



## West Park MyCom Neighborhood

### Youth Development Plan

#### **Background**

In 2015, the MyCom network launched “MyCom 2.0”, the next generation of the county-wide youth development initiative that began in 2007. MyCom is a network of public-private partnerships and individuals committed to fostering positive futures for Greater Cleveland’s youth by connecting them with innovative community-based programming and transformational services to help them become healthy, self-sufficient adults. West Park has been part of the MyCom network since day one, and continues to grow and evolve in its program offerings for neighborhood youth. To advance the MyCom 2.0 initiative Bellaire-Puritas Development Corporation updated its neighborhood youth development plan to reflect the needs and interests of youth living in the neighborhood today.

#### **Vision**

Our vision is that West Park will become a community in which every young person will be empowered toward a path of self-sufficiency, respect for others, and leadership to other youth. Our supportive community will help them find their paths through conspicuous, accessible, high quality programs and services.

#### **Values**

We recognize that all youth have potential and ability; are diverse and unique individuals; and need to be supported and nurtured.

We will create for youth in our community a sense of belonging; an atmosphere of respect and understanding; quality programming based on quality research and best practices; and a safe, healthy environment.

Our programs will be accessible; involve youth in decision-making and leadership; give youth the resources and tools needed to grow; and recognize the accomplishments of youth.

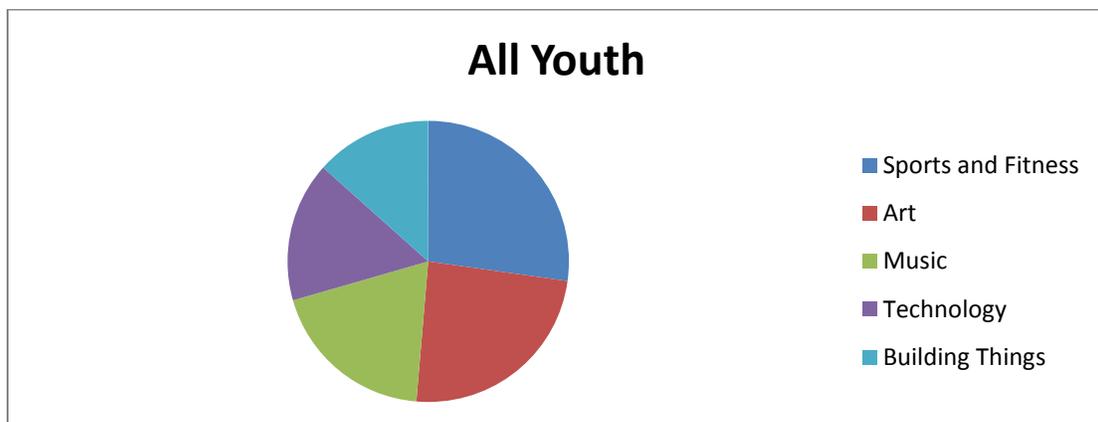
Youth will be engaged in our community through youth representation in community organizations and a neighborhood youth council.

