

Community project

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Introduction

Quinton, a neighbourhood located in the city of Birmingham is a close-knit community that values its strong bonds and rich traditions. As an active participant in the local community, I am excited to introduce a new project that will further enrich the lives of community members.

This initiative aims to provide young children with opportunities to engage in creative and recreational activities, such as dance classes and painting workshops, this is because according to Lake (2013) 'participating in dance classes can be beneficial for kids of all ages. The project also seeks to foster deeper connections between families, neighbours, and the community as a whole.

Additionally, all earnings from the project's activities will be donated to the Birmingham Children's Hospital and cancer research. This paper will provide an overview of the project's goals, execution, and expected impact as well as future considerations.

Quinton Community Enrichment Project

Project Goals

The Quinton Community Enrichment Project has three primary goals. The first goal is to empower young members of the community by providing them with opportunities to engage in creative and recreational activities. The second goal is to strengthen community ties by creating a welcoming space for parents to interact with one another and deepen their friendships. The third goal is to engage volunteers from within the community to lead the dance and art classes, encouraging a sense of ownership and collaboration in the project's success.

Project Execution

To execute the project, the organizers will gather feedback from community members through surveys and community meetings to understand the needs and preferences of parents and children, surveys will be helpful because as Kasunic (2005) says they 'provide insight into complex issues and support effective decision making'.

The project will be integrated into food projects and gatherings to ensure maximum participation and engagement as they are common activities that anyone can enjoy. The project will also encourage parents and guardians to actively participate in their children's activities, and family-friendly events will be organized to facilitate this.

If the initial activities prove successful, the project will approach the local school to explore the possibility of hosting the classes on its premises. All earnings from the classes will be documented transparently, and at regular intervals, the accumulated funds will be donated to the Birmingham Children's Hospital and cancer research organizations.

Expected Impact

The Quinton Community Enrichment Project is expected to have a positive impact on the community in several ways.

First, children will have the opportunity to explore their creativity and develop essential life skills such as teamwork and self-expression.

Second, the project will lead to lasting friendships and foster a close-knit community, which Francis et al. (2012) say it leads to 'improved well-being and increased feelings of safety and security'.

Third, the donations to the Birmingham Children's Hospital and cancer research organizations will contribute to the well-being of children battling illnesses and aid in advancing medical research.

Gibbs Reflective Model

The Gibbs reflective cycle is a model that 'focuses on learning from experiences by involving feelings, thoughts and recommendations for future actions', Husebo et al. (2015). The Gibbs Reflective Cycle has provided valuable insights into the Quinton Community Enrichment project as it has highlighted the achievements and successes of other projects such as the one, I talked about on my previous assignment, the British Red Cross which helps learn what kind of challenges I can expect on my project, it is also useful for identifying areas of potential improvement.

By applying this reflective model, I can ensure that future community projects are better informed and more impactful, ultimately fostering a stronger and more connected community in Quinton.

In this reflection I apply this model to reflect on the project which is aimed to introduce entertainment and learning opportunities for young children during community gatherings in Quinton, Birmingham. It includes dance classes, painting workshops, and other engaging activities led by volunteers.

At the project's inception, I felt excited and enthusiastic about the potential positive impact it could have on the community, feeling proud of the idea and excited to put it in motion. However, I also had some concerns about the project's sustainability and whether it would gain enough traction to take off and achieve its intended purpose.

The project can experience positive outcomes in many ways, I expect the children to eagerly participate in the activities, showing enthusiasm and joy during the dance classes and art sessions. Parents should appreciate the opportunity to engage with their neighbours, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie within the community as well as having some social interaction with people in similar situations as themselves and making friends, as usually parents with kids of similar age tend to become close due to their kids connection, for example Goldberg et al. (2017) say that in a survey about parental friendships at school, 'most participants described friendships with other parents at school'. The transparent fundraising and donation process will also earn trust and appreciation from the participants.

The engagement of dedicated volunteers and the genuine interest from parents will contribute significantly to the project's accomplishments. Moreover, the decision to donate all earnings to charitable causes adds a sense of purpose and meaning to the initiative that might encourage other volunteers to participate as a fundraising activity despite it not being the primary goal.

This is a valuable and transformative project for the local community that will successfully nurture the creativity and social skills of young children while strengthening the sense of community among residents.

To further improve and expand the project, I should gather feedback from community members regularly as this will help me adapt to their evolving needs and preferences. Additionally, we can explore collaborating with other local organizations to enhance the range of activities offered to the children, increasing the frequency of classes, and broadening the age groups targeted could also lead to greater community involvement.

Witnessing the positive impact on people that the British Red cross has achieved motivated me to initiate projects that create a meaningful difference to those around us.

Reflection of the Module

The community engagement module offered by the university has had ¹⁵ a significant and positive impact on the making of my project. The module provided valuable insights, knowledge, and practical skills that informed the project's planning, execution, and overall success as we have learned the importance of open communication, adaptability, and collaboration in successfully executing community-based initiatives.

