



City of Palo Alto

COLLEAGUES MEMO

DATE: May 8, 2017

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Council Member Fine, Holman, Kou, and Wolbach,

SUBJECT: Colleagues' Memo From Council Members Fine, Holman, Kou, and Wolbach Regarding Matching Funding Opportunity and Proposal to Increase Programming for Youth Through Youth Community Services

Goals:

Among the goals achievable through the success of this proposal are:

- Increase efforts that serve the youth in the community including teaching critical life skills;
- Leverage potential Santa Clara County matching funds with support from Supervisor Simitian;
- Regain small portion of funding for Palo Alto's social services organizations lost in the prior economic downturn without taking away from other current Palo Alto HSRAP non-profit organizations;
- Expand programs included in Council's Healthy City, Healthy Community Resolution.

Background and Discussion:

The City of Palo Alto through its General Fund helps support organizations through the Human Services Resource Allocation Process (HSRAP). Each year the Council and the Human Relations Commission (HRC) struggle to allocate limited dollars among the many non-profits that provide critical services to a broad range of members of our community. Competition for funding is always intense and a matter of thoughtful and extensive deliberation, especially at the HRC. Unfortunately, with such limited funding, it is common for allocations to fall short of the support sought by valued organizations to provide critical services. Additional organizations delivering direct safety net services to Palo Alto residents are sadly deterred from applying altogether.

In the throes of the last economic downturn, funding for social services organizations was cut from a level that has yet to be restored. Palo Alto's current HSRAP funding remains at 2010 levels while the demand for services of these organizations has steadily grown. Palo Alto has an opportunity to take advantage of a three-year fifty thousand dollar (\$50,000) a year County matching program for longtime HSRAP grantee Youth Community Services (YCS). The current

HSRAP program is already in process with the HRC and will soon reach Council and will continue through the budget process independent from this consideration, which relies on approval by both the City and the County. The result will possibly not be known until late in both parties' budget deliberations.

Santa Clara County counts among the non-profits it supports, several of the HSRAP organizations that the City also supports, some through direct financial assistance and some by providing office space. With this grant opportunity YCS, which has been providing critical services to Palo Alto's youth since 1990, could be added to that list of organizations supported by both City and County.

No effort is more central to the health of our residents than service to our youth especially in the realm of growing leadership and life skills. This opportunity to realize \$50,000 per year in matched dollars for a three-year period comes at a time when other funds for YCS are in jeopardy due to other jurisdictional cutbacks while the needs of our youth have not diminished. Leif Erickson, Executive Director of YCS, has prepared a proposal (attached) for how this matching grant can help continue providing critical services, expand their efforts in our community thus better serving our youth, and position the organization to continue at a higher range of programming as a result of this opportunity.

Recommendation:

We recommend that Council refer this proposal to the Finance Committee for discussion of potential inclusion in the FY 2018 budget with advisory to that effect to Supervisor Simitian.

Staff Impact:

It is not anticipated this recommendation will have significant impact on staff resources.

**Youth Community Service
Santa Clara County - City of Palo Alto
Three-Year Matching Grant**

**2017-2020 Proposal Outline
Building Protective Factors in Youth
through Evidence-Based Connectedness Strategies**

Youth Community Service
Executive Director: Leif Erickson
705 Alester Ave. Room 4
Palo Alto, CA, 94303
650-858-8061
leif@youthcommunityservice.org
www.youthcommunityservice.org
Founded: 1990
IRS 501(c)3: 20-8099150
Annual organizational budget: \$650,000
Board chair: Barbara Spreng
Board members: 12
Current School-Year Employees: 12

Summary of Organization History:

Youth Community Service was founded by the Cities of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto and their two school districts, to bring diverse communities closer together through youth service. Since then, YCS has engaged over 19,000 young people in service activities to learn more about themselves and their communities. Youth have provided over 115,000 hours of service through more than 40 local community groups.

