

## | BACKGROUND |

The Campus Community Coalition's role is to encourage safe, positive Off-Campus Living experiences for students, promote a collaborative, connected relationship between students and their non-student neighbors and to facilitate community-wide discussions on a range of topics related to substance abuse, health & safety, and community connection.

## | CHALLENGE |

How to expand outreach and education to off-campus students and how to minimize tension between student renters and permanent residents.

## | PROCESS |

Originally, I had planned to create an advisory group/task force comprised of local landlords with the intent of engaging them in the resolution of persistent "town/gown" issues such as litter, abandoned curbside furniture and lack of student integration into the community. It was my hope that the landlords would see this work as beneficial to them as it would make their jobs easier with less hassles at lease end and that the community as a whole would benefit from cleaner, tidier and friendlier neighborhoods.

This idea was met with a definite lack of enthusiasm from my group namely because they saw it as being fraught with complex interpersonal issues and being too large scale to accomplish in addition to my other work responsibilities. I really appreciated their frank feedback and their willingness to help me identify my key goals and redesign a program that would accomplish the goals while not overtaxing my resources. As a group we came up with the idea of having a community building event in the beginning of the school year that would allow students and permanent residents to meet and build relationships as well as create a fun and non-preachy way to display and distribute educational materials.

## | PROGRESS THUS FAR |

I have had two meetings with the core planning group from WWU and the Whatcom Volunteer Center and we have chosen a date, a name for the event, created an advertising timeline and are designing posters and logos.

Each of the core members have been approaching key community members, community associations and groups (as well as my CE fellows) to see if there was any interest in getting involved in the project. Currently, we have the Whatcom Volunteer Center, the AS Environmental Sustainability Program, the Mayor's Office, the Karate Church, the Parks Department, WWU Counseling Center, the Center for Service Learning and the three neighborhood groups involved and we will be having our inaugural meeting of all of the stakeholders in the next few weeks.

## | PROGRAM INFO |

Name: Do Good in your Neighborhood

Date: September 30, 2017

Where: Happy Valley, York and Sehome Neighborhoods

What: Day of Service in the three neighborhoods most heavily occupied by students followed by a potluck or barbecue hosted by the neighbors or neighborhood association.

Happy Valley – Create new community garden to support Skookum Kids

York – Park cleanup in Rock Hill Park

Sehome – Karate Church Block Party and free stuff swap

#### | WORK STILL REQUIRED |

Find funding or sponsors for the barbeques

Create event website

Market the event

#### | REFLECTION |

A project is only as good as the participation in it. While I may have been able to create the landlord group concept and go looking for recruits, ideas are best supported when they are generated from within a group rather than created by one person and foisted onto others. I have always found it difficult to ask people for favors or participation in things when everyone is so busy but it became a lot easier when the idea was not mine but ours and everyone felt ownership over it. Because we created the program as a group and followed what was a more positive and fun concept to us, I think my CE Fellows were more willing to be involved in the project and to support it. The key was to stay flexible and be responsive to others ideas and enthusiasm. It was also a great reminder that progress is not linear, although I had to backtrack on my idea, the process itself was easier once the concept was reimagined.

#### | KEY LESSONS |

I learned several key lessons from my time as a Community Engagement Fellow: go where the excitement is, be flexible and let people help you.