



Native American Community Design Group

April to May, 2015

A Project of the Mission Impact Council

DESIGN GROUPS: The Mission Impact Council and Native American Takota Prep high school students held two design meetings.

GOAL: The goal was to begin identifying needs and *co-creating* initiatives that would increase life opportunity and equity for all Native American youth.

CONTENT: Monthly discussions focused on five topics: youth development and leadership, employability, diversity, health and wellness, and education.

RESULTS: The high school students identified key gaps and obstacles in each of the above areas that could increase life opportunities and equity for their youth. Their comments and ideas are presented on the following pages in three sections:

1. **Access:** Do Native American youth have equal *access* to youth programs and opportunities?
2. **Quality:** Are the programs that Native American youth access *high quality*?
3. **Purpose:** Do existing programs serve the most important *purposes and needs* of Native American youth and their community?

The Mission Impact Council

The Mission Impact Council convenes diverse organizations and communities to work together for positive social change through developing innovative and community-based solutions that change life opportunities for and with urban and underserved youth in the Twin Cities. The co-chairs of the collective impact initiative are:

- Wokie Weah, President of Youthprise
- Todd Tibbits, Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities
- Meghan Barp, Senior Vice President, Community Impact, at Greater Twin Cities United Way

For more information, contact Hedy Walls, the Vice-President of Social Responsibility at the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities: hedy.walls@ymcatwincities.org.

Native American Youth Development Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Transportation	Programs exist but there is no viable transportation.	Even where transportation exists, money is an obstacle.
	Flexibility	Programs exist but not flexible to homeless youth needs.	Programs don't work with time and day, requirements, child care, etc.
	Information	Need easy way to find out about programs that match their interests.	Great to have system where sign up to learn about programs that match your interests.
	Who's Welcome?	Programs are not always welcoming to the youth who need it the most ("cream of the crop").	Youth sometimes unsure if they are really welcome if not fit the norm.
	Teen Parents	Desire for more educational resources for teen parents.	Lack of resources is a significant barrier to parenting.
Quality	Definitions	Programs don't understand youth's point of view.	Youth have different perspective on what it means to be a leader.
	Mental Health	Free mental health counseling needed for substance abuse, alcohol abuse and more.	Mental health considered a significant issue; offer mental health classes/ resources at schools?
	Health Education	Need more information about safe sex and to be STD/ HIV free.	Desire more and better resources in this timely area.
	Transportation	Offer more transportation options for youth to get around the city (kids, bus cards, low priced cars, etc.).	This is a significant barrier to making things happen in one's life; free bus cards are highly valued.
Purpose	Community Centers	Like community centers and boys and girls clubs to offer meals and transportation.	Youth desire the social and nutritional connection but face multiple barriers.
	Youth-Driven Community Center	Love to have youth-run and youth-driven not-for-profit centers.	Provide music, sports, health (physical, mental and social); tutoring, LGBTQA-safe space, tech center, field trips, yelling room (room where you could yell).

Native American Employability Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

(Students gave stars to what they saw as the most important issues)

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	First Job	Find more ways to help teens get their first job experience; and learn what it is like to have a job.	Difficult to get a first job with no experience; students shared it was transformative for how they saw themselves and their future.
	Parks and Recreation	Youth would love for Parks and Recreation Department to open more teen jobs in the summer.	Many high school youth particularly like to work with younger children.
	Employability Resources	Synthesize best resources for workforce readiness skills.	Great deal of information available but need to guide teens to best.
	Driver's License	Remove obstacles to teens getting their driver's license quickly and cheaply (8 stars).	Driver's license gives you flexibility to get to job.
	Step Up Program	Create more spaces in Step Up-type program for youth.	Have a Step Up program just for Native American youth. (4 Stars)
Quality	Communication	Set up a system to inform youth about jobs and internships (e.g. job fair/ online teen job opportunities search engine).	Student idea that you could sign up for certain types of jobs and get an email when one was posted.
	Job Coach	Help teens find internships tied to their diverse interests (e.g. computers, animals, cooking, etc.). (14 stars)	Students love to have someone assess their capabilities and interests and gave them ideas where to apply. (person come speak at school?)
	Job Application Process	Students wanted help in the "how" of getting a job—need the basics for how to do this.	Not know where to apply, how to apply, what need for job, how to get the right fit for your skills and experiences; how to complete online applications.
Purpose	Future	Help high school students get a job that prepares them for the future and their career. (7 Stars)	Make sure local community centers and organizations like East Phillips for Youth Teens have computers so youth can search themselves too.
	Independence	Working and earning money helps us to learn to be independent.	Several youth talked about wanting to learn to be independent and to provide for themselves