In 1994, the California Department of Education CalServe Initiative designated YCS as the Service Learning Lead for educators in our five-county region. In 1998, YCS initiated the Summer of Service day camp program, based in Palo Alto, for youth ages 11 to 14 from diverse communities to engage together in well-designed service-based learning activities across the Bay Area – environmental, intergenerational, educational and economic safety net projects. A research report appeared in a peer-reviewed journal documenting gains in self-efficacy scores for YCS program participants. In 2000, YCS was honored with the Award of Excellence by the California Park and Recreation Society.

In 2008, after eighteen years as a collaborative of the City of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto and their school districts, YCS incorporated as a non-profit corporation with our own board of directors. The organization continues to enjoy in-kind partner support through ongoing agreements with the cities and school districts. In 2009, YCS partnered with the 180-Degrees Organization to adopt evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum that YCS staff members have been trained to bring to classrooms with at-risk students from East Palo Alto to Redwood City. Embraced by principals and administrators because of positive academic and behavioral student outcomes, the work has been deepened through additional curriculum development by YCS staff members. Since 2009, over 1,500 at-risk high school students and over 1,000 middle school students have completed semester-long YCS social-emotional learning classes.

With our focus on Palo Alto today, YCS leads service-learning clubs and attendance & behavior academies with youth ages 11 – 18, school-wide service-learning days, and community-based service events – in partnership with the City of Palo Alto – including MLK Day in January and Make a Difference Day in October. Our students in Palo Alto schools include Voluntary Transfer Program students who reside in East Palo Alto. YCS has also initiated a coding program with youth that includes an afterschool partnership at Mountain View High School, with support from Google and Yahoo employees.

Mission Statement and Vision:

Youth Community Service engages young people from diverse Silicon Valley communities in meaningful service-based learning. YCS youth build leadership and life skills, empathy for the needs of others, and a sense of connectedness, purpose and efficacy, while making a positive difference in the lives of those around them.

At Youth Community Service, we believe that every young person with a heart full of service has a future of meaning and purpose.

Executive Summary:

A three-year grant will make a meaningful investment in the YCS model that combines life skills, service-learning, social-emotional learning, and developmental relationships in a focused series of activities and reflection that build protective factors with young people ages 11 – 18. This proposal addresses critical unmet needs in the Palo Alto community identified by the recent CDC Epi-Aid Suicide Prevention Report, California Healthy Kids Survey, Developmental Assets Survey, and Project Safety Net Community Survey. Evaluation over the three-year period will build a strong case for the efficacy of this evidence-based connectedness model that can be shared with other communities and districts in our County and throughout Silicon Valley and the Bay Area where surveys continue to identify risk factors in young people.

The grant will make possible a Youth Connectedness Initiative led by YCS staff members to recruit and train youth peer leaders to engage other youth in a series of service-based activities and reflections, and to engage parents and other adults in raising awareness of options that will encourage the development of protective factors in young people in Palo Alto schools and community.

The work will be guided and evaluated using the recommendations of the CDC Epi-Aid Report on Suicide Prevention, CDC evidence-based strategies for building school connectedness, developmental assets strategies from Project Cornerstone, and developmental relationship strategies from the Search Institute.

Top Three Outcomes of Proposed Project:

1. Youth will be trained as peer leaders to promote engagement by other youth in service and learning activities in their schools and community that are intentionally designed to build connectedness and protective factors.
2. Youth who participate in service and learning experiences will demonstrate gains in individual, interpersonal and community protective factors as demonstrated by participant surveys.
3. Secondary school parents and other adults (including Mandarin and Spanish-speaking) will increase awareness of strategies and options to build youth connectedness and developmental relationships.

Definitions

Protective Factors – As defined by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), protective factors are individual or environmental characteristics, conditions or behaviors that reduce the effects of stressful life events; increase an individual's ability to avoid risks or hazards; and promote social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life now and in the future.

Connectedness – As defined by the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health in the *Wingspread Declaration on School Connections*, school connectedness is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals. Because studies indicate that individual students' feelings of being connected to school are influenced by their peers as well as by adults, that definition now includes peer influence.

