

# **Youth and Family Economic Wellbeing Work Plan**

Youth and Family Economic Wellbeing Work Team

Southwest Detroit

GNI Initiative

Skillman/NCDI

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### **Situation**

#### **Our Community Strengths**

- A racially diverse neighborhood: Latino, Black, White, Arabic
- SW Detroit comes in second as a neighborhood in the City of Detroit with the least crime
- The average median income for community residents is just under \$25,000
- 19, 000 families reside in the SW Detroit Area, over 50% of those families are headed by married couples, and 33% are headed by single woman.
- There is 35,000 youth between the ages of 0-18 residing in the community.
- There are 11 parks in the community. In spring of 2006 Southwest Detroit open the doors of the \$10 million renovated Patton Park Recreational Center. Patton Park is an 85 –acre green space, with baseball diamonds, playscapes and soccer fields.

#### **Our Community Concerns**

- 40% of the children living in the SW Detroit Community, age five and under live in a family whose income is below the Federal Poverty Line.
- The high School drop out rate in the SW Detroit Community is 49% compared to the citywide rate 30% and a statewide rate of 25%.
- Limited Public Transportation in the community
- Limited opportunities for employment for both youth and adults (vocational, entrepreneurship)
- Lack of communication about jobs, resources, and community activities

- Limited opportunities for ESL, GED and life skills training

### **Our Community Goal**

All youth will have positive development opportunities in their home, schools, and neighborhoods.

### **Our Community Strategy**

- Promoting programs that enhance economic well-being of youth and families.
- Creating and fostering partnerships with businesses and organizations to create better opportunities for youth.

### **Definition of Work Team's Strategy**

The Youth and Family Economic Wellbeing Work Team defines its strategy as communication, employment and education. Youth need to be connected to specific job interests and job opportunities, educated in career preparation and life-skills training, and employed in meaningful work experiences

## **Priorities**

The work team believes that each strategy implemented should exhibit the following **core values**:

- 1). Commitment to **Integrity/Fidelity**
- 2). Commitment to the Southwest Detroit **Community**
- 3). Commitment to **Education/life skills training** of youth and their family unit
- 4). Commitment to helping and working with **everyone** in the community.
- 5). Commitment to **intergenerational** training and mentorship.
- 6). Commitment to addressing the needs of the whole **family** unit.

Our **long-term goal** is self-sufficiency for youth and their family unit. In the next three to five years we desire the implementation of the following **long-term strategies** to meet this goal:

- 1) The creation of jobs, internships, work incentives, and entrepreneur pursuits for youth.
- 2) The enactment of new legislation to allow young people to get work permits prior to obtaining a job, rather than having them obtaining a job first and then a permit.
- 3) The establishment of a training center to educate youth and their family unit on job-training skills, personal finance, recreation, literacy, and other life skills.

In the **short term**, however, we hold the following **goals** and **strategies** as priorities:

- 1). Improved Communication
- 2). More Youth Employment
- 3). More Job and Life-Skills Education

We propose the following plan to be implemented in the following three to twelve months.

## Implementation Strategies

### I. Communication

Communications will be improved by networking our churches, local media, recreational centers, libraries, nonprofit agencies, businesses, and block clubs. These communities' organizations will communicate information on opportunities to a community liaison (such as Maria Salinas) that will pass it on to the rest of the network. We will identify community residents in each neighborhood and block who can volunteer to spread the word about the opportunities. The liaison will work with the resident communicators and monthly get the information out to church bulletins, newsletters, websites (i.e. insidesouthwest.com), community posting boards at libraries and schools, and circulars that can be delivered door to door. He or she will work with the community residents to identify and hire youth and other individuals who can deliver the flyers to the homes and be compensated through rewards and stipends.



## **II. Employment**

- A. Create a database of jobs for teens by asking local stores and businesses in the community to set aside jobs for youth (e.g., Bagging in a grocery store, filing in an office, to more sophisticated and meaningful work opportunities). The database could be maintained by a local library.
- B. Obtain funding for local businesses so that these jobs may become available and young people may be hired.
- C. Obtain funding for hiring youth to help in communication efforts, community clean-up efforts, park and lawn maintenance, painting over negative graffiti, and creating positive murals.
- D. If the youth need transportation from and to their new jobs activities, churches will be called upon to provide transportation.

## **III. Education**

- A. Meet with principals of local public schools, charter schools, and private schools to encourage the use of local agencies and programs to meet Wellness and other curriculum requirements of the schools.
- B. More participation in current programs and new skills acquired by youth.
- B. The following three programs will be implemented as early as the summer, 2007 for the various summer school programs, latest spring of 2007.
  - 1. The creation of a community gardening curriculum in which youth learn topics related to gardening, nutrition, and business. Students will be guided by their instructors in a hands-on project of planning, planting and caring for a community garden. They will also work on projects related to the entrepreneurial pursuits of setting up a business, marketing and selling their produce.

2. The creation of an Art Program for summer school and school program in which students will learn about various art forms and marketing the art talent. Throughout the program the students, under the guidance of their instructors will collaborate with local authorities and agencies to paint over negative graffiti and create positive murals.

