Dear YSN Student:

Welcome to YSN’s Operation House Call Program 2018, offered with the support of The Arc of Massachusetts. Its purpose is to contribute to your interest, confidence, and sensitivity in your work with persons who have IDD (Intellectual/Developmental Disability). We believe that learning from families provides important skills and perspective. This course is not graded, but it has requirements. Please read this letter carefully to understand them:

* **Attend class.**
* **Visit** [**www.operationhousecall**](http://www.operationhousecall)**.com for student learning resources and your class forum.**
* **Contact your assigned host family this week to schedule your 2-hour home visit.**
* **Deliver your student evaluation form to your family during your visit.**
* **Post about your home visit and learning in your private OHC class online forum.**

**It is very important to contact your OHC host family this week, to schedule your two hour home visit with your visit partner.** Remember that these are busy families, so be patient and make multiple efforts in case they missed your first email/call. Families are looking forward to meeting you. Arrange a two hour home visit time that is convenient to your host family.  *Please note that a failure to handle this requirement responsibly may risk a note of unprofessional behavior in your student file.*

If there are any difficulties you cannot resolve please contact Susanna Peyton, YSN OHC Program Coordinator, by email: peyton@arcmass.org. She will then help you or redirect you.

**Tips about your home visit**:

This is an opportunity to meet a family during a time uncomplicated by the need for acute care. As you arrive, offer your student evaluation form to your host family to prevent awkwardness at the end of the visit! (They will mail this in later.) During your home visit play with children. Talk to the teens and adults, ask questions, listen and observe. You are not required do any personal care, nor should you advise the family on medical issues. Reading the student evaluation form before your visit will help you understand very basic expectations. You should prepare beforehand by reading and reviewing resources, or watching films offered on our website. Spend at least 2 hours doing this. As a guide keep the OHC learning objectives in mind. You will see that the OHC website materials honor families as your teachers.

**The OHC website class forum:**

Visit and post your reflection ASAP after your visit. You will likely write a better reflection if you do, while the visit is fresh in your mind. Post the date of you went, and information that will orient your peers to your host family. This is a private student forum: your volunteer families do not have access to any school forum in order to protect student privacy, and also family confidentiality. Write about your visit and your learning (500 word min.) Each student should write their own post after the home visit. Set aside time to read about others’ experience in order to benefit from all the visits, and feel free to comment and post replies to each other’s reflections. Each of you will have a reply from one of our OHC team by the end of this session. Your supervisor, Michelle Kennedy, will be able to view your posts. Note that your work in the OHC forum is required to complete this course.

To wrap up: we hope you remember that our families volunteer to be part of this program and they very much look forward to meeting you. So relax, have fun and enjoy!

Susanna Peyton RN MSN, 2018 YSN OHC Program Coordinator & Parent Instructor: peyton@arcmass.org

Sophia Johansson, YSN OHC Parent Instructor johansson@arcmass.org

Carolyn Cappiello YSN OHC Family Coordinator for CT cappiello@arcmass.org

**Operation House Call Learning Objectives:**

1. Use person first language and thinking.
2. Review supportive ways to deliver unexpected or difficult news to parents.
3. Practice building rapport in a home visit to a family who has a child with intellectual/developmental disability (IDD).
4. Monitor personal or subjective bias that might affect an evaluation of an individual with IDD.
5. Demonstrate sensitivity to sibling issues during the family visit or in class discussion.
6. Increase awareness of resources available to families, including a broad overview of public education support.

**The OHC Website and YSN Student Forum Instructions:**

We have a new Operation House Call website. Please visit and bookmark [www.operationhousecall.com](http://www.operationhousecall.com/). Look for the drop down menus under Students. Prepare for your home visit with at least two hours of exploring the resources there. The copyrighted videos link will require a separate password. Email your instructor if you are interested in this information.

After you have made your home visit you will need to visit your password protected class forum to write your reflection (500 word min). Here is how to do this:

* Go to [www.operationhousecall.com](http://www.operationhousecall.com/)
* Find **Students** on the left and select **Forums** from the drop down menu.
* Enter your **YSN school email** in the box labeled Email address and then choose the Forgotten Password option. (No user name necessary.)
* In 5-10 minutes you will get reset instructions by email. Create your own “strong” password, using uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and punctuation. Something easy for you to remember and hard for others to guess.
* Once you have chosen your password and logged in to the Moodle side of our website, you will see a list of forums. Choose the forum for your class: **YSN 2018 Winter Forum.**
* Your YSN 2018 Winter forum password will be **snow2018**

Important: all the student forums are private, password protected, and contain confidential information posted by students: about personal learning, and about their host families. *Host families do not have access to school forums.* Only your teaching team will view your forum, along with your classmates. Please do not share your forum access information as it is confidential. Create a strong password to use with your email to access the school’s Moodle forum site, and then use your specific forum password listed above.

**OHC Home Visit: a few sample questions to explore**

*(Use this resource to inspire your own questions, which may vary from this list.)*

**Receiving news:**

How did you learn of your (son/daughter)’s diagnosis?

What help or advice did you receive at the time?

How did your physician/care provider respond to your thoughts and feelings at the time?

Can you tell me something about your family’s response to the news?

How did your medical team help you learn about what to prepare for?

How has your experience affected your health care decisions?

**Ongoing support:**

Who has helped you understand important issues?

How has your health care practitioner addressed the needs of others in your family?

Who do you turn to most often for help or advice regarding the needs of your (son/daughter)?

Who in the family is the primary care giver? (Are siblings, or others, expected to give care in any way?)

What supports in your community do you rely on the most?

If I were a new family, a family similar to yours, moving into this area, what would be your favorite suggestions for support and resources?

**Relationships:**

What helps you establish a good working relationship with your health practitioner?

What are your priorities in care relationships for your child?

What helps a visit to the doctor/care provider go smoothly?

Do you have a favorite helping professional, and why? (can be more than one)

How has your experience affected your marriage? Other adult relationships?

Can you tell me about how members of your family get along with each other (siblings)?

**Community and activities:**

What are your (son/daughter)’s educational supports? (for older children: you can explore preparation for work or adult life)

What does your family do for fun?

What does your (son/daughter) enjoy doing most?

Can you tell me about (special therapies, hobbies, sports, favorite exercise)?

**General:**

Are there positive or negative experiences that stand out that you want to teach me about?

How has the experience of your family changed you?

What is a good day in your household?

What makes a day difficult in your household?

Do you have visions for your child’s/family’s future that you can share?

**Note to students**:

These questions are framed as questions to parents but be creative about learning from the children too. Ask your host family to teach you how to listen and communicate if you feel you need help, most especially if communication is challenging, or their loved one is nonverbal. There won’t be time for all questions, so reading about other peers’ visits in the class forum will be useful to you.

Finally: these are only questions to inspire your own. Thinking about them beforehand will help you have a better learning experience, as will going over the Operation House Call learning objectives, and reviewing the articles and videos on the Operation House Call website. On your home visit playing and talking with everyone in the family is encouraged.