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Date: August 2, 2023
To: Genine Perez
From: Kayland Childress
Subject: Proposal for adding fitness equipment to public playgrounds in Benton, AR

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this proposal is to advocate for the comprehensive upgrade of Benton's free public playgrounds by adding outdoor fitness equipment for adults, utilizing \$10,000 budget, and engaging volunteers to execute the project within a timeline of 6 months to a year. This initiative aims to create inclusive, safe, and vibrant recreational spaces that promote physical activity, foster community engagement, and enhance the overall well-being of Benton's residents, especially low-income families.

Summary

This semester, Professor Genine Perez asked us to develop a plan to improve the community in regard to living conditions, health and wellness, or animal services for community members, including a budget of \$10,000, the use of volunteers, with a project duration of six months to one year as well as the use of references.

Currently, Saline County in Benton AR has no fitness equipment or facilities available to the public that are free. There are plenty of gyms such as Planet Fitness, 10 Fitness, and Pulse Premier Fitness to name a few. Although all of these gyms are available to the public, they all require a paid membership in order to use them. With the majority of people in my area of Saline County, Benton, AR being low-income families, coming up with an additional \$10 a month for a basic gym membership at Planet Fitness can be a challenge. Also, most of these low-income families have children, and children under a certain age are not allowed inside the gym.

According to the Arkansas Department of Health, there are a total of 115,577 residents in Saline County. Among these residents, 29.7% of adults reported no leisure-time physical activity, 32.5% of adults reported being obese with a BMI ≥ 30 , and 32.6% of adults reported being overweight with a BMI ≥ 25 and ≤ 29 (bustphin 2). Along with the high percentages of overweight and obese adults, a whopping 26.4% of the Saline County population are single parent households (bustphin 2). Keeping this in mind, as a low-

income, single parent household myself, I can relate to how difficult it is sometimes to stay “above water” when it comes to making sure your child is taken care of and all of your bills are paid on time. These factors can take a toll on a person mentally and physically.

Therefore, adding an outdoor fitness area on Benton's free public playgrounds is a community-driven effort to revitalize our recreational spaces, giving low-income, and single parent families the opportunity to better their health. Adding this equipment to current playgrounds around the Saline County area will not only help adults residing here get into better shape, but also give the added benefit of being able to bring along their children when no babysitter is available essentially saving the residents hundreds of potential dollars a month on childcare and gym memberships alone.

This proposal outlines the utilization of a \$10,000 budget, strategic volunteer involvement, and a realistic timeline to ensure the successful execution of this project. By enhancing our playgrounds with a new fitness addition, we seek to promote active lifestyles, strengthen community ties, and create a positive impact on the overall health and happiness of our residents.

Introduction

This semester, Professor Genine Perez asked us to develop a plan to improve the community in regard to health and wellness.

Currently, Saline County in Benton AR has no fitness equipment or facilities available to the public that are free. There are plenty of gyms such as Planet Fitness, 10 Fitness, and Pulse Premier Fitness to name a few. Although all of these gyms are available to the public, they all require a paid membership in order to use them. With the majority of people in my area of Saline County, Benton, AR being low-income families, coming up with an additional \$10 a month for a basic gym membership at Planet Fitness can be a challenge. Also, most of these low-income families have children, and children under a certain age are not allowed inside the gym.

Therefore, Professor Genine Perez wanted us to create a project to perform specific tasks to come to a resolution for the community. These tasks include:

- Conducting a playground assessment.
- Developing an outdoor fitness plan.
- Community engagement and volunteer recruitment.
- Material sourcing.
- Construction and installation.
- Safety inspections and maintenance plan.
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In the following sections, we provide additional details about the proposed tasks, schedule, and budget, as well as references.

Proposed Tasks

Task 1: Safety Inspection and Maintenance Plan

To start this project off the first task that will need to be completed, is getting in contact with experts to assess the current state of the playground by identifying safety hazards, accessibility issues, and potential areas for new workout equipment to be installed.

To complete this task, we will need to reach out to the Code Enforcement office of Benton, AR. Per their mission statement, “the purpose of Code Enforcement is to provide essential requirements to safeguard the public health, safety, and general welfare through the regulation and enforcement of the City of Benton Municipal Codes” (The City of Benton Arkansas).

This task will also need to be completed a second time at the end of the project to ensure that everyone involved in the installation, both professionals and volunteers, meets all of these safety and code guidelines.

Task 2: Develop an Outdoor Fitness Plan

After receiving good results from the initial inspection of the playground, we are able to come up with a plan of the exact location in which the addition will be erected, the layout of the area, as well as the type of workout equipment to be installed.

