

Project Summary

The project is designed to address youth homelessness, future employment and preparation, and the ever - lurking street culture that temp's youth into engaging in crime and gang involvement.

Following on the heels of our long-standing (12+ years) very successful Gift of Music Programs, this new project (Direct Drive) will be designed to engage Homeless Youth, 16-24 years of age, living primarily in shelters, in a one of a kind, state of the art, Entrepreneurial Training and Crime Prevention Program, built on a foundation of Hip Hop - more specifically Electronic Digital Music.

Through this innovation, homeless youth will be introduced to the program through engagement with long - term mentoring, DJ artists who have also been successful as entrepreneurs and business people. We have consistently demonstrated how effective we are in reaching out to 'at risk' and hard to reach youth through music (primarily guitar) for the past 12+ years, and we have seen repeatedly how powerful a draw music is and the incredible impact that having a long-term relationship, with a positive role model can be in building resilience, skills and hope in young people.

We have been experimenting with the DJ lessons part of the program with homeless youth residing with their families at CUPS, a program that supports homeless families and individuals by offering housing and wrap-around support services. As you will note from the support letter attached, they are thrilled with the program - they have seen great value in how we reach out to vulnerable young people and the impact we can have.

We have mirrored successful / long-standing, similar programs from cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Guitars Not Guns that originated in San Francisco and now operates in Toronto. All the programs, like Legacy, operate at an 80% level of successfully meeting their objectives of helping youth stay in school, complete their education and continue on a positive life path.

Our new DJ Project (Direct Drive) is a music / mentoring entrepreneurship, prevention, and employment preparation project built on a positive, hip hop foundation, that will give our target population opportunities to develop cognitively and emotionally while at the same time developing skills in a context familiar to them - through applied Entrepreneurship, Audio Production, DJing, Marketing, Job Shadowing, Training and Community Service. The Direct Drive Project is a creative / innovative learning experience for our communities' most at risk youth, who embrace the hip hop generation and this genre of music.

This Project is more than your typical after school Hip Hop or prevention program. It's a way of life for these young people and a legitimate way to connect with youth who would otherwise shun more traditional training programs. Youth who participate in the DJ Project will build a sense of their own identity through music and engagement with positive, like minded adults and peers - and grow not only artistically but business-wise as well. Through a mix of Turntablism and Entrepreneurial Training, the Direct Drive experience will equip youth with the skills to break the cycle of homelessness, while at the same time helping them to stay on a positive life path.

The critical issue(s) being addressed by this new project is the plight of homeless youth and the impact this life style has on their future and future generations. Youth living on the street and in shelters, quickly become entrenched in this life style, easily developing social networks with other street-involved youth and adults.

Homelessness is a dangerous, unstable lifestyle for youth, characterized by several high-risk, negative experiences and behaviors, including; violence, victimization, physical and sexual abuse, involvement with police and the justice system, criminal / gang activity, stress, depression, suicide and chronic unemployment.

It is an understatement to suggest that Homeless youth desperately need to have access to education, skill training and employment preparation opportunities that prepares them for the future - however improving access and delivering culturally relevant training, that connects to this population is no easy task. The approach needs to be designed in a manner that speaks to them in their language, on their terms and is of interest to them!

Project Model

Our theory of change - is predicated on a few basic research-based propositions and on 'Building Blocks' that assist youth in successfully transitioning into adulthood.

- That long-term relationships with caring, positive adult role models can help build resiliency and confidence in youth.
- That engagement in music programming has many positive benefits including improved school performance.
- That completing school can significantly impact a youth's potential of becoming a successful and contributing adult, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness.
- That the benefits of at-risk youth completing their education will have a significant positive impact on society both socially and economically.
- That youth living in poverty and who are homeless are at far greater risk of not completing their education, becoming engaged in criminal activities and incarceration and living in a state of chronic homelessness and poverty.

Program Building Blocks

The first Building Block is the incredible power and influence of music - research has consistently demonstrated an unmistakable link between music learning and academic achievement, as well as demonstrating that youth who participate in music instruction and experiences have a unique opportunity to grow socially and emotionally through the intimate connections they make as part of shared music experiences with parents, mentors and peers. The longer youth are involved in music programming the better they score on SATs, and there is a proven link between music and literacy and math ability - all necessary elements for youth to experience success later in life (Education Through Music, 2007).

