



People Advocating for Recreation in Communities (PARC)

Youth Education for Community
Development

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Introduction

- People Advocating for Recreation in Communities (PARC)
- We would like to create a Youth Education program that encourages Community Development.
- Our focus for this program involves the community of Pacoima in the City of Los Angeles.
- The Agencies involved in this program would be:
 - Police
 - Parks and Recreation
 - City of Los Angeles



Introduction (cont'd)

- We decided to implement this program because we recognize that Pacoima is a community that faces many problems, including high crime rates, pollution, a lack in community involvement, and a lack of concern from the government at all 3 levels: Local, State, and Federal.
- Our program will focus on involving the community leaders to educate the youth on several issues within the community (i.e. police, mentors, teachers, parents).
- From the responses of the community, we recognized that they need a foundation to help them get started on community development seeing as how they are willing to participate for bettering their community.
- By integrating our program we hope to better the community and solve the problems that afflict them.



PARC

- The goal of PARC is to connect the local community with the government.
- Working with the police and local government authorities, PARC wants to create and implement youth crime prevention education programs that will help decrease the high crime rates in Pacoima.
- We want to advocate for the people that live in Pacoima, whose voices are being ignored by the government.
 - By bringing unity to Pacoima's voices, PARC feels that the government will listen to them together rather than individually.

Political Action

- o The History and Government Involvement

History of Pacoima

- o Pacoima's populations consists mainly of Mexican-American immigrant working-class families. Then what makes up for the ethnic composition of Pacoima?
 - **Restrictive Covenants:** Contractual agreements that prohibited non-Whites from living in an area. Pacoima was one of the few places in Southern CA where non-whites were not restricted.
 - o 1964: Executive Order 10925 signed by JFK.
 - o Prohibits Federal Government contractors from discrimination based on race.



Pacoima Today

- Pacoima is an area with many problems that afflict the community, the main one being pollution.
- Their needs for a better quality of life have often been ignored by government agencies.
- Youth that live and grow up in Pacoima often feel that they are not important, because nobody is trying to help them.
 - Youth often resort to acting out by joining gangs or partaking in other crime-related activities.



← The Pacoima Wash, which runs adjacent to the site would, once cleaned up, provide the perfect setting for a park.

Focus-Group Questions

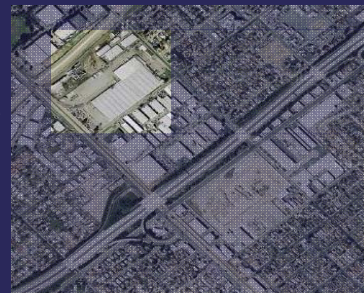
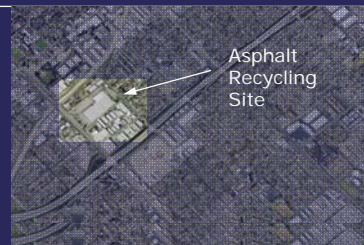
- We worked with Pacoima Beautiful to ask 11 members of the community the following four questions that follow the PARK (Preserve, Add, Remove, Keep Out) model used in community workshops.
 - What do you like about your neighborhood? (Preserve)
 - What would you like your neighborhood to have that does not currently exist? (Add)
 - What would you like to see eliminated in your neighborhood? (Remove)
 - What should never become part of your neighborhood? (Keep Out)

Focus Group Responses

- What do you like about your neighborhood? (Preserve)
 - People in the neighborhood are fighting for change, fighting for a better quality of life.
 - The mom and pop shops; there has not been a lot of big box development, YET!
- What would you like your neighborhood to have that does not currently exist? (Add)
 - Open Space- more parks for children.
 - Community Center- one close to their neighborhood.
- What would you like to see eliminated in your neighborhood? (Remove)
 - The industrial sites (Asphalt Recycling Center)
 - Pollution: air and water.
 - The industrial sites surrounding the neighborhood contribute to the air and water pollution in Pacoima.
- What should never become part of your neighborhood? (Keep Out)
 - Keep out industrial manufacturers.
 - Keep out big box developers.

Pacoima

The Asphalt Recycling Site located near single family residential houses would be ideal for developing a park and recreation facility in the center of the site, with other possible uses developed on the site.



Pacoima

- The Asphalt Recycling Center site has caused many problems in the neighborhood, and its removal is one, community members have advocated for.
- A Community Center and Park on this site would serve the neighborhood, because they do not have these uses available to them in close proximity to their homes.
 - The creation of Open Space (a park) has been advocated for by members of the community for a long time, but nothing has been done until now.



Peer & Adult Advisement

School And Mentors involvement



Peer & Adult Advisement

- As part of PARC, our division focuses on the youth education to better their communities.
- By working with local officials and police action we want youth to know they can make a difference.



School involvement ...

- We will be contacting Pacoima schools and giving presentations on how to get involved in the city actions.
- Some teachers we receive a program lay out as too how their students can get credit by getting involved.



- We will work with the architect and the construction company that will be hired to develop this community land, and show how the youth can be taught vocational skills through being involved in the process.