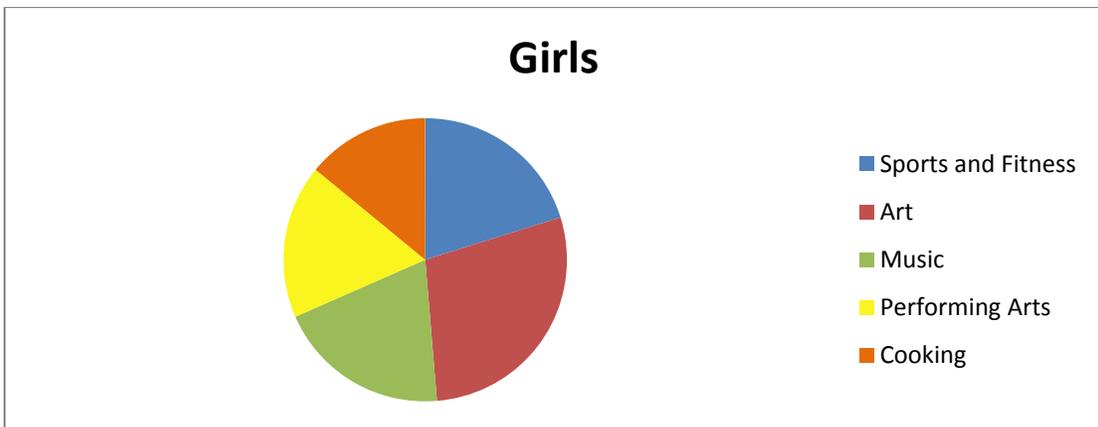
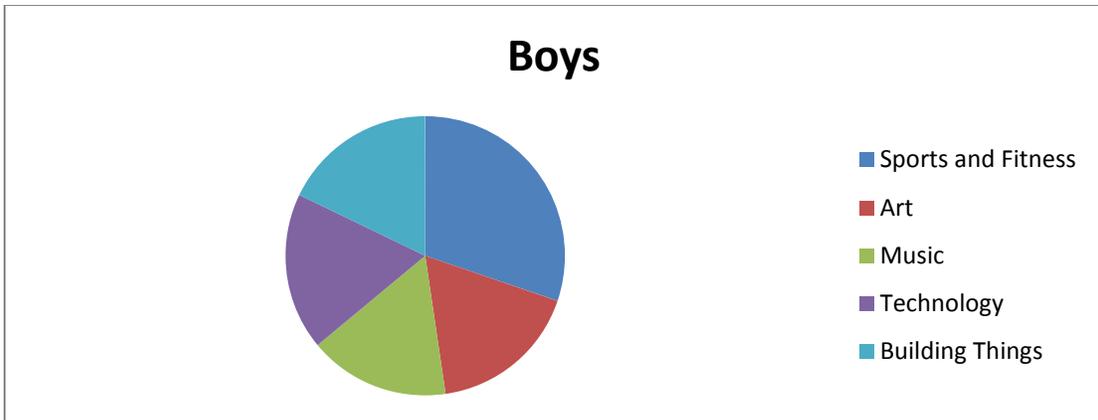
## Method and Results

In January and February of 2015, Bellaire Puritas held four community meetings and received input from about 100 youth and 25 parents. We additionally received completed surveys from another 200 youth. At our meetings and in the survey we asked youth about the activities they most enjoy doing, activities they would like to try given the opportunity, and what help they need to achieve their goals.

When asked their top three activities they enjoy doing, youth of all ages and all genders said they enjoyed sports and fitness (61%), art (54%), music (43%), technology (36%) and building things (30%). Our female respondents preferred art (65%), sports and fitness (46%), music (45%), performing arts (40%), and cooking (32%). Male respondents preferred sports and fitness (78%), technology (47%), building things (46%), art (45%), and music (42%). From this information we can tell that art, music and sports are popular among both boys and girls. Performing arts and cooking have a stronger appeal to girls, while technology and building have a stronger appeal for boys.

We broke these larger categories down into more specific categories and got input on what activities the youth would most like to participate in. For sports, the most popular, among both boys and girls were basketball and soccer. Other popular options were cheerleading, baseball, swimming, volleyball, football, and gymnastics. In the visual arts, fashion design and sewing was the most popular response, followed by drawing, wood working, ceramics and photography. Technology interests included robotics, video games, and computers. Many youth also expressed an interest in science in general. In the performing arts, singing was most popular, closely followed by dance and acting. There was also some interest in poetry and improvisational comedy.





The second part of our data collection asked youth about the type of help they need in order to achieve their goals. Youth responded that they wanted to meet people doing the job they want when they grow up, good coaches and mentors, and opportunities to learn new skills. Additionally, our older youth said they wanted more internship opportunities, hands on experiences, and opportunities to give back to the community through volunteering. When asked what they need help with the most, youth ages 12 and older responded “getting ready for college”, “meeting new people who share my interests”, and “getting a job”. Children ages 6-11, said they wanted help with “making new friends”, “making good decisions”, and “getting ready for college”.

Parents who attended the meetings and responded to the surveys said that they wanted more information on financing their child’s education, how to help their child learn to read, and how to help their child improve their behavior and self-control. They also wanted more variety in sports offerings, weekend activities, and to be kept better informed of programs for kids in the neighborhood.