"Every student in the nation should have an education in the arts." This is the opening statement of "The Value and Quality of Arts Education: A Statement of Principles", a document from ten

important American educational organizations, including the American Association of School Administrators, the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, and the National School Boards Association. This basic statement is unlikely to be challenged by anyone involved in education...in the harsh environment where these youth live, however, limited time and funding is available for what we are proposing, and to our knowledge no other training program in Alberta approaches employment training in this manner.

The reality is that music instruction helps our youth and communities in real and substantial ways. The benefits of music instruction, based on a growing body of convincing research, can be grouped in four categories: **success in society, success in school, success in developing intelligence, and success in life.** (Source: MENC--The National Association for Music Education "Music Education Facts and Figures", 2002).

Success in Society - The importance of music to our economy is without doubt. And the value of music in shaping individual abilities and character are borne out in numerous research articles...the most notable Canadian study by Dr. Levitin from McGill, "This is Your Brain on Music", 2012...*as a side note there is very little Canadian research in relation to this topic and to that end we will be working with the University of Calgary, through the Department of Education to evaluate the effectiveness of this program and to share the results on an international stage. Of interest related to this evaluation will be our capacity to capture the entrepreneurial spirit of these youth. Dr. Harker has created a new conceptual framework that will measure the effectiveness of the Direct Drive Project as an intervention strategy in assisting homeless youth in becoming employable, as well as how our programming (music and mentoring) improves intellectual engagement in at risk populations and how this engagement impacts youth in pursuing entrepreneurial interests through the arts.*

Nation-wide research in Canada shows that general student engagement is deplorably low with fewer than 40% intellectually engaged in their every day school work (Willms, Friesen, & Milton, 2009; Dunleavy, Milton, & Willms, 2012). This is a crisis that Dr. Harker has framed as "collective powerlessness requiring intervention". If this is indeed the case for our youth in mainstream education, what chance do homeless youth have?

Music is a magical gift we must nourish and cultivate in our youth, especially now as scientific evidence proves that exposure to music improves math, science and language skills, and we read repeatedly how music and the arts prevents teen violence and involvement in crime.

Over the years we have reviewed numerous similar programs, primarily in the US, that have demonstrated success in meeting their objectives of keeping youth in school and out of trouble with the law. One that really caught our eye is the '**Merit School of Music**' that provides high-quality music education for youth in metropolitan Chicago. Its primary goals are to help young people achieve their full musical potential, to remove economic barriers to participation, and to stimulate personal and educational growth through music. Started over 30 years ago, more than 46,000 youth from lower-income families and the streets have gone through this program with 90% of youth finishing high school and/or progressing on to post-secondary education and/or employment.

Another example is “The Roots of Music (RoM)” program in New Orleans that was created after Hurricane Katrina. The program gives youth a better alternative to the violence, instability and chaos of street life culture by offering them an entertaining place to interact with one another, learn from first-rate musicians, and to be part of a team. The program also allows teens from various neighborhoods and cultures to meet and develop a rapport, offsetting the geographic separation that can lead to gang development and fights over neighborhood 'turf'.

Success in Education - Success in society is predicated on success in school. Skills learned through the discipline of music, transfer to study skills, communication skills, team work skills and cognitive skills useful in every part of a person’s life – music instruction teaches discipline and it assists youth in learning to work effectively in a team environment without resorting to violent or inappropriate behavior. The Alberta Governments detailed document entitled “Supporting Healthy and Successful Transitions to Adulthood: A Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness”, 2012, indicated that 60% of youth living on the streets leave school early, with 80% being involved with the youth criminal justice system. These are staggering numbers leaving us to wonder why we continue to approach this very serious matter with strategies and interventions that don’t necessarily appear to be having very successful outcomes. It also points to the challenge confronting us, of preparing these young people for employment.

