

Youth Development Work Group – meeting II

2/3/2015

”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.”

Present: Annette Howard, Gabriela Ramirez-Darris, Dan Pederson, Mayté Penman, Evan Villeneuve, Piper Carter, Stephan

Overview

On Tuesday, February 3rd, Vista staff and residents and stakeholders convened for the second youth development meeting to discuss a few different topics including: the mission and progress of Life Directions, review of the Community Leadership Grant in relation to youth development, and points of connection between Vista, Life Directions, and local youth.

Life Directions

We welcome members of Life Directions at our youth development work group meeting. Life Directions is a youth-based program out of Western High School in SW Detroit that “inspires achieving peers to want to motivate, mentor and lead their peers to take charge of their Life Direction.” The program has been ongoing for 41 years and focuses on student excellence, belonging, responsibility, personal values and relationships. Life Directions also has a unique niche in connecting youth and adults for intergenerational interaction. Recently, they’ve been involved in helping immigrant families take field trips to various places with their children—facilitating experiences they may not otherwise get to enjoy. Also, they’ve facilitated the construction of a greenhouse or hoop-house at Western High School, and helped to build a gardening program which students oversee and manage throughout the spring and summer months.

Review – Community Leadership Institute (CLI) Grant and Programming

We briefly reviewed the intent for the CLI grant and student programming for Covenant House Southwest Academy.

- Copy of the programming schedule passed out to meeting attendees
- Purpose of the grant—to enhance and encourage leadership, team-building practices, and the importance of obtaining education and skills to attain employment
- Programming: soft skills training, multimedia tools training & documentation, local business survey & analysis
- Dividing trainings up in different areas and different subjects
 - Interviewing
 - Documenting
 - Team Building
 - Self-Analysis
 - Leadership

Documenting through Multimedia Tools

In order to help the students “understand the importance of their own voice, story and history,” giving them lessons and tools to document their mission and goals are a key part of that process.

Through media documentation, we’re looking to:

- Create activities to help with ice-breaking, building relationships and creating comfort interacting with others
- Practice using media tools; you don’t need a large budget to have a powerful voice or big impact; can actually do filming and editing with their own cell phones
- Creating an output measure in the last couple of weeks of the program; important for youth to see they’ve accomplished and finished something

Self-Assessment Survey (before and after)

We’re hoping to see where youth are in their knowledge and developmental levels when it comes to the curriculum. We passed out a pre-survey that will be used to determine where skill levels are currently at—a copy was passed out and distributed to the group.

The survey:

- Will be used in the first workshop session
- Is a chance for youth to see how they know key information, and to compare answers at the end of it
- Allow participants and facilitators to see what’s important to youth, how do we facilitate their wishes and ambitions?; youth are very aware of their surroundings—do not underestimate and listen to them

Points of Connections with Youth

Vista staff informed stakeholders about the potential connection points between Life Directions and Vista initiatives. We hope to work in the future with Life Directions to foster collaboration and participation of youth inside and near the Vista geography.

- Lot Activation
 - Youth participation in deciding and organizing events
- Safety & Blight
 - Neighborhood Beautification Day
- Arts & Culture
 - Participating in murals, music, performances, and events
- Communications
 - Youth advice and strategies for communicating Vista initiatives