



GRANT OUTCOMES REPORT

Annual Meeting: June 8, 2015

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Dear Members and Friends,

We invite you to read our Grant Outcomes Report outlining how our Community Partners implemented their plans. We hope you will be inspired by their results. This issue features three Impact Austin Community Partners and one Girls Giving Grants Community Partner, whose grant programs were completed as of May 2015.

Our support of these organizations reflects our commitment to transforming lives in our Central Texas community. We have learned alongside our Community Partners as they have faced challenges, overcome barriers, and achieved extraordinary successes. The lasting friendships developed as a result of these partnerships have changed forever our hearts individually and as an organization.

It is through the successful program execution of our Community Partners that we can continue to deepen our commitment to the Central Texas community in a meaningful way!

Sincerely,



Donna Benson-Chan
Impact Austin Executive Director



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CREATIVE ACTION

(Formerly Theatre Action Project)
www.creativeaction.org

New Stages Youth Theatre

Ensemble

Focus Area.....**Culture**

Grant Amount.....**\$103,600**

Grant Year.....**2012**

Grant Period.....**7/1/2012 – 6/30/2014**

Creative Action uses artistic methods to encourage a youth's academic, social, and emotional development, inspiring them to be positive forces in their community.

The Impact Austin grant funded the New Stages Youth Theatre Ensemble program, which targets middle and high school students recently released from juvenile detention. By using drama, team games, and discussions, Creative Action sought to boost these youth's social skills and emotional well-being.

Creative Action aimed to provide over 150 hours of direct service to more than 50 youth annually over the two-year grant period, with goals of having more than 75% of participants successfully completing the program and at least 90% exhibiting improved social skills and behavior. The organization targeted zero instances of recidivism and gang-related offenses from participants. Additionally, the program sought to have students acquire the necessary skills for creating and presenting original performances to the public as well as envisioned engaging up to five professional artists to deliver the program.

In total, the program served 113 students and offered 450 direct

programming hours during the two-year grant period. While the organization fell short of its goals of having 90% of participants achieve certain social and behavioral metrics, such as only having 75% of students reporting improved familial relationships and having four participants reoffending during the program, there were strong improvements across the board, with 100% of participants satisfied with the program. Additionally, all participants demonstrated an improvement in social competencies, while 95% of participants reported acquiring communication and conflict resolution skills. Creative Action was unable to deliver on its goal of having all students perform original pieces publicly and reach 2,000 community members through performance due to performance anxiety. However, the organization rallied to overcome this challenge, working to establish a strong foundation of trust among participants as well as build self-esteem and performance skills. In the end, students shared their work on two occasions. Also during the program, Creative Action met its goal of engaging up to five professional artists from the community, with three professional artists working with participants to foster various artistic skills.

A STORY FROM CREATIVE ACTION:

"Frank is 17 years old and has been in and out of jail since he was 13 for drug-related offenses. Frank signed up for New Stages' Hip Hop Workshop this spring as soon as he found out about it from his probation officer. Both of them believed he would benefit from having something positive to do after school and a channel to express his ability as a poet. When Frank arrived at the first workshop, he was accompanied

by his aunt. His aunt was there for two reasons—1. Frank was nervous about being in the program and 2. He couldn't run away and get in trouble under her watch. On that first day, Frank didn't share much. Like many of the youth we worked with, he was extremely hesitant to share anything about himself—we had not yet gained his trust. He was still unsure about why we were interested in helping him and his peers. So, he sat in the back and listened. And while he was not actively participating—he was taking it all in and deciding whether or not to come back. He was the first person to arrive for the second workshop. And while his aunt was still in tow, things had changed. He didn't sit next to her. He sat with some of the other participants, and they began working on songs together. It was clear Frank had thought we were worthy of his trust, and he was finding a place to belong. Over the next few weeks, Frank became a leader in the group and recruited three new participants. He would always show up first. When his friends were not there on time, he picked up his phone and called them to see where they were. When the participants had the opportunity to share their raps, he always volunteered first and politely encouraged others to share. And on the two days he had to miss the program, he called ahead to let us know why he wouldn't be there. As instructors, we worked very hard to instill a sense of personal responsibility into the group, and they started to become truly dependable following Frank's lead. One of the reasons he had to miss the program was because he was required to appear in court as part of his probation. What Frank didn't know was that his probation officer and I were in contact throughout his time in our program. On the day of the court hearing, his probation officer called me to ask about Frank's commitment and attitude. He almost fell out of his chair when I told him Frank was the clear leader of the group. He expressed his gratitude for our program and told me Frank had not been as successful in other programs. That night at the hearing, his

probation officer read a statement by me in front of the judge. She was very pleased with the report and congratulated Frank on his development! When Frank came back to the program, he thanked me for my words, and I assured him that he only had himself to thank for being such a talented and effective leader. Currently, Frank is still free and living at home.