Developmental Relationships – As defined by the Search Institute, relationships are developmental when they help young people: 1) discover who they are 2) develop abilities to shape their own lives 3) learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. The Search Institute has identified five elements, which are expressed through 20 actions. (For example one action to express the element of Expand Possibilities is "to Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.")

Background Research Summary

Youth Community Service strategies are informed by the recently released *CDC Epi-Aid Report for Santa Clara County: Undetermined Risk Factors for Suicide among Youth Ages 10-24*, which was initiated in response to a request for Epidemiologic Assistance from the Santa Clara Public Health Department. The report synthesized current County trends, programs and practices, as well as data from surveys that included Developmental Assets Survey from PAUSD, California Healthy Kids Survey, and the Project Safety Net Community Survey.

The Epi-Aid report recommends multiple prevention approaches to address multiple risk factors for suicide and suicide-related hospitalizations. Prevention approaches for youth highlighted by the report at the individual, interpersonal and community levels include:

- Positive perception of self
- Positive outlook on one's future
- Problem-solving
- Emotional self-awareness
- Self-efficacy for help-seeking
- Engagement in outside activities
- Close and positive relationships with adults outside of school/family
- Caring relationships with fellow youth
- Caring relationships with teachers and adults at school
- Positive relationships with neighborhood and community

In addition, the YCS Connectedness Initiative will draw on well-proven strategies provided by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), Project Cornerstone (strategies for building Developmental Assets) and Search Institute (strategies for building Developmental Relationships). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published evidence-based strategies for School Connectedness that will also be a resource.

Many years of research by the Search Institute have identified twenty-one internal and external protective factors, generated through meaningful “service to others” experiences – that enable young people to overcome mental health challenges and build resilience to thrive as connected community members on a path to becoming future community leaders.

Project Budget:

Annual project budget for each of three years:

\$100,000 (\$50,000 from Santa Clara County; \$50,000 from City of Palo Alto)

Opportunity for YCS Connectedness Initiative

Despite a long track record of effective school and community-based programming with youth ages 11 to 18, the capacity of Youth Community Service to address unmet community needs to build protective factors in youth has been restricted by limited financial investment by local public agencies.

The YCS skill-set and evidence-based curricula that we offer occupy the critical social-emotional territory that lies between the supports offered by the school district's academic resources and those by the district's clinical partners. It is in this social-emotional territory where the potential is greatest for young people to develop protective factors that include self-efficacy, positive relationships, connectedness and community engagement. In recent years, YCS staff members have worked to leverage our modest financial resources through active participation in partnerships such as the Project Safety Net collaborative, the Palo Alto school district's Continuum of Care Committee and Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum Committee, as well as the City of Palo Alto's Healthy Cities, Healthy Communities priority initiative.

In addition, current budget challenges facing the Palo Alto Unified School District may result in reduced investments in the coming school years in the social-emotional connectedness territory that YCS addresses.

This grant proposal represents an opportunity to build a strong case for the efficacy of our intentional model that combines life skills, service-learning, social-emotional learning, and developmental relationships in a focused series of activities and reflection that build protective factors in young people through connectedness strategies.

Problem Statement:

Palo Alto youth in the 11 - 18 age groups as a whole are characterized by high academic achievement. But multiple recent surveys identify significant room for improvement in the areas of connectedness and protective factors. For example, up to 25 percent of 9th and 11th grade girls report feeling chronic sad or hopeless feelings. Youth Community Service staff in collaboration with school and community partners will apply our experience and curriculum materials to engage youth in service and learning activities that will build the developmental relationships all young people need to thrive.

Who Will the Project Serve?

The project will serve a cross-section of youth in the 11 - 18 age group (sixth grade through high school seniors) that reflects the range of cultural diversity, gender, academic achievement and interests, with a goal of demonstrating the efficacy of connectedness strategies across all youth sectors.

