

Vista Partnership Youth Development – meeting I

12.23.2014

“Accelerating the revitalization of a 20-block area in Southwest Detroit with a focus on economic opportunity, social equity, and most importantly—resident planning and partnership.”

Overview

On Tuesday, December 23rd, Vista staff and residents convened for the first meeting of the Youth Development work group. During this meeting, residents and staff discussed various topics including: *“What came to mind when expressing interest for this work group?” “What are your hopes and goals?”; the NeighborWorks - Community Leadership Institute grant for youth leadership development; and, ideas and interests for trainings and workshops for youth*

Hopes and Goals

The question was posed to participants, “What came to mind when expressing interest in this work group—what do you hope to achieve?” Here are some of the responses from meeting-goers:

- Looking for a way to become more involved with Southwest Detroit organizations working with youth
- Really like youth, want to offer my experience in leadership training and entrepreneurship training
- Would like to offer my talents to help enrich young people
- I have a lot of experience with job skills and would like to work more with youth

NeighborWorks - Community Leadership Institute

Staff and outreach team members helped explain to meeting goers what the Community Leadership Institute grant is, and how it relates to current youth development and Vista Partnership initiatives.

Neighborworks & the CLI grant (YLead)

NeighborWorks is an organization that emphasizes efforts around affordable housing and community development and the people who benefit from them. Each year, through the Community Leadership Institute (CLI), they host a national training with workshops that cover a whole range of topics around community development and community engagement. In October of 2014, Vista staff, outreach team members and residents traveled to Cincinnati to participate in the annual training. Part of the training encouraged trainees to develop a grant proposal geared towards engaging local youth and enhancing their leadership skills. Two youth from our outreach team created the initial concept of the proposal, and named it YLEAD – Youth Leadership Education Achievement of Detroit. The grant award is \$2,000.

CLI Grant Proposal (YLead)

With the CLI Grant award, we hope to accomplish 3 things for local youth:

1. Developing leadership and teamwork skills
2. Developing soft skills and job skills
3. Provide hands on experience in an economic study and survey of the Vista area

The members who developed the grant proposal decided to work with local youth from Covenant House – Southwest Academy, an alternative high school located a block outside of the Vista development area. Here, various trainings would be provided starting in February of 2015 and lasting through May. The main strategy of the curriculum is to pool the collective knowledge and resources of those willing to help facilitate workshops—and provide as much value as possible regarding soft skills training and local economic understanding with limited time and funds.

Trainings & Workshops: Interests and Ideas

We asked participants to weigh in on some ideas for training and workshops for the CLI Grant curriculum, here are some responses in bullet points:

- Research development (development of questionnaire)
- Financial Literacy
 - FDIC approved, “Money & Young People” DVD, has many different online workshops with different levels of education
 - Youth can choose which elements of financial literacy are most important to them, and guide them through the trainings
- Leadership
- Entrepreneurship Training
 - A couples residents suggested providing entrepreneurship education workshops; a couple of our participants have experience with that work
 - ProsperUS
- Resume Writing
 - Several of our participants have experience in resume writing
 - Workshops, trainings, and survey study all can be added to experience on resumes for youth
 - We can see how resumes looked before trainings, and then after
- Team Building
 - Drum circle workshop for team building practices
 - Trainings for survey will help build team work capacity
- Interviewing Skills
 - Several members have experience in conducting job interview workshops
 - Can also host interviewing workshops for surveying businesses
- Documentation of the process through video and photos
 - Youth can learn how to use video camera and editing software to document their surveying progress

- Media literacy: how to analyze data, how to ask important questions; how to document from the inside as opposed documenting from the outside; use this as a learning tool for growth; social media etiquette
- Ways to communicate: SnapChat, Instagram; Use Instagram and blog along the way for trainings and surveys

Additional thoughts from participants

- In case we don't get grant, or even if we do, can we raise more funds through local businesses, possible trainings offered by local businesses?
- Research *The Future Project* - someone organizing at Western
- Is there any opportunities to bring in student leadership groups or teen council groups from other schools/agencies?; Western High school used to have a strong student group; Clifford Academy student group?
- Detroit Future Youth: coalition of youth organizations—justice based (social, economic); Partnership for Youth
- Who else can we bring in to help do some of the trainings?
- What can be made valuable and tangible for youth—even if it's not a job from the local area; if you give someone something they can be proud of, even if it's small, it can help to change their actions; provide tangible, valuable resources
- Have a youth entity council - helps guide issues and helps with decision making
- Reach out to different resources to help find scholarships for minority students
- Can YLead become its own entity; annually continuous and sustainable?
- Are there opportunities and money to involve seniors, cross-generational programming?

Local Business Survey

After initial trainings and workshops, about 12-15 youth from Covenant House will help to develop a questionnaire which will be applied in a local business survey during the spring of 2015. The intent is for local youth to interview owners and/or managers of local businesses within the Vista development area for the purpose of finding out:

- What types of businesses are here?
- What services and/or products do they offer?
- Who is hiring in the next three months?
- What is the entry level wage at each business?
- What is the level of education or experience needed to get a job?

Youth will travel in pairs or small groups to conduct surveys, and hopefully will be able to document their progress via video or audio recording. They then can create a report out document or presentation to the rest of the students at the school.

Conclusion

The Vista Partnership Youth Development work group has a concrete initiative to work on in order to engage youth, and add value to their experiences. Strategy still needs to be ironed out, but overall there are a variety of great ideas and talents at the table that are willing to help.

Residents were asked a couple questions before the conclusion of the meeting:

- Think about – what could we add or tweak to a curriculum that we're missing or that could add real value?
- Who could we get involved with our efforts, residents/organizations/businesses/student groups?
- Are you willing to dedicate some time to this project
 - In what capacity?
 - How much time?
 - Think about chaperoning for survey project...

Scheduling Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting for the Youth Development work group will be on Tuesday, January 20th at 5:30pm