Per the Department of Human Service of Arkansas, when it comes to the design and layout of a playground being built, “2. Any changes to the play area boundaries or equipment requested must be submitted in writing and approved prior to use. 3. All equipment and protective surfacing shall be installed and maintained according to manufacturer’s guidelines” (Burriss 31).

Task 3: Community Engagement and Volunteer Recruitment

This task is a very important part of this project that includes organizing town hall meetings and community workshops to gather feedback, suggestions, and support from residents, promoting a sense of ownership and involvement in the upgrade process. During these meetings we will be able to establish a volunteer recruitment drive, engaging local organizations, schools, and business to contribute time and skills to the playground upgrade. Doing so will also give the opportunity to the potential growth in funds for this project due to the possible donations that could be received.

Task 4: Material Sourcing

Included in this task will be the research of high-quality outdoor fitness equipment, safety surfacing, and landscaping materials, ensuring compliance with safety standards set by the City of Benton Arkansas and a \$10,000 budget constraint.

Task 5: Construction and Installation

Volunteers play a crucial role in helping to install this equipment and create safe, enjoyable spaces for all patrons of the playground and fitness area. Although the actual installation will need to be done by professionals, volunteers are able to assist in the preparation phase of planning the layout. Volunteers can also assist with ground leveling while the professionals are installing the new equipment, spreading mulch, and planting greenery around the area.

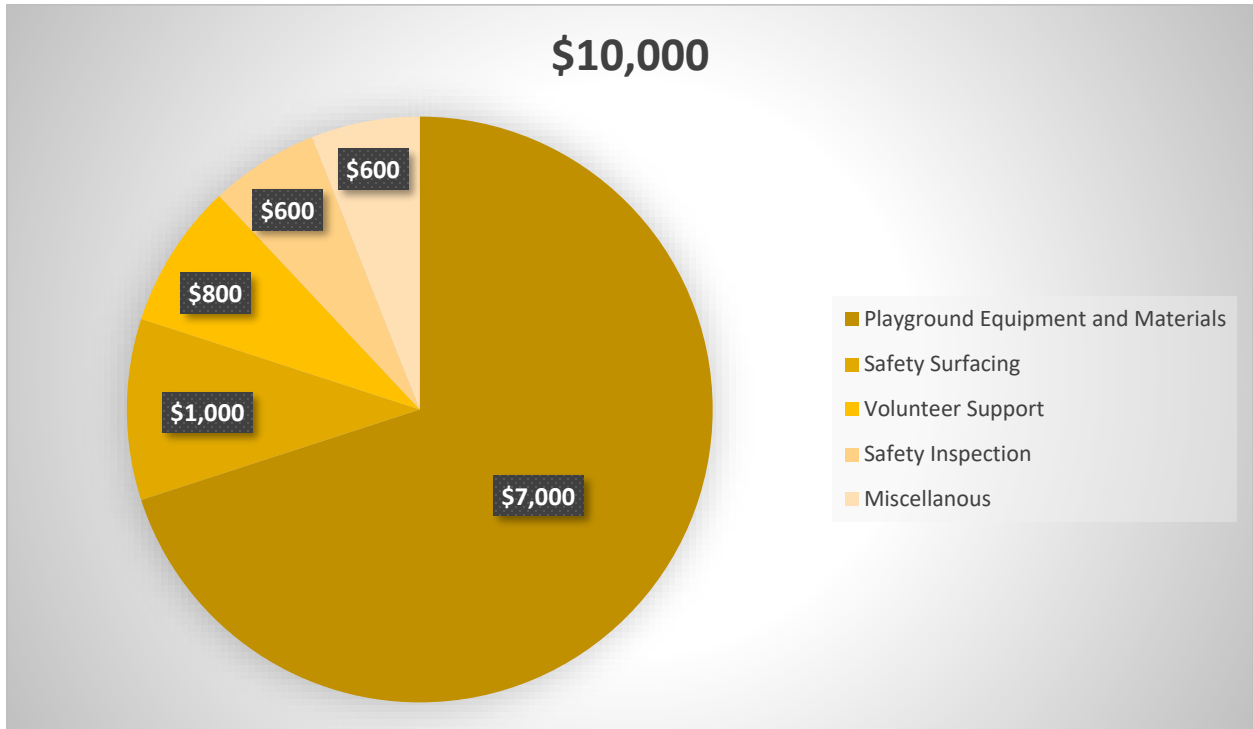
This step will coordinate volunteer efforts and professional installers to assemble and install the new playground equipment, ensuring adherence to safety guidelines and quality standards set by the City of Benton Arkansas.