Native American Educational Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

Access

Quality

Purpose

Issue	Opportunity	Insights
ACT Preparation	Offer ACT preparation during or after school.	Difficult to find the time and the money to do this under present system.
School Credit	Create more opportunities to receive college credit for high school work and/ or outside work activities or prior learning.	Anything to get more credit is helpful; students may have fallen behind when younger and now seek to graduate.
Summer Learning	Ensure access for Native American students to take part in the Destination, Diplomacy and Degree summer school program in Minneapolis.	Student suggestions to make sure this works: there would be transportation; an opportunity to meet teachers and learn their way around ahead of time; class start times that work; email reminder.
Relevance	Focus classes more on what is needed for practical life skills and success.	Hard for students to see the connection between subjects like calculus and algebra to getting a job and making money.
Additional Subjects	Offer more opportunities for science, art and music.	Students in small schools sometimes miss out on these creative options.
Driver's License	Remove barriers to getting driver's license to get to school and job.	Not having a license makes several aspects of their lives difficult.
Internships	Offer internships that would allow for learning and school credit and opportunity to make money.	If high school students can make \$4,000 a year, that makes a big difference for families.

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Native American Health and Wellness

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

Access

Quality

Purpose

Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Sports	Provide space for sports on the South Side —place where there is safe play and no violence.	Offered in some places, but not in all parts of the community.
Resources	Link youth to the many resources that are already there.	Need ways to recognize that resources and programs are there but how to get the youth and families to access.
Gymnasiums	Open up more gyms and hours.	Need more places to get exercise.
Classes	Provide or identify cooking classes, community garden options and more to promote health.	Need to make classes relevant and customized for American Indian youth.
Nurses Office	Make sure nurses' offices offer information and help on issues like HIV, prevention of AIDS, etc.	Need access to trained health professionals.
Education	Create more discussion opportunities on health issues — HIV, STDs, alcoholism, cancer, diabetes, substance abuse.	Key health issues where we need education but that people sometimes don't want to talk about or address.
Cultural Opportunities	Help with cultural opportunities, circles of generation; bring more of the cultural opportunities to youth.	Need to make sure the programs are culturally relevant.
Younger Kids	Offer more programs and services for the younger children; need healthy kids programs.	Native American high school youth are concerned about the younger generation and their exposure to violence and poor role models.

Native American Culture and Identity Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Language	Offer access to different native languages (e.g. Ojibwe, Lakota); and storytelling and traditions.	Language reflects the way we think about the world and is therefore critical to learn.
	Outdoor Field Trips	Need more outdoor field trips that give exposure to Native American culture.	Several programs doing well but need more opportunities.
Quality	Youth Connections to Ancestors	More youth workshops that involve Native youth connecting with ancestors.	Honor and pass along history and traditions; build a family tree for every student; sponsor a family photo project.
	Cross Cultural Opportunities	Learn about other cultures, other traditions, foods, and languages; create cultural sharing between groups of young people locally, across the country and intergenerationally.	Important to learn about other cultures as well as our own; such exposure may help address the lack of respect between races.
Purpose	Celebration of Culture	Promote more events (e.g. block party) about Native American culture with food, dancers.	Create social events that honor traditions and history and educate wider community about cultural traditions.
	Service	Create an indigenous service group where the American Indian youth serve the elders (e.g. in areas like fixing or maintaining, buildings).	Offer American Indian youth these opportunities to serve their community and develop as more positive role models.

Native American Support Services Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Sports	Sports teams run by Native Americans and set up to be able to compete with other schools.	Want to be able to compete in sports like other schools.
	Child Care	Child care programs for teen parents; place for parents to drop off kids for short term.	Difficult to find child care options; has a large impact on what able to accomplish.
	Shelter	More short-term shelter options.	Need more temporary space.
	Youth Services	Need more services for all youth; also need help in accessing the services that are there.	May be enough services available, but students are not aware of them or how to access them.
	Teen Parents	Desire for more educational resources for teen parents.	Lack of resources is a significant barrier to improving parenting.
	Housing	Income-based housing program for kids that need a home; low income housing for teenagers.	Housing may be available but not affordable.
Quality	Mental Health	Free mental health counseling needed for substance abuse, alcohol abuse and more.	Mental health considered a significant issue; perhaps offer mental health classes at schools.
	Health Education	Need more information about safe sex and to be STD/ HIV free.	Desire more and better resources in this area.
	Transportation	Offer more transportation options to get around the city (kids, bus cards, low priced cars).	Lack of free bus cards is a significant barrier to making things happen in one's life.
Purpose	Community Centers	Get community centers or boys and girls clubs to offer meals and transportation.	Youth desire the social connection tied to other services.
	Youth-Driven Community Center	Idea for a youth-run and youth-driven not-for-profit community center.	Might include: music, sports, health (physical, mental and social), tutoring, LBGTQA-safe space, tech center, field trips, yelling room (room where you could yell).
	Service	Create an indigenous group where the American Indian youth serve the elders in the areas of fixing, maintaining, building.	Offer American Indian youth these opportunities to serve their community and develop as more positive role models.