3. The expansion of current literacy programs such as that provided by Southwest Counseling Solutions to summer school programs and elementary schools. In order to provide personal, youth will be hired to work with and tutor the younger grades. Compensation will come by stipends and training on teaching and literacy.

4. The expansion of current personal finance classes to summer school programs. Currently, Southwest Housing provides workshops on personal finances that would be adapted to teach youth about personal finances, banking, and managing credit.

C. In all of the programs above, instructors will discuss the topic of overcoming negative peer pressure. They will assume the role of mentor to the youth to help them achieve their personal goals. Training or experience in mentorship and mentoring at-risk youth will be required of the instructors.

D. Although, schools seem like the appropriate means to deliver the above curriculum. The work team would like to see the similar programs developed through other community venues (i.e., churches, nonprofit agencies, block clubs, etc.

## **Resources**

### Alternative for Girls

In addition to programs for at-risk girls, it has a Peer Educator program.

### Back Ally Bikes

The collective teaches youth entrepreneur skills in addition to bike repair.

### Bailey Temple Church

Local congregation that offers various programs working with Madison Community Center and has offered to help with youth block cleanup and provide transportation.

### Building Better Adults

The group provides a variety of programs for youth.

### Carter Memorial Baptist Church

The local congregation holds mentorship workshops and would be willing to help with transportation.

### Chass Clinic

The local walk-in clinic offers a variety of health services to Southwest Detroit including the REACH program (diabetes prevention) and LA VIDA (violence against women).

### Creative Pathways

The resource provides tutoring for at-risk youth and other academic programs in SE Michigan.

### City Year

The organization hires youth and works with volunteers to perform a variety community service projects.

### Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation

In addition its prevention and after school tutoring programs for youth, the agency trains youth for media internships.

### El Central

Bilingual newspaper in Southwest Detroit

#### El Latino

Spanish-language newspaper in Southwest Detroit

#### The Essence of Egypt

The program was awarded a Skillman Grant for Financial Literacy in 48217.

#### Focus Hope

The agency has a variety of job training programs for youth and adults.

#### Goodwill Industries

In addition to its many services and programs, the company employs youth.

#### Greening of Detroit

The agency has a variety of projects in Detroit to revitalize the city with greener parks and boulevard and gardens.

#### Kumon

The company runs tutoring and literacy programs in Southwest Detroit.

#### Latino Family Services

The non-profit agency offers among its programs, after-school tutoring, year-round recreational activities, and summer programs. It was recently awarded a Skillman grant to run technology training, career planning and mini-internship program for high school students.

#### Mercy Education

The agency runs tutoring and literacy programs in Southwest Detroit.

#### Mort Crim Communication Foundation

The foundations is full-service content development, editorial, and consulting firm specializing in broadcast television, corporate video, multimedia, print, and motivational messages.

#### National Community Development Institute

The institute works to build capacity in communities for social change. Maria Salinas is the Community Coordinator for Southwest Detroit under NCDI.

#### Real Media Project

The UM program works with Western International high school students to develop announcements for events and services in Southwest Detroit.

#### Skillman Foundation

The foundation offers a variety of grants through its Good Neighborhood Initiative to Southwest Detroit and other communities.

#### Southwest Solutions

The non-profit agency is the parent company of Southwest Counseling Solutions (among its programs, also offers family literacy classes) and Southwest Housing Solutions (among its programs, also offers Personal Finance Classes).

#### Univision

The Spanish-language television network owes the local Spanish channel 23.

## **Participation**

### 1. Communication

NCDI – Maria Salinas (example)

Community Communicator – Jennifer Williams (example), others will be identified.

Agencies – (various, see resources)

Media – Community Online Calendars, Univision 23, El Central, El Latino, Detroit Free Press & News, Community Bulletin Boards, Circular, and Church Bulletin insert

### 2. Employment

Funding – Skillman Foundation (example)

Local Businesses and Agency (database will be created as part of the plan)

Work Projects (City of Detroit, Local agencies such as Latino Family Services, Southwest Solutions, DHDC, Detroit Youth Foundation, City Year to organize, hire, and manage youth work projects)

Circular/Newsletter – Real Media Project at Western International (example)

### 3. Education

Schools – All local public, charter, and private schools in Southwest Detroit

Program Development and Delivery

Gardening – Building Better Adults/Greening of Detroit (example)

Personal Finance – Southwest Housing Solutions/Chase Bank (example)

Art – Local Mural Artist, Vito Valdez/DIA (example)

## **Outcomes**

### 1. Communication

- a. A bi-monthly circular/Newsletter of youth-job opportunities and training opportunities will be drafted and delivered to homes in Southwest Detroit, posted on community bulletin boards, inserted in fifty church bulletins, and delivered to local agencies and media outlets.
- b. Resident volunteers will be identified to act as community communicators.
- c. Youth will be hired every other month to deliver circulars.

### 2. Employment

- a. A database of youth job opportunities in Southwest Detroit will be developed.
- b. Local business will be contacted and asked to set aside jobs for youth.
- c. Youth will be hired to participate in cleaning up activities and mural painting teams.
- d. More youth employed.

### 3. Education

Summer schools programs and local schools will include classes in Entrepreneurial Skills through Gardening, Personal Finances, and Mural Art.