**Spring 2012 Community Project Abstracts**

**Starting New Chapters:**
**Bridge Builders and Parklane Page Turners**

MSW students: Elsa Miranda, Josalin Robinson, Dana Boyd, Kristian Barze, Robyn Gordon

**Abstract**

Our group worked with the Fulton County Schools- Program for Children and Youth in Transition (FCS-PCYT) on their project to formulate a book club for homeless and displaced students. We assisted (FCS-PCYT) in creating the book club at two locations, Parklane Elementary School and McClarin High School. We held a total of sixteen (16) sessions, eight at each school, which lasted for an hour each. We worked to secure a $300 Scholastic grant and a $3000 Dollar General grant which provide books for future book clubs. Both schools are excited to host the book clubs in their schools for the next school year. Our developing a book club taught us that not only is reading fundamental, but it is very necessary for homeless or displaced students see that they too can overcome adversity.

**Supporting People & Livelihoods through Art, Self Expression, & Healing**

MSW Students: Bincy Baby, Shallyn Blanton, Brittany Gray, Caroline Tuten & Chris Watts

**Abstract**

Our group collaborated with the Work of our Hands (WOOH), an organization that connects homeless and mentally ill communities in Atlanta with the arts. The project’s main goals were to create a grant template that the organization may use to obtain funding and establish Memorandums of Agreement between WOOH and the three organizations that have specialized art programs. These organizations are The Friendship Center, Emmaus House, and Common Ground. We worked with WOOH’s Board to help develop their overall financial and social service goals. Finishing the grant template was important because it now gives WOOH the opportunity to receive grant funding, which they have never been awarded. This funding will impact marginalized individuals who are participants in the art programs that WOOH supports. During our project with WOOH we have learned and gained a better understanding of the inner-workings of a non-profit.
The Furniture Bank of Metro Atlanta’s 18th Annual Chairish the Future Auction and Gala: A Community Project

MSW students: Caitlin Costello, Katherine Frazier-Archila, Elizabeth Kauss, Erik Moore, Lee-Ora Segel

Abstract

Our group partnered with the Furniture Bank of Metro Atlanta on its annual fundraiser, the Chairish the Future Auction and Gala. We assisted in the coordination of the event through four key goal areas: event marketing, which included the use of Facebook and natural network connections to increase ticket sales, event exposure, and auction item donations; direct event support, which included pre-event set up, event staffing, and post-event breakdown; Furniture Bank resource creation, which included the development of a Facebook event page and an assessment of social media’s role in giving and fundraising; and post-event follow up tasks and responsibilities. Our efforts helped to raise a net total of $75,452, yielding a $61,224.50 profit to support agency operations and services. Our involvement with this fundraiser taught us that a successful fundraising campaign requires a rich network of resources and professional tenacity to appeal to targeted groups’ giving capacities.

GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM- MAAC: Final Paper

MSW Students: Austin Brown, Dianna Dikitanan, Lindsey Galinis, Matt Raskind & Mary Beth Whitworth

Abstract

Our group worked with the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children to do a community assessment of foster youth attending Georgia State University with the hopes of being able to lay the groundwork for a Guardian Scholars program for Georgia State University students formerly or currently in foster care. We were able to create a strategic plan, which outlined the steps needed to conduct the community assessment and lay the foundation for the development of the program. We tried several avenues for the community assessment, including a focus group and then an Internet survey. The focus group was unsuccessful but the survey created enough responses for us to move forward. In order to create a means of sustainability we created a manual of resources for foster youth at Georgia State and also created a directory of offices, contacts, and people key to the development of Guardian Scholars. Between the two and through getting Dr. McLaughlin on board to continue our work, we were able to leave the project in a place for it to continue to develop and grow. Through our efforts we learned the importance of community assessments and the difficulties related to creating and implementing a community assessment and creating new programs.
Special Pops Tennis: The What, Why, & How to Replicate and Sustain

MSW Students: Susan Coopman, Rasheda Dean, Jenifer Dupree, Marcus Hughes, Tanya Mitchell, Gina Moore

Abstract

For the community project our group partnered with Special Populations Tennis, Incorporated. Together we decided to develop a systematic way for organizations nationwide with a similar interest in helping the special needs population through interactive sports to replicate and sustain a tennis program in their community. To accomplish this goal, the group constructed a digital package to be placed on the organization’s website that can be downloaded by other parties to aid them in replicating a tennis-focused organization such as this. The digital package answers the “what, why, and how” questions of replicating and sustaining a Special Populations Tennis, Inc. in any area of the country. The deliverables of the digital package includes a marketing video that focuses on the “why,” a program brochure that addressed the “what” and “how,” and an accompanying PowerPoint presentation that further answered the “how.” In answering these questions, the group engaged the organization’s key stakeholders. We interviewed the athletes (intellectually disabled youth and adult clients), volunteers, board members, and funders to gather on video their personal reflections regarding what makes the nonprofit organization so unique and why replication is so important. The organization was a success before our group became involved, but the outcome of this project is to show others why and how it is such a success. By meeting some of the many different people involved in making this community organization such an amazing accomplishment, the group was able to see the passion, motivation, and effort of the largely volunteer-run operation.