Researchers of the above noted document also suggest that “**Improving access to education, training and employment** is critical for homeless or formerly homeless young people to successfully transition into adulthood and eventually independence. Providing critical educational and employment training helps youth to develop essential skills and launches them on a path towards independence and self-sufficiency as contributing members of society. Improving educational opportunities and job training that is designed specifically to meet the needs of street-involved youth will remove some of the barriers that these young people encounter when trying to obtain employment or access to education and training”

Success in Developing Intelligence - Success in school and in society depends on an array of abilities. Without joining the intense ongoing debate about the nature of intelligence as a basic ability, we can and have demonstrated that some measures of a youth’s intelligence are indeed increased with music instruction. An increasing range of data support a long-established base of anecdotal knowledge to the effect that music instruction 'makes kids / youth smarter'. What is new and especially compelling, however, is a combination of tightly-controlled behavioral studies and groundbreaking neurological research that show how music study can actively contribute to brain development.

Success in Life – We want youth in our program and those around us to achieve success in school, employment, and in the social structures through which we move. We are adamant that participation in music, and engagement with positive adult role models bring countless benefits to each youth we engage, throughout their lives. The benefits can be cognitive, psychological or spiritual - we know how therapeutic and calming music can be and we can all relate to how critical it is to have someone to look up to and who will be there for you over an extended period.

Studying music, with someone you respect encourages self-discipline and diligence - traits that carry over into intellectual pursuits and that lead to effective study and work habits. An association of music and math has, in fact, long been noted. Creating and performing music promotes self-expression and provides self-gratification and increases self-confidence and esteem. In medicine, increasing published reports are demonstrating that music has a healing effect on patients and that it reduces stress which in turn improves memory. For all these reasons, a program like the one that we are suggesting deserves strong support to be part of a service system that is designed to move very deserving youth forward successfully into adulthood. – Partially taken from Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Leading Heart Surgeon, Baylor College of Music.

“The very best engineers and technical designers in the Silicon Valley industry are, nearly without exception, practicing musicians.” - Grant Venerable, “The Paradox of the Silicon Savior”, as reported in "The Case for Sequential Music Education / Training in the Core Curriculum of the Public Schools", The Center for the Arts in the Basic Curriculum, New York, 1989...**our training curriculum will be focusing on sound engineering and technical / graphic design.**

Another Building Block is homeless youth having easy access to programming during hours that support their existing life styles. This Building Block is taken from research with respect to ‘Critical Hours’ programming, keeping in mind that these young people are on the far side of the continuum when it comes to problems that are magnified due to their very extreme living circumstances.

We know that where and how youth spend their time has important implications for their development. Generally speaking, homeless youth have endless hours of free time and are without consistent if any adult supervision during day time and evening hours. This unsupervised / unstructured time, puts these youths at extreme risk for the many negative outcomes noted previously. We also know, however, through our research and experience, that young people can benefit when they spend time engaged in exciting and structured pursuits that offer opportunities for positive interactions with adults and peers.

We have seen increasing interest in support programs in relation to Housing First Initiatives from various levels of government, the Calgary United Way and other funders and public education officials that would like to see enhanced creation of programming that can provide youth with safe and supportive support, that offers not just shelter, but growth-enhancing and skill development opportunities - all that promote academic, personal, social, and employment related development. There is strong public support for this type of programming for young people who, if we don’t do something that reaches these young people, will cost us dearly both socially and economically.

"Research indicates that youth who participate in positive activities (recreation, educational / training support, art / music and mentoring programs) demonstrate improved academic performance and attachment, reduced participation in risky behaviors and enhanced healthy development." (Upstart, Champions for Children and Youth - After the Bell Rings, United Way of Calgary and Area.)

In a study completed by Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2007, the two most important findings were:

1. Youth who participate in this type of programming improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and academic performance. More specifically, they found improvement in youth's self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding (positive feelings and attitudes toward school), positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores. Programs also reduced problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance and conduct problems) and drug use. In summary, programs like we are offering, produced multiple benefits that pertain to youths' personal, social and academic life, thereby increasing the likelihood of young people continuing with their education and or training that we expect will increase their potential to secure future, gainful employment.
2. It was possible to identify effective programs: Programs that used evidence-based skill training approaches were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth, while those that did not use such procedures were not successful in any outcome area.

