



Rainbow Valley Resource Network Peer Connect Program Guide

INTRODUCTION TO RVRN

Rainbow Valley Resource Network (RVRN) originated in 1984, as a residential facility called Rainbow Valley Ranch in Hadley, NY. Operating as a working farm, the three founders, Doug and June Dickinson and their close friend and colleague, Joy Parker, dedicated their lives to providing a *learning community* in a healing atmosphere for Christian Scientists labeled in society as “developmentally disabled.”

The ranch sold in 2004, and the organization has evolved into a nationwide support community of volunteers, caregivers and ambassadors dedicated to delivering spiritually enriching activities and financial support to Christian Science families and their loved ones with developmental special needs.

RVRN’s mission is to build a compassionate sense of community and support for Christian Scientists with developmental special needs and their families through financial assistance, informational and inspirational resources, and experiential enrichment activities.

Services Offered

- Networks
 - Family Network
 - Loved One Network
- Enrichment Programs
- Financial Assistance
- Hope Library

PEER CONNECT

Introduction: Over the years, RVRN has offered opportunities for participants in our circle to engage with other Christian Scientists through our enrichment programs at Christian Science (CS) camps (both in-person and online). These programs are engaging, fun, and uplifting; but they are designed for larger groups.

RVRN has seen a growing desire to connect and socialize with other CS peers, as well as for support and guidance in navigating life’s social situations in joyful and elevating ways. Many Christian Scientists enjoy meaningful social interactions through church, CS summer camps and even schools. These avenues are often not accessible to Christian Scientists with a claim of “developmental special needs.” They miss out on these social opportunities with fellow Christian Scientists—while their peers miss out on the blessings of interacting with them.

Purpose: To connect RVRN participants with peers from the wider CS community, one-on-one or in small groups, and to engage in fun, social gatherings, while providing opportunities for all parties to learn and grow.

Hangouts:

Eligibility: Christian Scientists with developmental special needs who are seeking individualized connection and a learning opportunity

Activities: RVRN will work with CS organizations and individuals to ensure activities for this program are tailored to the participant, emphasizing fun and connection while having a social-skill focus; for example, engaging in an activity with a new person, getting to know a new person, taking turns, listening, expressing a like or dislike in a graceful manner.

Duration of each gathering: 15 min – 60 min

Dates: Dates are flexible and dependent on what works best for the group. For example, if you sign up for a spring session you would hang out at least once per month for four months with your peer group.

Format: Phone and/or video conference

Expectations:

RVRN will:

- Manage the registration process
- Collect and share pertinent participant information
- Schedule an orientation meeting with facilitators to:
 - Provide suggestions and guidance for working with RVRN participants
 - Assist with the initial contact with participants and their parent or caregiver
 - Discuss the debrief process that will occur after each gathering
- Be available to answer questions, and offer support or suggestions

Facilitators will:

- Establish relationships with RVRN participants
- Offer support and encouragement
- Witness the growth, enthusiasm, and joy of participants
- Witness your own growth

Responsibilities:

- Determine hangout dates based on the group's availability, best mode of communication [i.e. phone call, video conference (preferred), etc.], and frequency (i.e. 1x/week for four weeks)
- Communicate with the family if you are unable to make a scheduled hangout
- Come prepared with conversation topics and activities
- Maintain confidentiality
- Participate in the debrief process which includes submitting an email to the program director where you:
 - describe the hangout activities
 - share what worked and what didn't work/challenges
 - share fruitage or special moments between you and the participants

Requirements:

- Practice Christian Science in your daily life
- At least 18 year of age or older OR enrolled in DiscoveryBound's National Leadership Council (NLC) program
- Complete the online Peer Connect Facilitator application
- Complete an orientation session with RVRN staff