Evaluation:

Judy Dauberman, PhD, YCS director of service-learning and social-emotional learning, will manage the evaluation process to assess the impact and lessons learned with youth and adults through surveys and interviews to demonstrate gains in protective factors, connectedness strategies, and developmental relationships across diverse school and community sectors.

Collaboration:

Youth Community Service has a long track record of collaboration with partners in the City, school district and community. For this project, YCS would assemble an advisory council that would meet quarterly to provide feedback and insight. Advisory Council members would draw on local partners such as:

Judy Argumedo, Voluntary Transfer Program coordinator

Becky Beacom, Palo Alto Medical Foundation

Kathleen Blanchard, parent active in suicide-prevention efforts and YCS board member

Josh Bloom, Paly High teacher on special assignment, social-emotional learning

Debra Cen, Palo Alto Chinese Parents Club, founder

Rob DeGeus, City of Palo Alto Community Services Department, director

Paul Dunlap, Gunn High, adviser to ROCK student peer mentors (Reach Out. Care. Know) Sources of Strength

Mary Gloner, Executive Director, Project Safety Net

Vicky Harrison, Community Partnerships Manager, Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Well-Being

Linda Lenoir, retired PAUSD district nurse and YCS board member

Kala Mehta, DSc, MPH, Public Health Professor, UCSF and YCS board member

Vic Ojakian, Santa Clara County Co-Chair, Suicide Prevention Oversight Committee

Lee Pfab, Executive Director, Ross Road Family YMCA

Gail Price, Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Board

Valerie Stinger, Palo Alto Human Relations Commission

Greer Stone, Santa Clara County Human Relations Commission

Plus

Liaison to Palo Alto Palo Alto Police Department

Liaison to Palo Alto PTA Council

Liaison to Palo Alto Human Relations Commission

Youth liaison to ROCK organization (Reach Out. Care. Know)

Youth liaisons to campus media organizations

Youth liaisons to student service clubs

Youth liaison to Youth Advisory Council

Timeline:***Year One 2017-2018***

Planning in July and early August for 2017-18 school year

Collaborate with school site and youth partners to identify youth peer leaders with whom YCS staff can work to engage other youth in service and learning activities and reflection activities. Staff will provide ongoing training with youth leaders in strategies designed to build protective factors and developmental relationships.

Parent education events during the school year in partnership with secondary school PTA's and parent grade level cohorts, as well as community organizations such as neighborhood associations and congregations, to share

strategies for strengthening developmental relationships with their children
 Scheduling for presentations in school living skills and advisory periods
 Leverage existing YCS service day activities and community partnerships to
 extend and deepen connectedness strategies that more intentionally build
 protective factors and developmental relationships
 Coordination with City-School Liaison Committee
 Evaluation surveys with youth and parent participants

Year Two 2018-2019

Continue the above with the addition of:
 Youth-planned forums to share positive experiences
 Parent-planned forum to share positive experiences and survey results
 Evaluation surveys with youth and parent participants

Year Three 2019-2020

Continue the above with the addition of:
 Day-long event with speakers and workshops for youth and adults
 Publication of materials illustrating elements of the model with interviews and
 outcomes

Sustainability:

Youth Community Service will highlight this funded project over three years to leverage other public agency grants, contracts and partnerships to establish a focused model for building protective factors through evidence-based connectedness strategies. The demonstrated effectiveness of this emerging model will be shared with parents, foundations, and youth-focused foundations to achieve sustainable funding beyond the life of the three-year grant. Contributing parent donors will be a particular funding focus as they become aware of the value of these activities for building protective factors in their children. To continue to invite financial support, YCS hosts events such as this year’s April 27 fund-raising luncheon with NFL legend Steve Young, whose book, *QB: My Life Behind the Spiral*, candidly describes his struggle with anxiety disorder that began in his youth.

Annual Project Budget – each of three years:

\$50,000	Staff expense, youth connectedness coordinator
\$30,000	Program expense, service and learning activities
\$10,000	Communication materials and media
\$5,000	Program development
\$5,000	Evaluation
\$100,000	Annual Budget