Evidence-Based Training Approaches - Drawing on theory and research about skills training, the researchers applied two criteria related to the training process and two criteria related to program content to identify programs that used evidence-based training approaches to promote personal and social skills. The two criteria related to process were the presence of a sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives (sequenced), and the use of active forms of learning (active). The two criteria related to content were the presence of at least one program component focused on developing personal or social skills (focus), and the targeting of specific personal or social skills (explicit).

Current data offered clear empirical support for the conclusion that a well-run program like we have been offering, with the addition of employment training, will produce a variety of positive benefits for participating youth. They confirmed that effective programs employed skill-development activities that were sequential, active, focused and explicit. It is important to stress that only those programs that followed these four evidence-based training approaches in their program components devoted to skill development produced significant changes in any outcomes. In other words, it is the combination of both training process (i.e., sequential and active) and program content (i.e., focused and explicit) that leads to positive results.

Not only can participants benefit in multiple ways if these components are included, but success is unlikely if they are missing. To improve youth's personal and social skills, programs must devote sufficient time to skill enhancement, be explicit about what they wish to achieve, use activities that are coordinated and sequenced to achieve their purpose, and require active involvement on the part of participants.

The Direct Drive Entrepreneurial Project

The Need: Taken from the Alberta Governments Plan to End Homelessness, 2012.

Youth are among the fastest growing and most underserved of Canada's homeless population. The number of homeless youth in Canada is estimated to be approximately 65,000. In 2011-2012, youth-serving organizations in Alberta served over 2,100 youth through outreach and family support / reunification services and 1,900 youth through shelters and supported living. This

estimate does not include the youth who do not voluntarily go to shelters or other housing options. In Calgary (August 2012), the number of youth between the ages of 13 and 24 years experiencing homelessness was 446.

Youth homelessness is an issue that is similar to, yet distinct from, homelessness in general, and our understanding of and solutions to the issue must be distinct as well.

- Youth are in the process of transitioning toward adulthood and may not have acquired personal, social and life skills that make independent living possible.
- Youth tend to seek, access and respond to services and supports differently than other homeless individuals. They often avoid the homeless-serving system out of fear of authorities.
- Youth have particularly challenging issues, and require targeted responses to be rehoused.
- For youth under the age of 18, the situation is complicated by the obligation of families and/or the government to care for them and provide for their basic needs.
- For youth involved with Child and Family Services, these issues are further magnified if healthy transitions are not prioritized...according to the Alberta Government report noted previously, approximately 25% of youth had previous Foster Care involvement - we've heard that it is much higher.
- Youth living on the street become entrenched in this lifestyle very quickly, due to rapidly developing new social networks with other street-involved youth.
- In Calgary 57% had dropped out of school with 80% having had involvement with the Youth Justice System, both reflecting the lack of support and resources for this population.

Homelessness delays social and developmental progress while making it more difficult to develop life skills and independence. Further, without the ability to create stability or independence in their lives, youth may be 'stuck' in homelessness, uncertain of what help they need to change their situation, or how to get it. Aside from shelters, youth may not be aware of or be able to access many services, supports or jobs that are available, especially because they lack a fixed address, personal voicemail and identification. Homeless youth also report facing a powerful stigma that labels them as listless, worthless, criminal or dangerous. Youth and community stakeholders suggest that the stigma of homelessness interacts with negative perceptions of youth in general to create a climate of disrespect and disregard for these youth, even in some service environments...youth generally enter a state of homelessness as a result of a number of factors which may include:

- Physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Poor school performance or leaving school early
- Involvement with Child and Family Services, Intervention Systems and the Youth Criminal Justice system
- Discrimination
- Homophobia
- Poverty

Responding to youth homelessness is incredibly complex and will obviously take a concerted effort of all stakeholders working closely together, in a collective and collaborative fashion.

Legacy Gift of Music has had the opportunity to work with numerous stakeholders and service providers who experience first - hand and see value in the manner in which we connect with hard to reach youth, build trust, skills and direction while building resiliency and confidence. The path out of youth homelessness will not be easy but we have faith that by working together, by providing innovative and exciting and proven programming, that we can be successful in making a real difference in these young people's lives.

How Legacy's Direct Drive Project will Prepare Youth for the Future

Hip Hop culture, in particular Electronic Music and Hip Hop Dance, have captured the imagination of youth and it very much connects with 'street culture'. Legacy Gift of Music (GOM) has been providing musical and long-term mentoring support for at risk youth for 12+ years, through schools and service agencies, and we have been 80% successful in helping youth stay in school, complete school, and stay out of trouble with the law.

