horses were favorites. Because we had a smaller response for this survey, we are cautious about drawing conclusions from these results, but the staff survey did mirror the participant survey with lower levels of interest in other forms of exercise as a preferred activity.

Question 2: Where did you experience challenges or barriers with transportation? (fig. 6)

This question is important when considering the logistics of the CCS program. All five staff members answered that not having enough vehicles was a challenge/barrier to this program. Only 2 staff members experienced difficulties with late Sunvans and 2 staff members answered a need for more training to be comfortable with driving larger vehicles. This is important when thinking about program growth. As more people begin to participate in the CCS program, there will be a need to train staff to be comfortable with driving larger vehicles that can fit more participants.

Transportation needs of participants and hesitancy by staff is one of the factors that will need to be revisited regularly to set the CCS programs up for success.

Question 3: What Challenges/Barriers were faced in the community?

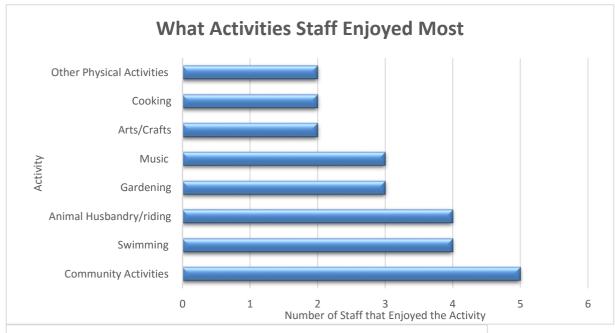
People with disabilities require an extra level of accessibility when going into community spaces. Staff members were able to assess barriers that came up when visiting businesses in the community. Staff did report accessibility issues, but 4 staff members reported time management issues. Issues included not having enough time from one activity to the next. This is an important point when analyzing program efficiency. If there is not enough time between or during activities, Mandy's Farm may want to consider allocating extra time for certain activities or pairing different activities together to ensure that there is enough time.

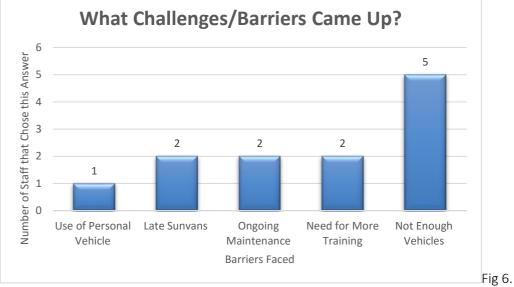
Mandy's Farm leadership reflected that one of the largest challenges in the new iteration of CCS programs is due to community accessibility. While the best practices indicate that activities should not be primarily facility-based, but community-based, Mandy's Farm's facilities are highly accessible, and community sites are often not accessible. Many locations do not have accessible parking close enough to the site or fully accessible bathrooms, including bathrooms with adult changing tables. Other locations may have variable factors including wheelchair or mobility aid accessible tables, staff who are trained in best-practices for accessibility, and more. Mandy's Farm staff have to be prepared for potentially higher levels of stress and uncertainty when facilitating community-based activities. However, the rewards of these activities are also great for developing independence, integration, and community.

Question 4: What does staff look forward to with the CCS relaunch?

The pandemic was not only isolating for Mandy's Farm participants, but also staff, who were used to working with many participants and other staff, needed to work with a much smaller group of participants (sometimes only one participant exclusively) in order to protect participant health and safety. Unsurprisingly, staff expressed that they looked forward to working with more staff and also to have the opportunity to grow relationships and be out in the community more regularly. Somewhat surprisingly, only one staff member responded that they were looking forward to working with more participants. Mandy's Farm leadership noted that this was the only unexpected answer based on their conversations with and observations of staff.

Fig. 5





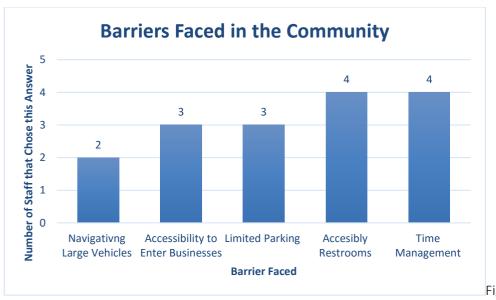


Fig 7



Fig. 8



Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Prioritize transportation as a topic to continue assessing for participants, participants' caregivers, and staff. Transportation is the largest barrier to full participation. Unfortunately, the public transportation options (Sunvan and the bus system) are challenging for a variety of reasons. However, Mandy's Farm also has barriers in providing transportation (maintaining vehicles, training staff to drive large vehicles, and having enough staff to cover the full amount of time needed).