ECOLOGY ACTION

www.ecology-action.org

Circle Acres Master Plan

Focus Area.....**Environment**

Grant Amount.....**\$103,600**

Grant Year.....**2012**

Grant Period.....**9/1/2012 – 8/31/2014**

Ecology Action strives to create a healthier environment through undertaking activities focused on resource recovery, Brownfield remediation, and zero waste.

Impact Austin awarded Ecology Action a grant to assist in the development of a master plan and installation of critical infrastructure for a recently purchased 10-acre tract of land, Circle Acres, in the Montopolis neighborhood of East Austin. This land, near the Colorado River, was formerly used as a landfill and an illegal dump site for more than 40 years. Ecology Action sought to remediate and restore the land, while offering education on sustainability and accessibility to green spaces to the local community.

Ecology Action met several goals during the course of the grant period, notably in relation to remediation and restoration. There is no longer surface trash and the surface soil is safe for walking without fear of lead contamination. Furthermore, local

wildlife has reportedly flourished thanks to this land remediation and restoration effort, with partners at the Travis Audubon Society counting more than 120 bird species at the site. Land samples taken at the site in 2000 found lead contamination in the ground soil to be above TRRP Tier 1 Standards (Texas Risk Reduction cleanup standards), while the most recent samples taken indicate levels now below these standards. Over the course of the grant period, Ecology Action established three trailheads with informational kiosks, just shy of its goal of four due to permitting issues, providing access to nearly 45,000 people in the local community.

Through this project, Ecology Action was able to build strong ties with the local community as well as involve the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), allowing for the establishment of a long-term partnership. The organization hosted more than 500 volunteers at Circle Acres over the course of the project. At the end of the grant period, work remained to be done with respect to the installation of an outdoor classroom for youth education, though its completion was reportedly imminent. Additionally, final graphics for the informational kiosks were anticipated for installation in 2015.

The organization credits Impact Austin with its ability to secure additional funding for the project through the awarding of two separate grants, totaling nearly \$20,000.

A STORY FROM ECOLOGY ACTION:

Our "human interest story" can be framed as somewhat of a tragedy turned into a

success. In July [2014], our office onsite was seriously vandalized over the course of a long weekend. The door was completely kicked in, all windows were broken out, a number of field analytical tools like water testing kits were stolen, all items that were not stolen were broken, and the exterior of the building was splashed in paint. We had proposed in our original grant application to Impact Austin that we would use some funds to build a fence around the property to secure it, but changed that plan midway through the grant period because we felt that it made us seem distrustful and therefore not welcoming of the surrounding community. Seeing the extreme amount of damage caused, it seemed as though our change in plans was being proven wrong.

Instead of filing a police report and attracting negative attention to the project and the surrounding neighborhood, we decided to begin going door to door, asking each area resident if they had seen anyone going down to the property on the weekend in question or if they had seen anyone driving or walking away with what looked like stolen merchandise. After a long day of canvassing with no success, a neighbor who said that they had some information about the incident contacted us. They claimed to have seen a pile of material matching the description of what was stolen from our building in one of the neighbor's backyards. At this point, the entire neighborhood was essentially out in their front yards talking about us and what was going on. When we decided to just go and approach the residents living in the house where the stolen items had been seen, there was a crowd of neighbors standing behind us. The young man that came to the door after we knocked on it immediately fell into tears upon seeing us and his neighbors standing outside and began apologizing profusely. He gave up a number of other young men in the neighborhood who were all brought outside by their parents. We spoke to them all, as a group, about respect for their community

and respect for Circle Acres, a place that was meant to be a resource for them. The following morning, each of the young men met us at the vandalized building and they spent the day cleaning up the damage that they had caused and even began working on some new trails that were being installed.