- ***Several important assets in youth development are***
 - *Showing the youth that they are important resources*
 - *Helping youth to serve others*
 - *Making sure they are safe within their communities.*
 - *But also making sure students have adult role models to show responsible behaviors.*




Best Practices...

- Taking the ideas of The National Big Brother and Big Sisters and The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston:
 - We plan on getting youth involved while learning skills and taking pride in what they do and where they live.




Benefits of Youth Involvement

- Direct youth involvement offers potential benefits both to youth and to the organizations that serve them. Youth gain experience and confidence; organizations gain a fresh perspective on youth culture; and organizations develop more effective outreach.



Involving young people may provide an organization with the following benefits:

- Fresh ideas, unshackled by the way things have always been done
- New perspectives on decision making, including more relevant information about young people's needs and interests
- Candid responses about existing services
- Additional data for analysis and planning that may be available only to youth
- More effective outreach that provides important information peer to peer
- Additional human resources as youth and adults share responsibility
- Greater acceptance of messages, services, and decisions because youth were involved in shaping them
- Increased synergy from partnering youth's energy and enthusiasm with adults' professional skills and experience
- Enhanced credibility of the organization to both youth and advocates.



Involving young people may benefit the young people themselves in these ways:

- Increased status and stature in the community
- Improved competencies and increased self-esteem
- Stronger skills and experience as leaders
- Greater knowledge and understanding of other cultures
- Increased self-discipline and schedule management
- Greater appreciation of the multiple roles of adults
- Broader career choices.



Strategies

1. Provide youth with the skills needed to influence policy.

- Provide youth with training in areas such as leadership, collaboration, organizing, policy advocacy, and media.
- Develop channels for disseminating information to youth about policy issues affecting their lives.
- Encourage adults who speak about issues related to youth to share the podium with qualified youth speakers.



Strategies (cont'd)

2. Create opportunities for youth to shape policy.

- Include youth in hearings, boards, and commissions at the state level and support their participation with leadership development training, transportation, and incentives such as school credit.
- Create youth commissions within local government. Youth commission members can play a variety of roles including shaping policy, holding conferences, sitting on other commissions, or partnering with policymakers as advisors on youth issues.
- Engage youth in asset mapping projects in their communities to identify community resources and needs from a youth perspective. Involve youth in the publication and dissemination of the results within the community.
- Require and fund grantees to involve youth in program planning for state and foundation initiatives.



Police Action

Police and Authority involvement



Police Action

- By creating a local police precinct within the program, the focus of that station can be on the youth and their education.
- Police can go to local high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools to give them a refresher course on the laws pertaining to the youth.
- This type of youth involvement can increase academic performance during high school, and increase likelihood of college attendance
- Police can teach youth how to be involved in the community and show them the outcomes of involvement.
- Other youth inclusion programs show lower rates of crimes committed by youth.
 - A similar program implemented in Wales shows the results of such a program.



Police Action

- Arrest rates for young people considered to be most at risk of crime in each Youth Inclusion Program (YIP) had been reduced by 65%
 - Of those who had offended before joining the program, 73% were arrested for fewer offences after engaging with a YIP, and those who were arrested, were arrested for lesser offences.
 - Of those who had not offended previously but who were at risk, 74% did not go on to be arrested after engaging with a YIP.



Police Action

- Police can create a council for Pacoima with leaders that represent each neighborhood in the community.
 - These subgroups involve representatives from youth, parents, teachers, and community officials.
 - These representatives voice their opinions on behalf of their subgroup so that every concern is heard.



Police Action

- Create a mandatory community service program for the local high school where the students have to complete 40 hours with the police.
 - This program involves the youth with the police to help clean up graffiti in their neighborhood.
 - This in turn, will give the youth pride in their communities.



Police Action

- Recreation centers help decrease crime.
 - Research in the Ottawa-Carleton Police Department Youth Center has shown that youth involvement in their center has decreased crime.
- Calls to the police for youth related disturbances have declined.
 - Drug related arrests have gone from fifty-seven in 1988 to zero in 1993.

Police Action

- These Police Action programs can be funded by donations, government grants, or by re-allocating police funds to help with this precinct located within the center.

Developmental Assets

PARC aims to provide youth with the following assets through various programs to help them develop into healthy, caring, responsible adults.

- *External Assets: Empowerment*
 - **Community Values Youth:** Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
 - **Youth as Resources:** Young people are given useful roles in the community.
 - **Service to Others:** Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
 - **Safety:** Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.
- *External Assets: Constructive Use of Time*
 - **Youth Programs:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
- *Internal Assets: Positive Values*
 - **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
 - **Equality & Social Justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
 - **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for their beliefs.
- *Internal Assets: Social Competencies*
 - **Cultural Competence:** Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different backgrounds.
 - **Resistance Skills:** Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

Conclusion

- By creating PARC, we have integrating different agencies such as police, government, and parks and recreation, in order to establish a foundation for the youth to develop their behavioral assets with their involvement in their community.
- These values learned will benefit the community as a whole by instilling pride and self accomplishment with the help of these public governing bodies.

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