

COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROJECT

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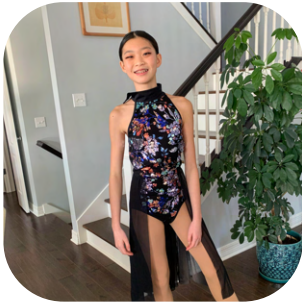
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Brianna Zhang
Co-founder

Growing up as a dancer, spending time in the studio was my favorite part of the week. I loved wearing ballet slippers, learning combinations, and bonding with teammates. But I'll never forget the feeling of sitting at the dinner table with my parents, adding up the costs of dance lessons, costumes, and shoes, only to realize I had to give up what I loved. Too ashamed to ask for help, I felt alone.

This is the heartbreaking reality many young athletes face today, where financial barriers block them from participating in activities that build character, teach teamwork, and develop leadership. No child should have to choose between pursuing their passion and their economic circumstances. That's why my team and I are committed to helping kids access sports—so every child has the opportunity to play, grow, and feel included.

Problem

Youth sports are a cornerstone of childhood. Whether that's playing tag on the playground or competing in soccer, physical activity is a need in adolescence¹. However, many children in Southwest Michigan lack access to these opportunities due to high costs and limited school-supported programs. As a result, thousands of children are excluded from a vital aspect of their development, leading to inequities that hinder their physical, social, and emotional growth.



60% of families report financial strain from youth sports

-2022 Lending Tree survey²

Project Mission: To make youth sports more equitable and build future leaders.

In 2023, we started Leaders for Youth Sports, a one-and-a-half-year-long project entirely led by youth volunteers. We would assist kids in Southwest Michigan by raising awareness about the importance of sports, hosting free sports opportunities, conducting research, advocating for sports programs in schools, and providing resources to families struggling to pay for these activities.

Project Goals

P

Participation

Raise \$10,000 in contributions to support youth sports initiatives, such as events and equipment donations.

L

Leadership

Create 15 leadership positions for teenagers and opportunities for local adults to get involved.

A

Awareness

Educate 10,000 community members about sports inequities and the benefits of sports participation.

Y

Youth

Support 500 children in sports participation by providing resources, free opportunities, and advocacy.

Evaluation of Gaps and Opportunities

Several prominent organizations in our community operate in sports equity, such as the YMCA, which provides inclusive physical activity facilities for people of all ages. While these organizations have made significant strides, there are still gaps that remain unaddressed. Few organizations support children in their critical **elementary-aged** years. These children face several barriers to sports, including high equipment costs, lack of transportation, and limited free opportunities. Even fewer have focused on **youth leadership**, which, as teenagers ourselves, is a major priority of ours. With Leaders for Youth Sports, sports equity for children meets youth leaders to make an impact. We also evaluated our strengths and weaknesses as a volunteer organization. Our strength as local students is that we have **connections** with schools and sports programs for collaborations. However, while youth leadership is energetic, a weakness is that we are **less professionally experienced** than other organizations.



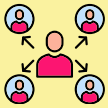
Quality Management

Schedule



Key metric: Adherence to timeline and deadlines
Month-by-month project timeline, individual event agendas, and weekly task lists

Delegation



Key metric: Completion of a range of responsibilities
Assigned work to student volunteers and Board of Directors according to skills

Financials



Key metric: Maintained financial health records
Regular calls with Treasurer for financial planning; recorded all income and expenses

Analysis of Potential Risks

Potential Risks

Response Strategy

Low Volunteer Retention

Risk: Low



Leveraged honors societies to invite students in need of volunteer hours
Exit surveys to get feedback and improve future opportunities

Limited Event Engagement

Risk: Moderate



Social media posts weekly
Media features such as radio, articles, videos, and live television news
Advertisements on school platforms

Failure to Meet Fundraising Goals

Risk: High



Multiple streams of income, including sponsors, grants, event registration
Realistic financial goals through thoroughly tracked finances

Project Budget

501(c)(3) Office Expenses	\$91.53
Miles 4 Smiles 5K 2023	\$1,444.74
Ugandan Sports Day with ECDC	\$1,648.48
2nd Annual Miles 4 Smiles 5K 2024	\$1,114.41
Lawrence Elementary School Sports Kits	\$525.00
Sports Equipment Drive 2024-25	\$24.50
Total	\$4,848.66

We created a detailed budget to plan expenses for each event. This helped us set realistic fundraising goals, track financial progress, and ensure the efficient allocation of resources to maximize the impact of our efforts.

Timeline of Events

Jun '23 - Oct '24
Fundraising



October 2023
Miles 4 Smiles 5K



Dec '23 - Jan '24
Sports Equipment Drive



February 2024
Ugandan Sports Day



March 2024
Funded by Project Play



Apr - Oct 2024
501(c)(3) Incorporation



Apr '24 - Feb '25
Sports Equity Survey



August 2024
Launched Website



October 2024
2nd Annual 5K



December 2024
Sports Kit Distribution



Dec '24 - Jan '25
Sports Equipment Drive



2025
Five More Events Planned



Monitoring

Meetings and Calls

We regularly held meetings (both in-person and virtual) with team members and collaborators, ensuring team bonding and smooth and concise event planning.

Emails

We frequently sent updates and other communications to the Board of Directors, Team of Advisors, and collaborators to keep everyone on the same page.

Google Classroom

We used Google Classroom to monitor the Team of Advisors and Branch Leaders as they managed event coordination, grant applications, and social media posts.

Controlling

Problem

Communication Issues

Transition to a Legal Enterprise

Limited Marketing Opportunities

Recruitment Issues

Solution

Responsibilities:

- Used to-do lists
- Delegated at least a month in advance

Timelines:

- Placed important dates placed in a Google Calendar
- Repeated communication about events and meetings

Legality Issues:

- Asked legal firms for lawyers to be our adult representatives

Funding:

- Made a single nonprofit associated bank account to consolidate our funds
- Managed by Treasurer and Secretary

Lack of Accessibility:

- Persistently reached out for opportunities
- Employed risk management strategy and used alternative methods
- Utilized our own social media
- Contacted local school districts

Board Members:

- Contacted a hospitality manager for more professional connections

Branch Leaders:

- Connected with classmates
- Advertised leadership on social media

Key Metrics

\$23,300

Total Value of Contributions

19

Team Members

105,000

People Our Mission Reached

775

Youth Helped

Lessons Learned

Initiating



Manage legal issues

Planning & Organizing



Increase event publicity

Execution



Prevent timeline delays

Monitoring & Controlling



Lead several projects

Recommendations for Future Projects

1

Branch Out

Expand the mission to involve teens and aid children in more communities.

2

Diversify Events

Host new events to increase methods of assisting and educating youth.

3

Increase Publicity

Increase advertisements and social media presence to raise awareness.

