

Curriculum Development: Building Guidelines for Consistent Engagement With Toledo's Youth

Overview

As we all know, the COVID 19 Pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on people in our community who were already struggling:

- Domestic Violence has increased by 33%.
- Suicide among African Americans has increased by 45%.
- Suicides by African Americans 13 and under is nearly twice that of White Americans.
- Mental health cases increased 25%.
- The prevalence of compassion fatigue ranges from 7.3% to 40% of workers in intensive care settings.
- Teachers and First Responders, including Police, are experiencing substantial amounts of burnout and compassion fatigue.

To address the fallout and trauma created by all of this, there is programming throughout our community designed to provide opportunities, develop skills, and inspire hope for our youth. Many of them are successful for some young people, but too many are well-intentioned yet fall short of realizing permanent change in a child. The program ends, and too many children are lured back to lifestyles that put them at great risk of physical harm, and a lifetime of remaining marginalized.

There is an opportunity to provide a consistent, manageable framework to program providers that is proven to be successful with some of our most at-risk youth. But first we must get this framework documented, then operationalized. This proposal is designed to do just that.

David Ross, through his work with the Toledo Arts Commission, has been running a program called Community Conversations and the Arts. The program provides a suite of activities engaging young people in discussions about the issues they face and how the arts can help to create dialogue in communities.

The success of this program is real. In combination with a collection of other research and experiences, David has a curriculum in mind that needs to be documented, then shared with program providers throughout the community. Just like a curator changes the items in an exhibit, we're suggesting that the only meaningful way forward is to change the picture that has been painted **of** our at-risk youth and **for** our at-risk youth.

The funding we are seeking is to finance the documentation of that information. An experienced curriculum developer will work one-on-one with David to build a curriculum that will be structured, relatable, and implementable. We will also begin building a cohort of community partners who are willing to be "first adopters" of the curriculum. Training sessions will be hosted and the curriculum will be tested and refined as necessary.