

Beachsider
SEEN & SCENE

**Teach on the beach:
Camp's fun outing for
high-schoolers**



SEEN & SCENE

Story by JENNIFER TORRES CORESPONDENT
SocialMelbourneBeachsider@gmail.com

On a sunny Saturday morning earlier this month, 22 high school students chose to spend their day picking up trash along Paradise Beach in Indialantic.

Hailing from around the world, these young adults got to spend just two weeks in Brevard County, but took the time and endured the heat to make one local beach better.

The group is part of Summer@ CIP, organized by CIP (College Internship Program) Brevard, and each participant has a learning difference that ranges from Asperger's and autism, to ADHD and others.

The camp is a special program aimed at preparing them for college and independent living a challenge for all young adults, but something that can be especially daunting for those with learning differences.

From guiding participants to uncover their interests through internships, employment and volunteering, to supporting the successful navigation of a program of study at a local college, CIP Brevard offers a full-time program with access to a supported apartment and a wide variety of support services including job coaching, resume writing and career development.

In the summer session, participants get a taste of the full-time program through planned recreational activities, independent living and a general sampling of what college life is all about.

This year they spent two weeks living at Florida Tech and participated daily in classes, activities and programs that teach independent living skills.

Kellie Landi has been a teacher in Florida for more than a decade and serves as a Student Advisor for CIP.

"Activities and programs cover banking and budgeting, social skills, executive functioning, as well short- and long-term goal setting and, of course, fun," Landi said. "Although, even fun outings are used as a teaching opportunity."

The beach cleanup at Paradise in Indialantic was part of a class on volunteerism, which Anthony Milla, a life skills coordinator with CIP, believes is an important component.

"Volunteering helps develop important skills that can turn into vital career skills down the line," Milla said.

Lance Haskins, a wellness coordinator with CIP, agrees.

"They learn to appreciate the value of helping others," Haskins said. "It translates into wanting to help out in the community, and in their own churches, schools and towns."

But once the work was done, everyone got the chance to enjoy some free time on the beach. "I love the beach," said camp participant Michael, 15, of Tavares. "I got attacked by the waves, but I love it. It's a really great day."

