



NEXT Steps Youth Entrepreneur Training Program
A 501c3 Tax Exempt Non-Profit Organization

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A Service Program Of The
National Black Men's Health Network

NEXT STEPS YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM TWO YEAR CASE STUDY PROPOSAL FY2012-2013



CSI: Westview Unit
Community, Science & Innovation
Investigation Team

Introduction

According to the USDA Food Desert Locator Map, The Westview Community of West End Atlanta, GA is a nationally recognized food desert. Just a few months ago, we learned that Atwood Community Gardens -- our budding urban farm and garden S.T.E.M.-based* outdoor training center -- is located less than one mile from the Westview Community. With such good fortune in proximity, we wanted to explore what impact our concentrated efforts would truly have in helping alleviate negative socio-economic conditions on a specific and clearly identified target market.

*S.T.E.M. = Science, Technology, Engineering And Mathematics

Over the past year (2011), the NEXT Steps Youth Entrepreneur Program has been successful in attracting and engaging over 450 youth and adult volunteers to Atwood Community Gardens for communal and social activities. Once there, we used collaborative and team building exercises to help them make the connection between business development and strategic planning, special event management, investigative research and discovery, introductions to career pathways in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (S.T.E.M.), community service and environmental stewardship and how they impact socio-economic conditions in their community. Now, over the course of 2012-2013, the NEXT Steps Youth Entrepreneur Program will develop a case study that focuses solely on the Westview Community Urban Food Desert to determine the effectiveness of our program strategies ability to address, reduce and/or eliminate socio-economic conditions that negatively impact at-risk, low-income youth and their families that live in the Westview Community.

Our Subjects

Our subjects are the Westview Community's neighborhood grandparents, John & Pat Perdeu and the 40+ at-risk kids they helped take care of within the past 12 months. They represent the growing trend of Georgia grandparents raising grandchildren -- regardless if they are of blood relation or not. Using the 2006 Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Region IV report entitled Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Call To Action as the foundation of our case study, **the NEXT Steps Youth Entrepreneur Program's goal is to determine if our Community, Science & Innovation (CSI) Investigation Team program strategy and our Community Involvement Growth Strategy (CIGS) Organizational Model could be coupled with the transferable skills within the urban agriculture industry to identify, address, reduced and/or eliminate socio-economic conditions that negatively impact youth and their families within the Westview Community Urban Food Desert.**

"Embracing Empowerment"

Economic and Community Development Through Social Entrepreneurism

Our Investigative Process

NEXT Steps will introduce Mr. & Mrs. Perdew and their “grandchildren” to the CIGS Organizational Model and teach them how to use it. Afterwards, the students will develop the CSI: Westview Unit Investigation Team to begin assessing “what’s wrong with their neighborhood”. Their tasks, however, would be to discover how it became that way and propose what resources (people, places and things) they have within their own backyards they use right now to fix it.

As the students engage in their discovery process, NEXT Steps will conduct a three-tiered process of our own:

- Research - NEXT Steps will document interviews of all subjects to study their lifestyles, mission statements, outlooks on life and passions.
- Analysis – NEXT Steps will analyze research to determine lifestyle patterns that can be identified as detrimental or trend setting towards the goal in reducing or eliminating socio-economic conditions that negatively impact the neighborhood lifestyle.
- Writing - Using the scientific method approach, NEXT Steps will create and present an organized report that shows the chronological process used to implement our program strategy and organizational model and its effectiveness in helping our subjects identify, reduce and/or eliminate socio-economic trends that negatively impact the Westview Community.

Research & Documentation Support

Our key research and document support will build upon the Emory School of Law, the Turner, the Atlanta Local Food Initiative, and Georgia Organics second phase activity of a 16-city nationwide survey (published June 2011) that identified NEXT Steps as a leading trend setter in urban agriculture in Atlanta, GA. (See attached). Production of the documentary will come through our partnership with Purple Flower Productions, the film industry 2,000 member network group called FILMAtlanta, and a social media specialist.

Budget Projections

It is estimated that the entire case study project will cost between \$185,000 (low end) and \$243,498 (high end). The high end budget projection is attached.

Final Results

If successful, we will package the NEXT Steps Youth Entrepreneur Program’s program strategies as an international social entrepreneur training model that can be implemented in any country.