Recommendation 2: Continue to work with community partners and locations to improve accessibility. Develop guides for specific sites (with detailed parking information, information about bathrooms, other accessibility factors to consider about the venue) to build confidence for both staff and participants.

Recommendation 3: Develop a plan to track attendance at these events over time in order to conduct a social network analysis. One of the goals of Mandy's Farm is to assess each participant's social support system. Because the new iteration of CCS programs is focused on small group activities, it will be important to track attendance in order to have a better understanding of social connections that are being fostered among participants, staff, and possibly even community members.



Evaluation Next Steps

The CCS programs are still in the first months of the relaunch. It will be important to keep tracking the types of activities and the attendance of these activities to determine what the demand is for each type of activity and to develop strategies for success. Currently, most participants are returning participants, but there are plans to grow this program. It will be important to assess recruiting efforts, onboarding practices for new staff, orientation information sent to new participants, and success of specific venues and activities. Many of the strategies that were used during the process evaluation can be modified and utilized at different stages to continue this evaluation.

Mandy's Farm will need to develop strategies to assess the outcomes of the CCS programs. There are several strategies that can be implemented, including a version of the satisfaction survey which was used this year and a version of the photo-elicitation/autophotography method which was used last year. As mentioned in the recommendations, an additional strategy which could be considered is a social network analysis of people who make up the social network of each participant. This method would provide evidence of each participant's community. While the analysis for this would require someone with statistical skills, the data gathering for social network analysis is relatively straightforward (mainly consisent and thorough attendance forms.



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Appendix A – Client Survey

Info or Table or PDF of instrument. Please use editable text when possible. Start each appendix on separate page.



Appendix B – Staff Survey

Mandy's Farm CCS Staff Survey

Mandy's Farm is continuing to recruit and retain awesome folks to engage in the re-opening of our Customized Community Support programs (also known as day program). It has been a long couple of years without this program available and it will take some time to get it back and running to the capacity we had in 2020.

There are some significant changes as well, we will no longer be offering group services but rather a combination of one to one and small group activities of no more than 3 people in a group with an assigned staff. We will also be offering a variety of different hours and days rather than the traditional Monday - Friday 9am -3pm. We truly believe this will allow for a more individualized experience and allow for more flexibility for those who want to visit our accessible facilities or participate in meaningful opportunities in the community.

None of this works without you, our staff, who facilitate these programs and activities. In order to make this the best experience for all, your input is greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance for responding to this survey as we relaunch our programming!

What did you most enjoy about Customized Community Support (aka Day
Program)?
Check all that apply.
Swimming
Gardening
Community activities
Animal husbandry/riding
Arts/crafts
Cooking
Music
Other physical activities
Other:

2.	. Where did you experience challenges/barriers with transportation needs?		
	Check all that apply.		
	Late Sunvans		
	Not enough vehicles or eligible drivers		
	Ongoing maintenance repairs Use of personal vehicles		
	Need for enhanced training to increase comfortability operating large vehicles		
	Other:		
3.	What did you most enjoy about working in a large group setting?		
	Check all that apply.		
	Interactions with coworkers		
	Having multiple staff/administrators around to provide support		
	Daily planning meetings		
	Other:		
4.	Where do you experience challenges/barriers with supporting participants in the		
4.	community?		
	Check all that apply.		
	Accessibility to enter businesses Accessible restrooms		
	Limited parking or access to parking garages		
	Navigating large vehicles		
	Time management from one location to another		
	Utilizing google maps		
	Other:		

5.	What do you look forward to when the CCS relaunch occurs?			
Check all that apply.				
	Working with a variety of staff Individualized participant schedules Increased community participation Relationship building Skill building Learning how to support in all areas of a participants life Working with new participants Other:			
6.	Is there anything else you'd like to share for us to consider as we relaunch and adapt the CCS programs?			

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Google Forms



Appendix C – Participant Satisfaction Survey

Participant Name:	_
Date of Activity:	
Activity 1 Name:	

Please Choose One:



Activity 2 Name:

Please Choose One:

