

What Touch Base Means to Families

By the Khan and Hartman Families

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Touch Base means respite, intervention, communication, recreation, and communities for deafblind individuals and their families. It provides structure, routine, and continuity.

Two families, each with a young adult with deafblindness, were quickly approaching graduation from their school systems. After evaluating numerous options, we joined together to start a day habilitation center that would meet the needs of individuals with deafblindness. We felt the need for this program when we realized that our deafblind children would be graduating from school soon and might lose the structure and consistency that their schools provided. They would be at risk for boredom, frustration, and then regression. Touch Base Center for the deafblind was incorporated in December 2015 and opened its doors in June 2016.

This has provided a place where adults can carry forward beyond the school system and use the communication tools and systems that are unique to deafblindness. The whole environment is established for the young adults' independence and engagement in daily activities. We have designed a facility where deafblind people can attend with their interveners for 4 to 6 hours daily to receive a program of coordinated activities specific to their needs. These clients use tactile calendars with symbols to plan their days, cook their meals, and socialize with other people. All of this is under the supervision of a program coordinator specialized in deafblindness. Some of the activities we offer are pottery, candle making, swimming, exercise, and baking. We also hope to further the training of interveners and create more awareness in the community of our deafblind family members and their need for interveners. Our experience thus far has been very positive, and we have seen clients flourish with a positive demeanor and have a good quality of life, thus enabling their families to do the same.

For a deafblind family member to attend Touch Base, it is advisable to have Day Hab written in their service plan, or they may participate as private-pay clients. Although our Center is primarily for deafblind graduates, we accept younger children who are deafblind during special vacation time events.

Touch Base Mission Statement

For people with deafblindness, and those who support them, to build connections with the community, promote self-respect, and improve communication and daily living skills, while creating moments of joy. This mission was most recently met in preparations for Father's Day. During this pandemic, we had to get more creative and bring new activities in-house since we have not been able to go out and volunteer in the community. In non-COVID times of crisis, we were able go out in the community to partner with another local company to prepare care packages. For more information, visit the [Touch Base website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

A Group Project



Christopher sanding a bench. He is laying on the bench to feel the vibrations.



Christopher staining the bench. Two people are supporting him with the paint brush.



Tania staining the bench.
Her intervener is hand over
hand supporting her.



The completed bench – a
group project.

Father's Day 2020 Project



Each client made a breakfast
in bed and computer lap
workstation to give to their
father. A good project to keep
busy while staying out of the
community due to COVID.



Tania and Christopher sanding their Father's Day projects.

Other Good Things 😊



Christopher with his intervener preparing the daily calendar.



Tania with her intervener volunteering to make meal packages.