

Associated Grantmakers of Massachusetts, Inc.

294 Washington Street, Suite 417 • Boston, Massachusetts 02108 • (617) 426-2606, Library 426-2608

FINAL REPORT

Program/Organization: Just-A-Start/Around-the-Corner/Just-A-Start Corporation

Contact: Gordon Gottsche Title: Executive Director Phone: 492-7900

BACKGROUND

The Just-A-Start organization provided Cambridge youths with summer employment and training in housing rehabilitation and neighborhood beautification. In addition to these ongoing program activities, Just-A-Start collaborated with the Cambridge Camping Association to operate the Around-the-Corner cultural and racial awareness program.

OBJECTIVE #1: To promote cooperative responses to community needs for summer programs for as many youth as possible in Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and Chelsea.

Strong x

Moderate

Weak

Each component of the Just-A-Start (JAS) and Around-the-Corner (ATC) programs were administered by JAS. A total of 217 youths, ages 11-19, were recruited by JAS for the training and employment program, and 20 of these youths, ages 14 and 15 were enrolled into the ATC component. The Cambridge Camping Association program, Inner City Day Camp (ICDC) enrolled 40 youths, ages 12 and 13 into the ATC program. Approximately 4% of the total population were Special Needs youths, and 203 teens engaged in the program. The JAS program operated a single, 8-week session, and the ATC program operated two 4-week sessions. Many of Cambridge's public and neighborhood organizations were contacted for the recruitment of these youths. The ICDC and JAS collaborative efforts provided staff, site, equipment, transportation, and all administrative expenses.

OBJECTIVE #2: To provide youth with opportunities for skill development, personal growth and exposure to new experiences.

Strong x

Moderate

Weak

The youths participating in the JAS employment component received training and completed the following projects: 19 outside and 32 inside rehabilitation projects, 12 carpentry, 8 energy conservation/weatherization, 2 lead paint removals, and 7 neighborhood beautification projects. All of the youths were evaluated on their skill progression in mid-summer and at the end of the program. It was stated in the final report that over 70% of the youths increased their skills and work habits over the 8-week period.

The ATC component made arrangements with the Cambridge Art Center for a clay and mask-making project, and exploratory trips were taken once a week to woodlands and saltwater areas. Arrangements were also made with Thompson's Island for the use of their Ropes Course, which was cited as a major highlight of the program, and an overnight camping trip for the ATC youths at the end of the program.

OBJECTIVE #3: To promote interaction and communication among male and female youth and staff from different ethnic and racial backgrounds and from different neighborhoods.

Strong x

Moderate

Weak

The racial profile of the youth population was 60% White, 32% Black, and 8% Hispanic with a sexual balance of 72% male and 28% female. The staff's racial profile was 76% White, 17% Black, and 7% Hispanic with a sexual balance of 70% male and 30% female. The recruitment effort extended throughout Cambridge and resulted in a multi-lingual staff and youth population. Both agencies were involved in the selection of the ATC Coordinator and reported daily to the ICDC Director.

The work projects provided the opportunity for individual interaction in a group project. Each job was developed so that each person's contribution was needed to complete the whole. A workshop on printmaking techniques was initiated and led by a hearing-impaired person. Sign language was taught and participants learned to spell their names in sign language and devised a sign to identify themselves. As stated earlier, the Ropes Course was a substantial contribution in trust building among the participants.

OBJECTIVE #4: To gain maximum impact of philanthropic dollars for summer programs in relation to other available resources, public and private.

Strong x

Moderate

Weak

Several agencies and organizations provided sites and funding for materials for both ATC and JAS work teams, i.e., Cambridge School Dept., Cambridge Housing Authority, Senior Citizens Center, Model Cities Center, and the Southwest Corridor Project in Jamaica Plain. The Agricultural Extension Service provided 100 seedlings at no cost for a beautification project.

As a supplementary resource to the program, salaries of 167 youths were provided or subsidized by the following organizations: High School Work-Study, High School Special Needs, College Work-Study, Somerville/Cambridge Economic Committee, Suburban Churches, Mayor's Summer Jobs, and the East Cambridge Paint Project. In addition, a Community Development Block Grant was received in the amount of \$58,880 towards the rehabilitation projects. The tenants and owners of the various rehab sites contributed over \$38,000 in materials.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Just-A-Start Corporation has made a significant contribution to the City of Cambridge. JAS' continued effort to provide services to Cambridge public sites and private residences and the employment of 203 teens is a remarkable effort. In addition, this was the first year JAS collaborated with ICDC to implement the ATC program. The program report stated, "A major success of the summer was the excellent working relationship established between our agency and Cambridge Camping Association...the success of the collaboration was the extensive amount of work put into pre-planning, and the experience of both agencies in running their own programs".

Prepared by: Vivian Davis
Program Officer, Members Services
December, 1981

6.

S-46

Comm. from Associated Grantmakers of Mass., Inc.
transmitting a copy of the final report on the
Just-A-Start/Around-the-Corner/Just-A-Start
Corp.

In City Council,

January 25, 1982

1/25/1982

Placed

on

File -