## Analysis

When we look at the data we collected and compare it to the programs we currently have in West Park, we find some alignment and some gaps. All of the interest areas can be found somewhere in the neighborhood. However, some programs are for specific schools, residents of specific communities, or members of specific organizations. Additionally, programs that are open to everyone may not be easily accessible to all youth in the neighborhood because of their location. The need exists for many of the types of activities youth are interested in to be made available and accessible to more youth throughout the neighborhood.

Below is an assessment of our current program offerings, including their strengths, weaknesses and gaps:

*Sports and Fitness:* West Park has a number of options for youth to get involved in athletics, including Gunning Recreation Center, The West Park YMCA, America Scores, The Cleveland Bombers Sports and Mentoring, and Tri-League Baseball. All of these programs have opportunities for both boys and girls, but boys are more highly represented. There is also limited opportunities for sports that are more popular among girls, such as volleyball and gymnastics.

*Technology:* Programming is available in the neighborhood at The Edge after school program at R.G. Jones, which has a robotics club, and Rockport Library, which has offered some robotics and computer coding programs. In addition, John Marshall High School's School of Information Technology will provide many hands on technology opportunities. Programs that engage youth in video game design and digital photography and filmmaking are possible options that are not currently being offered on a regular basis.

*"Building Things":* The Edge program and Rockport Library both have Lego Clubs, which focus on engineering principles and creativity. John Marshall's School of Engineering will also create more opportunities in this area for students enrolled in that program. Many youth expressed interest in learning how to use tools to make and fix things, which isn't currently being done in the neighborhood.

*Cooking:* The Edge and the after-school program at Riverside Park offer some cooking programs, but primarily focused on assembling food rather than real cooking and baking in a kitchen, due to limited resources.

*Visual Arts:* Bellaire Puritas currently offers art classes around the neighborhood through Art House, Inc., and Neighborhood Leadership Institute also provides art activities at the Schools as Neighborhood Resources program. However, specific art interests in fashion design, sewing,

drawing, woodworking and photography are not currently being met. There is an opportunity for us to refocus our art programs to more specifically target these interests.

*Performing Arts:* Joyful Noise offers free private music lessons to youth, taught by volunteers in a wide range of instruments. The Edge and the Riverside Park After-School Program have had some performing arts classes in dance, music and acting. There is room to expand these programs into other parts of the neighborhood.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Based on this analysis, Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation has established the following goals:

#### ***Goal 1: Prepare youth to be job and college ready upon high school graduation.***

Objectives:

1. Provide programming for teens to equip them with skills to be successful in their first job.
2. Establish a fashion and sewing program that will engage youth with an interest in pursuing a career in fashion design.
3. Provide opportunities for youth to learn skills in the trades, such as woodworking and mechanics.
4. Engage neighborhood athletic programs in college and career readiness programs.
5. Connect youth to careers they are interested in through job shadowing, field trips, guest presentations, and employment and internship opportunities.
6. Hold annual event in the neighborhood for teens to receive help with writing their resumes, practicing interviewing, and meeting employers and community service agencies.
7. Expose youth to a wide range of post-secondary education options.

#### ***Goal 2: Foster creativity and self-expression through strong and accessible creative arts programming.***

Objectives:

1. Offer creative arts classes at multiple locations around the neighborhood for multiple age groups.
2. Provide performance and exhibit opportunities for youth involved in neighborhood creative arts programs.
3. Integrate creative arts into service learning, literacy and

***Goal 3: Enhance youth civic engagement through increased leadership and service learning opportunities.***

Objectives:

1. Participate in three National Days of Service – Make a Difference Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Global Youth Service Day.
2. Create a Youth Executive Board that will lead the West Park Youth Mobilization Team and plan neighborhood events.
3. Incorporate service learning activities into all programs.
4. Work closely with John Marshall staff to promote service opportunities to students as part of their community service requirement.

