

**CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

Date: July 20, 2020

Contact Information

Organization Name: Westside Community Center
Address: 430 Hannum Ave. West Chester, PA 19380

Phone: (610) 314-4327

Website: www.westsidecommunitycenterwc.org

Year Incorporated: 2012

FEIN: 46-0764528

ED/CEO Name: Ryan Enns

ED/CEO E-mail:

Ryan@westsidecommunitycenterwc.org

Board Chair Name: Michelle McGowan

Board Chair Approval (check here): X

Primary Contact Name: Ryan Enns

Primary Contact E-mail:

Ryan@westsidecommunitycenterwc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

Mission: Westside Community Center's mission is to empower families and youth academically, socially and Spiritually; inspiring them to take on leadership roles in their community.

Geographic Area Served: West Chester Area School District
(students served primarily live in the Borough of West Chester)

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: The Westside Community Center (The Westside) serves 100 students (Middle and High School) through our core After School Program, Skate-Spot Program, Summer Soccer Camp and Enrichment Programs. 100% of students served are enrolled in the West Chester Area School District and predominantly live in poverty and come from single-parent households. Many students have experienced transient housing conditions, homelessness, abuse, food-insecurity, parents addicted to drugs/alcohol, are first or second generation immigrants and struggling academically. In addition to our core programs, approximately 10+ families are served through our Community Garden and over 200 adults receive free tax preparation services through our partnership with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance).

Annual Budget \$209,342

74 % of budget for program expenses

14 % of budget for administrative expenses

12 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

2FT/2PT # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

7 # of Board Volunteers

30 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

1,600 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Pilgrim Foundation \$15,000, West Pharmaceutical Services \$5,000, UWCC \$2,500, Individual donors & Special Events.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$3,000

Proposal Summary: The Westside Community Center respectfully requests \$3,000 of general operating support.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

In 2012, the Westside Community Center (The Westside) was founded with the mission of empowering families and youth in the West Chester area by helping them to develop academically, socially and spiritually. Ultimately, as individuals experience growth in these areas, our goal is that they will be inspired to become positive role models and leaders in the community.

In order to accomplish our mission, The Westside initially ran three distinct programs to serve community needs —The After School Program, The Community Garden and The Skate Spot. The Community Garden and Skate Spot were, and are still, open to all and the After School Program continues to serve middle and high school students in the West Chester Area School District. Over the past 2 years, we expanded our programming by instituting 3 new Enrichment Programs developed and facilitated in partnership with West Chester University students: LEAD (Leadership & Career Readiness), THRIVE (Nutritional Education) and EDGE (Leadership, Social and Diversity Empowerment) .

Since its inception, The Westside has utilized Providence Church West Chester's building to help alleviate overhead expenses. However, Providence Church is currently undergoing massive renovations (to be completed in August 2020). This expansion will nearly triple the space available to The Westside for the 2020-2021 school year. With the additional space, The Westside is going to open a STEM & Makerspace studio that will introduce students to STEM careers and provide opportunities for students to create, be innovative and develop 21st century skills.

Additionally, In December 2018, Providence Church purchased the adjacent car wash property on West Washington Street and provided The Westside with a lease (for as long as Providence owns the property) to utilize and renovate the space as needed. Since the cease of its operation, the car wash property had been neglected and attracted drug dealing, crime and other negative activity. Providence Church and The Westside saw the benefits that this space could provide the community. The Westside is actively fundraising and revitalizing the space to provide a safe space for the community to gather. The property will include a new and expanded skate park, basketball court, and picnic area.

Our distinctiveness lies in our holistic engagement with the community. In addition to the programs that we run; The Westside also serves as a site where community members can access critical services such as free tax preparation done by VITA volunteers (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance). Other partners include Young Lives, an organization who serves teenage moms and The Bridge Academy, an organization serving at-risk youth in Coatesville. Throughout the year we also host events such as skateboarding competitions, neighborhood barbecues, and movie nights in an effort to provide community resources and build healthy and impactful relationships throughout West Chester.