The entire event, though costly and unnerving to us, ended up becoming a valuable moment where a deeper trust and respect for our work was established with the surrounding community. Our goal at Circle Acres is to bring an environmental resource to a community that has little to no access to safe and available green space. This is most important to area youth who attend underperforming schools with little to no access to productive after-school recreational opportunities. This experience has renewed our dedication to the Montopolis Neighborhood, to remediating contaminated and neglected properties for the benefit of traditionally marginalized communities, and to making Circle Acres a hub for community and youth empowerment.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN

www.partnershipsforchildren.org

YES Mentor Program

Focus Area.....**Family**

Grant Amount.....**\$103,600**

Grant Year.....**2012**

Grant Period.....**8/1/2012 – 7/31/2014**

Partnerships for Children provides myriad services for abused and neglected children in the Austin area community, who are in the care of Child Protective Services.

The Impact Austin grant funded the Youth Empowerment & Success (YES) Mentor Program for children between the ages of 16 and 18 residing in group or foster care who would benefit most

from a mentor and a financial literacy training program. The program strives to decrease negative life outcomes for these youth, such as homelessness, incarceration, unemployment, teen pregnancy, and poverty. It also provides participants a voice, as the youth are instrumental in providing feedback that shapes the program to produce positive results.

The goals for the YES Mentor Program included enrolling 13 children and mentors in each six-month cycle; having 80% of participants open a savings account; and having 75% of participants successfully finish their classes and demonstrate improved financial literacy. With the Impact Austin grant, Partnerships for Children had great success, serving 54 youth during the grant period and having another 24 youth starting the program within the six months following the completion of the grant period.

Partnerships for Children works closely with YES youth on a day-to-day basis, with mentors providing them a consistent point of contact to help them make good choices. Partnerships for Children also works with youth on a plan of action prior to “aging out” of the care of Child Protective Services. Through this early intervention and planning, it is able to reduce the number of youth that end up homeless or incarcerated.

As the YES Mentor Program has grown and become more well known, Partnerships for Children has had an opportunity to build relationships with new organizations and expand existing relationships to broaden the program. Partnerships for Children had more than \$30,000 committed to supporting

the YES program following the completion of the Impact Austin grant and is working with a new partner that will provide housing opportunities for YES participants and alumna between 18 and 21 years old, one of the most needed resources for these young people.

A STORY FROM PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN:

Katie participated in the YES Mentor Program in 2012 and has remained involved as a YES alumna. She has attended a number of YES advanced classes and events including: “Job Hunting 101” and “Planning for Baby”. Katie has had many struggles since leaving care at 18. She has struggled with homelessness, providing for her 8-month-old child and maintaining employment. Also, she has relationship struggles with her biological family, boyfriend and others. With the help of her mentor, Katie has been able to secure employment, complete driver’s education, and obtain community resources such as childcare and WIC. Katie is moving into her very first apartment and hopes to get back into school at Austin Community College within the next year. While her road has been bumpy, one thing has remained consistent, she always returns to her mentor and Partnership for Children’s program manager for guidance. To us, this is a huge milestone and positive outcome. They may stray away, but when they come back, we all win.

HELPING HAND HOME FOR CHILDREN

www.helpinghandhome.org

The Kids Closet Program

Grant Amount.....**\$5,200**

Grant Year.....**2014**

Helping Hand Home provides a nurturing and therapeutic home for children who have suffered severe abuse and neglect.

The children that arrive at Helping Hand Home (HHH) often do so with only their clothes and possessions held in a small plastic bag. The Kids Closet Program at HHH provides these children with what might be the first new, well-fitted clothes they have ever had. The clothes help to make these severely abused children feel safe, secure and confident as they begin to acclimate to the regular childhood many other kids take for granted.

To expand inventory for its “closet,” Helping Hands Home approached Impact Austin’s Youth Initiative, Girls Giving Grants (g3), for support. Girls Giving Grants was honored to recognize the significance and achievement of the Kids Closet Program by awarding its 2014 grant of \$5,200 to support this important initiative.

A NOTE FROM HELPING HANDS HOME FOR CHILDREN:

Thanks to the generosity of Girls Giving Grants, the children of Helping Hand Home will continue to have new, well-fitted, and seasonally appropriate clothes and shoes. The children and Helping Hand Home thank g3 for their support!



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