***Goal 4: Increase enrollment in neighborhood programming by 15% through innovative, targeted marketing and outreach strategies.***

Objectives:

1. Distribute 5,000 Family Matters newspapers around the neighborhood three times per year, with information specifically geared towards youth and families.
2. Participate in neighborhood events that provide opportunities to market programs.
3. Create new marketing materials specifically for workforce development and arts programs.
4. Increase collaboration with Kamm’s Corners Development Corporation to market youth programs in their neighborhood.
5. Increase use of social media to reach youth.
6. Target marketing to underserved populations and micro-neighborhoods (Bellaire Gardens, the Triangle, Laura’s Home, refugees, youth with disabilities, etc.)

***Goal 5: Improve youth computer literacy and scientific reasoning skills through increased STEM learning opportunities.***

Objectives:

1. Utilize video games to teach youth computer skills and practice problem-solving.
2. Offer robotics and computer coding programs for middle school and high school youth.
3. Incorporate more hands-on science experiments into programs.
4. Offer programs in the digital arts, such as graphic design, photography, and filmmaking.

***Goal 6: Promote a healthy lifestyle through increased physical activity and healthy snack options across all programming.***

1. Find creative ways to incorporate physical activity into all program areas.
2. Provide wide variety of sports and fitness activities that have wide appeal to both boys and girls.
3. Support girls' involvement in sports, particularly during middle school years.
4. Provide healthy snacks at all programs.
5. Offer increased opportunities for youth to learn cooking skills, with a focus on healthy recipes.

**Partners**

The following organizations in the neighborhood have committed to being a part of West Park plan in a variety of capacities:

Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation – Convene West Park Youth Mobilization Team; facilitate Youth Executive Board; lead the Teen Job Club program; provide computer education and enrichment at Riverside Park Estates; coordinate with Art House for scheduling and marketing of visual arts programs; contract with arts and fitness program providers; market neighborhood youth programs; lead planning and marketing of collaborative neighborhood events

America Scores Cleveland – Engage youth in reading and writing through combined poetry, service-learning and soccer program; improve youth physical fitness through soccer; participate in collaborative neighborhood talent showcase and service learning project; partner with Art House to incorporate visual arts into program; engage alumni in service, leadership, and college and career readiness programs

Art House, Inc. – Provide visual arts programming in a variety of media for multiple ages around the neighborhood; participate in collaborative neighborhood talent showcase and service learning project; partner with America Scores to provide visual art program for participants; assist in marketing of art programs

Hasani Management, Inc. – Provide Hasani Garden camp which includes health, fitness, and arts activities; provide public speaking and performance workshops for Teen Job Club and host Black History Month Oratory Contest

Cleveland Bombers – Engage youth in football, basketball and cheerleading; provide positive coaching and mentorship; co-sponsor workshop with Lifeline Sports on careers in the sports industry

Tri-League Baseball – Engage youth in T-Ball, softball and baseball; assist with marketing for Lifeline Sports workshop

R.G. Jones Wraparound Program – Provide after-school tutoring and enrichment activities throughout the year; summer program for middle school students

Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority – Offer after-school homework help and enrichment activities for the youth at Riverside Park Estates; Include arts, fitness, science, technology, literacy, math and health and nutrition activities; provide field trips; foster social and emotional development

West Preparatory Academy – Offer space for after-school programming; assist with marketing of after-school programming

Cleveland City Council – Champion youth programming in the Triangle neighborhood

Rockport Branch Library – Operate Teen Rock Teen Center with technology programming for teens; facilitate Lego club for older elementary and middle school youth; after-school tutoring for K-8 students

West Park Branch Library – Provide space, assist with marketing, and manage form collection for middle school fashion design program; provide story-time for K-1 students at Riverside Park

West Park Fairview Family YMCA – Provide gymnastics classes at Riverside Park Estates; provide babysitter training classes; support neighborhood day of service

Girl Scouts of Northeast Ohio – Provide staff and materials for fashion design program; provide staff for Girl Scout Troops at Riverside Park and Bellaire Gardens

Kamm’s Corners Development Corporation - Assist with marketing of youth programs to Kamm’s neighborhood

Gunning Recreation Center – Offer sports and fitness programs; provide space for events; provide transportation to events outside of the neighborhood