Schedule

The project tasks will be distributed as follows:

Tasks	Date of Tasks (by Months)					
Task 1: Safety Inspection and Maintenance Plan						
Task 2: Develop an Outdoor Fitness Plan						
Task 3: Community Engagement and Volunteer Recruitment						
Task 4: Material Sourcing						
Task 5: Construction and Installation						
	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June

Budget



Playground Equipment

Due to the cost of equipment being so high, this start up project will be only adding two additional pieces of equipment this time around. After seeing what the public thinks about adding this additional equipment this year, we will then consider adding more new equipment in the following years to come.

Item	Cost
Action Fit Cardio Walker	\$5,910
Double Station Dip Bar	\$1,042
Total	\$6,952

Safety Surfacing

Although mostly adults will be using this workout equipment, also to be considered, is the possibility that children will also attempt to use this equipment. With that in mind, I have set a budget of \$1,000 for proper ground surfacing to effectively lessen the injury of a potential fall. The estimated surface area needed for this start up outside fitness addition is 100 square feet with a depth of 4" making the total area to be covered 33.3 cubic feet.

Item	Quantity	Cost
Rubber Border	8	\$45
Rubber Mulch	1,000 LBS	\$499
Total		\$859

Volunteer Support

To support the volunteers that help out with this community project, there is a budget of \$800 for refreshments. The goal is to have one meeting per month with the volunteers to check in, these meetings are planned to last anywhere from 30 minutes to 1 hour. During this time, drinks and food will be provided to members. At each meeting, we will agree as a group on what everyone wants for the following meeting.

Examples of food choices are:

- Pizza
- Sandwiches
- Pasta
- Even the possibility of a potluck.

Safety Inspection

A safety inspection for a public playground and fitness environment is crucial to ensure the well-being of all users of the amenities. The \$600 investment is necessary to hire certified professionals who can thoroughly assess the identification of potential hazards, ensuring that all equipment and structures meet the highest safety standards. This inspection will not only guarantee compliance with safety regulations but also provide peace of mind to parents, caregivers, and the community, knowing that the new equipment is a safe and enjoyable environment. Ultimately, prioritizing safety through this inspection will contribute to the overall health and happiness of the community.

Miscellaneous

The allocation of \$600 to cover the cost of signage and permits for this addition is essential to ensure a smooth and lawful development process. These funds will be utilized to obtain the necessary permits from local authorities, ensuring compliance with all building codes and regulations. Additionally, the creation and installation of proper signage are vital for informing the public about the upcoming construction, ensuring safety measures are followed, and minimizing potential disruptions. By investing in these crucial elements, we can guarantee a transparent and organized construction process that benefits the community as a whole, providing a safe and enjoyable playground space for children to play and thrive.

Experiences

Throughout my tenure, which spans several years, I have had the incredible opportunity to spearhead and oversee numerous community-driven projects, each one leaving a lasting impact on the neighborhoods we serve. The key to my success lies in the unwavering emphasis on collaboration and the unwavering commitment to fostering strong relationships with volunteers, stakeholders, and local authorities. Recognizing that a united effort is essential for the realization of any project's goals, I have always strived to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that encourages open communication among all involved parties. By valuing the input and ideas of every individual, regardless of their background or experience, we have managed to harness the collective wisdom and creativity that our community offers.

I have been privileged to work alongside a diverse group of volunteers whose dedication and passion have significantly contributed to the success of our community-driven projects. One such remarkable volunteer, Sarah, brought her expertise in landscape design, transforming our public spaces into inviting and picturesque havens for families to enjoy. Her innovative ideas and commitment to sustainable practices have left a lasting impression on our community, inspiring others to take an active role in preserving our natural environment.

Another invaluable volunteer, Alex, was instrumental in spearheading our outreach efforts, ensuring that our community engagement initiatives reached a wider audience. His excellent communication skills and enthusiasm motivated residents to actively participate in project planning meetings and provided an avenue for their voices to be heard. Alex's genuine empathy and approachability have fostered a sense of trust and openness within our community, resulting in a stronger collective drive towards positive change.

The support of volunteers like Sarah and Alex, among many others, has taught me the true essence of teamwork and the transformative power of community-driven action. Witnessing their selflessness and the positive impact they've had on the lives of our residents has been a constant source of inspiration, reminding me of the immense potential we possess when we come together for a shared cause. With these two along with many others by my side, this project is a guaranteed success.

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