For this project, we are targeting our communities' most at risk population by offering an opportunity for Homeless Youth to become engaged in weekly DJ lessons, full day workshops and Entrepreneurial and Employment Preparation Training, that focus on Entrepreneurial pursuits through the art of DJ'ing and Positive Hip Hop Culture. Many career / entrepreneurial opportunities exist within the music industry and we know from our many years of experience that we can connect with this population in a manner that will excite them, keep them interested and engaged.

The entrepreneurial / training aspect of the program is modeled after "The DJ Project" from San Francisco and New York. "SF City Hall and other community groups have commended The DJ Project for its professional approach and success at keeping kids away from gang activity. The students live in public housing projects, group homes and homeless shelters. Five years and counting, the Project has expanded to four Bay Area facilities - two in San Francisco, two in Oakland. The latter two programs have played a significant role in defusing the territorialism and violence between different Oakland 'hoods'." As noted, approximately 60% of homeless youth leave school early with 80% having criminal justice involvement, leaving them extremely vulnerable to gang influence and a life on the streets, that consequently includes poverty and chronic unemployment.

Program Innovation – The program is innovative from four different perspectives: First we are using existing program elements (music) that have proven to be a successful connector and intervention, rather than creating something completely new. Second, rather than being stand - alone we are providing services within existing facilities, where youth live and where stakeholders operate and offer support. Third, we will be creating a program that is easily understood and transferable to any neighborhood or jurisdiction. We have proven this to be the case throughout Alberta and Calgary neighborhoods over the past 12+ years and this program will be no different. Finally, and quite possibly the most important innovation is our mentoring component, that teaches skills and is long-term in nature. As we have read and been told, many homeless youth have graduated from care. These youths require stability, continuity and consistency in their lives and since they are living under these extreme circumstances, I would suggest that this has not been the case for them...our programming offers this and youth can stay involved from their initial engagement, through the training and afterwards as they continue to hone their craft with the artist

they started with. Legacy is taking what it has done and learned about music and long-term mentorship and applying it to an entirely different population, within settings that are brand new to us...we are working with youth in a manner that they understand, through hip hop, on their turf. It is highly unlikely that the youth, who we are targeting, would be overly interested in a training program taught by professional educators, within traditional settings. The reality is that youth come from all types of communities and backgrounds, and it is there, on their turf, that we need to be operating. Professionals accustomed to working with ready audiences may not immediately feel comfortable or know how to engage youth in more non-traditional settings...Legacy will be bridging this divide. Youth-serving organizations and institutions—whether public or private, corporate or non-profit, business or entertainment—must be flexible and pursue non-traditional collaborations to connect with youth. It is here where we shine – music speaks to everyone and it breaks down barriers that allows for entire communities to become involved in supporting our most at risk populations.

Methodology

Through hands on DJ training within homeless shelters and other locations that support homeless youth, workshops and applied Entrepreneurship Training will be offered to youth which will include Audio Production, Sound Engineering, Marketing, Job Shadowing, Resource Development and various aspects of Leadership including; Team Work, Managing Conflict, Decision Making, Problem Solving, and Communicating Effectively your companies Vision.

Hands on practical experience will include Job Shadowing, Performance Opportunities, Community Service and a mock ‘Dragon’s Den’ that will be created and overseen by a board member and Hip Hop Dancer who was on the show and successful at getting their support...youth who participate in the mock ‘Dragon’s Den’ exercise will receive \$1,000 to help build their business plan and marketing strategy.

During the initial stages of the program youth will work on an individual, weekly basis with a DJ instructor and be involved once a month in a 1-day workshop with other program participants and youth from the community. Youth who show promise and interest will qualify for the 10 session Entrepreneurship Development Course...sessions will accommodate 8-10 youth to allow for maximum hands-on involvement.

Course design, beyond the DJ lessons and workshops will be created, under the direction of the CEO, by artists who have created and marketed their own music and established their own businesses and who are active in the industry...it’s important for youth to work with artists in the community who they look up to and view as being successful.