We are pleased to report that in our most recent survey of core students, 93% said The Westside helps them feel more motivated academically, 100% improved reading and/or writing skills and 71% of seniors graduated and have plans to attend college or a trade school. Additionally, over 87% said that since coming to The Westside they feel more confident, better about themselves, have developed new friendship and 87% said The Westside helps them avoid drugs and alcohol and 100% said it helps them avoid skipping and/or dropping out of school.

2. Funding request

• Description of key initiatives

After School Program: The After School Program provides a safe place where middle and high school students can come to escape the stresses that they face on a daily basis. The program is open from 3-5:30pm on Monday- Thursday. The Afterschool Program runs September - May and continues in a modified format during the summer. Over 65 students are served annually and an average of 20 -25 students attend daily.

- **Academic Support:** Students have access to WIFI and computers after school. Westside staff and volunteer tutors are available to assist students with homework, literacy and specific projects or subject areas.

- **Thrive:** Thrive is offered monthly throughout the school year and is facilitated by Nutrition Majors from West Chester University. Students learn how to take regular food products and make them into a healthy snack/meal (i.e. Black Bean Brownies, Healthy Ramen, & Oatmeal Power Bars).
- **STEAM:** STEAM activities will be provided bi-weekly during the 2020-2021 school year for students to gain hands-on experience with activities including; coding, operating drones, pottery and building robots. A STEM camp will also be provided for one week during the summer.
- **Recreation:** Recreational activities are available daily and serve as a great academic incentive for students.
- **Nutrition:** Students receive a healthy snack after school and dinner 2x a week.

The Edge: The EDGE Project operates on Friday afternoons during the school year and exists to ignite a passion for equity, a deeper understanding of diversity, and a desire for community change through positive youth development. During the school year we conduct weekly meetings with teenagers, facilitating discussion and active learning, as a means to understanding identity, empathy, and advocacy.

LEAD: (Leadership Empowerment and Development) – This program runs throughout the summer and helps high school students to develop leadership and career readiness skills. Students participate in a series of workshops and/or discussions to help identify passions, career interests and have opportunities to meet with local businesses, explore career opportunities and work alongside staff/volunteers to set goals for post-secondary education/employment.

Girls' & Guys' Night: Girls' & Guys' Night is hosted monthly for high school students. These evenings are an opportunity to connect with positive adult mentors, discuss relevant topics (self-esteem, healthy relationships, bullying) and cultivate confidence, leadership and Spiritual development.

The Skate Spot: The Skate Spot was created to serve as a much needed legal area for skateboarders to enjoy the sport they love. In a sub-culture where there are many negative influences, The Skate Spot is a positive and welcoming environment where youth and adults can be encouraged and experience the love of God in a unique and tangible way. Open on Tuesdays from May through November during the hours of 4pm to 8pm, The Skate Spot has received a great deal of community support. Approximately 35 skateboarders attend our Skate Grill and Chill on a regular basis.

Community Garden: The purpose of the garden is to provide local families with healthy, low-cost food options while also bringing together members of the community to engage in a project that instills a sense of pride in their neighborhood. The garden runs from April through November. In 2018 we successfully transitioned leadership to a local garden director who lives in the neighborhood where the garden exists.

VITA: (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) – The Westside hosts VITA volunteers from January – April to provide free tax preparation for those in our community who cannot afford, or are not able, to take care of it themselves.

Summer Soccer Camp: We offer an affordable week-long soccer camp in July for youth in our community. Youth who attend this camp would otherwise not be able to afford athletic training. The camp is run by collegiate athletes and includes food and drinks.

• Specific needs & issues to be addressed

West Chester, PA is a beautiful town; but within it lie pockets of poverty often masked by the fancy town centers, parks and restaurants. The Westside is in its 8th year of serving approximately 100 disadvantaged, underserved youth in West Chester. Students served by The Westside are low-income, at-risk youth. The majority of students are minority youth (45% Latino, 27% African American, 16% Mixed Race, 11% White, 1% Other) and living in single parent homes. Additionally, many have experienced trauma (transient housing, homelessness, abuse, domestic violence, food insecurity), are English Language Learners, and are struggling academically. Over 36% will be the first in their families to graduate high school and 68% will be the first in their families to go to college. As a result, our students lack the motivation and guidance needed to reach their potential.