The following are the keyways in which the community engagement module has influenced the project.

Needs Assessment and Community Input

The module emphasized the importance of conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and seeking input from the community before implementing any project. Consequently, the project planning actively prepares to engage with community members through surveys and community meetings to understand their preferences and requirements.

This approach allows the project to be tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of the Quinton community.

Stakeholder Collaboration

The module highlighted the significance of collaboration with various stakeholders, including local organizations and schools. This knowledge helps understand how the collaboration with schools might benefit both parties.

Volunteer Engagement and Management

The community engagement module provided insights into effective volunteer engagement and management strategies. Armed with this knowledge, I feel better prepared to find volunteers and form a team to carry out the project together, specifically by involving volunteers from within the community, the project will foster a sense of ownership and invest the members in its success.

Emphasis on Inclusivity

The module emphasized the importance of inclusivity in community projects, talking about cultural differences and helping me take them into account when planning the project. This influenced the project by ensuring that the activities are accessible and appealing to children from diverse backgrounds and abilities, the core aspect of inclusivity is that 'minorities want to experience the same sense of belonging that the majority does' as said by Riordan (2014).

Ethical Considerations

The module addressed ethical considerations in community engagement, including transparency in fundraising and donations, applying these principles I will ensure that all earnings from the classes are documented transparently, and donations made to reputable organizations. Transparency is the most essential aspect as Turilli and Floridi (2009) argue

that 'transparency is not an ethical principle, but a pro-ethical condition for enabling other ethical practices', meaning without transparency no other ethical practice can work.

Reflection and Continuous Improvement

The community engagement module encouraged reflection and continuous improvement in community projects, which is why during the planning of the project I applied reflective models to assess the project's impact, strengths, and areas for development. This reflective approach allowed for understanding and the development of an action plan for the project's future growth and sustainability.

Focus on Sustainable Impact

Through the module, I gained an understanding of the importance of creating sustainable community impact. This influenced me to explore opportunities for expanding the project beyond its initial phase, such as offering additional activities and age groups if everything goes well. The focus on sustainability ensures that the project's positive effects will endure in the long term.

Action Plans for the Quinton Community Enrichment Project

Prior to initiating the project, comprehensive surveys will be conducted to gather feedback from community members. The surveys will assess the interest in specific activities, preferred timings and the willingness to pay the suggested minimum monthly fee. This data will guide the project's planning and ensure that it aligns with the community's needs and preferences.

In addition to surveys community meetings will be organized to foster open communication and gather additional insights from residents. These meetings will serve as a platform for residents to voice their opinions, share ideas and actively contribute to the project's design.

Volunteers will be recruited and trained to lead the dance and art classes effectively. The importance of volunteer engagement and management will be emphasized to ensure that volunteers are well-prepared and motivated to provide high-quality experiences for the children.

Building upon the successful engagement module's emphasis on stakeholder collaboration, the local school will be approached to explore the possibility of using their premises to host the classes, this collaboration will not only provide a suitable venue but also create a sense of community ownership and support for the project.

Family-friendly events will be organized during the project's launch and throughout its duration to strengthen community bonds and encourage parent involvement.

Throughout the project, its progress will be consistently monitored, and its impact on the community will be assessed. Reflective models such as the Gibbs Reflective Cycle will be

used to evaluate the project's strengths and areas for improvement and regular feedback from the community will also inform adjustments to the project to enhance its effectiveness.

Transparency in fundraising and donation processes will be ensured inspired by the ethical considerations from the community engagement module. Regular updates will be provided to the community showcasing the accumulated earnings and the donations made to the Birmingham Children's Hospital and cancer research organizations.

If the initial activities are successful, opportunities to expand the project further will be explored. This may include adding more activities, extending the project's reach to other age groups and collaborating with additional local organizations to enhance the overall experience for the community.

Sustainability will be a key focus of the project's planning since by actively involving community members, building partnerships, and continuously seeking community feedback, a sustainable and long-lasting impact within Quinton will be created.

Achievements will be celebrated, and contributions of volunteers and supporters will be acknowledged. Recognizing the collective efforts and positive outcomes will foster a sense of pride and motivation within the community to continue nurturing the project's success, since recognition 'is central to morale' says Cronin and Becherer (1999).

Conclusion

The Quinton Community Enrichment Project is a testament to the power of unity and camaraderie. By offering entertainment and learning opportunities to young community members the project aims to enhance their lives and pave the way for a brighter future for the entire community.

Through dance, art, and shared experiences, the project will bring smiles to the faces of children and create lasting memories for families.

Additionally, the project's collective efforts will make a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need as all earnings will be directed to support healthcare and research initiatives. The project represents a journey of growth and community building, with the belief that positive change can be achieved one step at a time.

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