Domestic Violence: Facilitating Change

MSW students: Ana Brower, Antonina Tomaski, Paul Pursell, Leigh Nadel, and Candace Clark

Our group worked with the Community Welcome House (CWH) domestic violence shelter to create an educational video for law enforcement and legal authorities to improve communications and services provided to domestic violence survivors. Our purpose was to shed light on the systemic re-victimization that often occurs when domestic violence survivors seek help in the community. Our group engaged in various tasks designed to improve our understanding of the complexities of domestic violence, including a literature review and several group and individual interviews with survivors and community professionals who work with them. Innumerable factors serve to commit on-going victimization of a survivor, including struggles with psychological and physiological repercussions and systems which are difficult to navigate. Championing domestic violence should be an on-going process within the community, emphasizing that domestic violence is not limited to a certain group but can happen to anyone. It is imperative to provide measures of confidentiality to safeguard survivors and community professionals who advocate to bring needed change.
Serve Your Server Wellness Spa Event

MSW Students: Hannah Adams, LeQuandra Hale-Banks, Kehli Higdon, Mia Howard, Shawndria Miller

Our group joined 9to5 Atlanta, a member-led organization that improves the workplace for working women, in working with their Fair Eats Campaign. The Fair Eats Campaign advocates for raising the $2.13 per hour wages of tipped workers. Our collaboration efforts consisted of joining their “Serve Your Server Wellness Spa Event”. The event expressed and displayed appreciation for restaurant servers while increasing awareness about the campaign and membership. Our involvement required completing the tasks of soliciting servers, volunteers to provide services, and food donations, and planning the event. During our process we attended a legislative hearing on 2/13 at the capitol to advocate for increasing wages which was very educational. Our fundraising event was the first and was held on April 1 which had 40-50 attendees, raised $87, and increased membership by four. The outreach process enlightened us on the importance of starting early and including servers in the planning process.

Current Processes and Avenues for Improvement: Client Satisfaction and Program Outcomes for Our House

MSW Students: Katie Crippen, Devika Kumar, Mary McCarthy, Rebecca Stoll, and Laura Zimmerman

ABSTRACT

The group conducted two program evaluations for Our House, an organization that provides childcare and support services to homeless families. The purposes of these evaluations were to determine the usefulness of agency services and to guide the creation of a follow-up program. The outcome evaluation targeted former clients to gather feedback on what assistance clients needed post-discharge. The primary finding was Our House needed to improve the quality of its client contact data –only three of 93 potential participants were reachable. The second evaluation was of current clients’ satisfaction with Our House services. Twenty-nine clients completed surveys, and an overwhelming majority expressed satisfaction with their experience at Our House. Our House received written reports which included evaluation results and recommendations based on client feedback; these support current service implementation and will shape agency protocol for follow up services. This project reinforced the importance of evaluation in providing effective services.
Got Boys? Program: Developing a Curriculum to Empower Single Mothers Raising Sons

MSW Students: Andrea Brock, Krystal Kofie, Lindsey Stewart-Gonzalez, Nicole Williams

Abstract

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MSW Students: Andrea Brock, Krystal Kofie, Lindsey Stewart-Gonzalez, Nicole Williams
Our group collaborated with Single Parent Alliance and Resource Center (SPARC) to create an 11-session workshop curriculum for their Got Boys? program. The curriculum aims to increase the capacity of single mothers raising sons. We met with SPARC staff and a curriculum expert to establish project goals. We also conducted a literature review and facilitated focus groups with 13 single mothers and their sons to discover challenges they face. Finally, we drafted, designed, and edited a curriculum based on these meetings and relevant literature. The final product, a 64-page facilitator’s guide with unique illustrations, dynamic lessons and hands-on activities, will be copyrighted and distributed to SPARC staff and programs throughout the country servicing single mothers raising sons. We learned that, despite the unpredictability of working in the community, drawing on individual skills and collaborations can empower workers, organizations and clients.