Rising costs of living in our community requires many of our student's parents to work 2-3 jobs to provide for their family. Consequently, many of our students are left home alone and unsupervised in the out-of-school time hours and many will not be fed until late in the evening (if at all). Research confirms that the hours of 3-6PM are, "the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex" and that hours spent alone afterschool are, "lost opportunities to help students grow and develop the skills and competencies to make positive life decisions that can lead to their future success" (After School Alliance).

The Westside seeks to prevent these outcomes by providing a safe and supportive environment during the critical out-of-school-time hours and providing a variety of academic supports, nutritional education, leadership development and recreational activities. The Westside is committed to serving the community in this manner because we know that there is a need for FREE positive, educational and recreational opportunities to improve the health and well-being of youth and families in West Chester. We want to see the needs of our students met so they stay in school, graduate, and set goals for post-secondary education/employment.

We believe that positive relationships not only change lives, but that changed lives change communities. Our program is a “drop-in” program. Students are not mandated to come but instead attend because of the relationships that they have with our staff and volunteers. Students stay off the streets and out of trouble if they find people who care about them, are committed to getting to know them and then, because of relationship, help them succeed. Students who participate in our programs are expected to demonstrate the following outcomes:

- 1) Students feel safe and supported at The Westside.
- 2) Students do not drop out of school.
- 3) Students increase academic motivation.
- 4) Students graduate high school.
- 5) Students are equipped for academic and professional success.
- 6) Students avoid risky behaviors (i.e. drugs, alcohol, skipping school).
- 7) Students develop positive and healthy relationships.
- 8) Students develop increased confidence and/or self-esteem.
- 9) Students take on leadership roles among their peers and/or community.
- 10) Students demonstrate improved physical, emotional and mental health.

• **Why it is important to fund this now**

Students and families served by The Westside face difficult circumstances including homelessness, addiction, language barriers, poverty, abuse, food-insecurity and/or illiteracy. Without The Westside, the majority of students served would be home-alone and/or on the streets, unsupervised - substantially increasing their risk for juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and other destructive behaviors.

The COVID-19 crisis has generated significant hardship for our students and their families. Many parents have lost jobs due to businesses closing and/or lack of available childcare. The Westside also serves a high population of immigrant families who are being hit especially hard as they are ineligible to apply for the financial supports being offered by the government. Additionally, students often come to The Westside to get away from the chaos and stresses of their home. For Westside students, “stay-at-home” orders resulted in overcrowded homes, food insecurity, neglect and increased exposure to domestic violence and addiction. We are already observing the physical, mental and emotional toll this crisis is having on our students and their families and anticipate it will only get worse. Safe and supportive environments like The Westside are needed now more than ever to ensure at-risk youth’s social, mental, academic and Spiritual needs are met.

• **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

The Westside administers post program surveys and works with the schools to track student’s academic performance and graduation rates. Program outcomes are shared with stakeholders via newsletters, presentations and social media. The Westside’s impact is also demonstrated through students like Anaiah. Anaiah is 16 and lives with her parents and 5 younger siblings. Like many of our students, Anaiah is expected to oversee a lot of the responsibility of caring for her siblings. Her dad has been back and forth from Mexico, leaving her mom alone to work and provide for the family. Anaiah began attending The Westside 2 years ago and never misses an event or program. Westside has become her safe place and where she comes whenever she is able to let go of her responsibilities at home and just be a kid. Over the past 2 years we have observed her come out of her shell and increase confidence. She has also formed several great friendships through The Westside. Most recently, The Westside launched a Middle School Girls’ Night Leadership Team. Anaiah will be volunteering as one of our first student leaders to help serve her younger peers.

**Students name has been changed for confidentiality.*

III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report & financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.