

Grand Aspirations Partnership Tool-Kit 2011-2012

a comprehensive guide to building strong relationships to facilitate healthy, local programs

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I. Overview

This tool-kit provides program leaders, participants and relevant individuals the knowledge and necessary information to build healthy, mutual beneficial partnerships. Generating strong, evolving relationships with local, regional and national organizations, businesses or community groups will allow program leaders to construct the proper frameworks to administer a successful program. These partnerships will become the foundation in which the program relies on for support and resources while creating a collective movement in that facilitates broad, powerful change. The tool-kit will equip program leaders and others to understand the current landscape of Grand Aspirations' allied network while providing critical information on how to specify partnerships to program needs. In addition to these components, this tool-kit also provides the necessary content for official partnership within Grand Aspirations. If local Grand Aspirations organizers wish to form partnerships within the organization, this guide will give the information as well as examples needed to make it happen. This tool-kit will be updated each calendar year in order to give leaders the current Grand Aspirations organizational network.

II. The Grand Aspirations Philosophy of Partnerships

Model of Social Change – Systems Change from the Grassroots

Many non-profits have adopted social change models focused on either service delivery or regulatory change. The former focuses on directly serving people's needs through some form of charity, while the latter focuses on shifting policy incentives so that government or

business serves people's needs. Grand Aspirations uses a model of social change that integrates both to do something different. We support, connect, and empower people to learn how to meet their own needs while engaging in the process of shifting the larger systems in which we are embedded. This approach is founded on a recognition that the changes we need in a green economy are fundamental and vast. We rely every day on the activities (coal-powered electricity, oil-powered transit, industrial food, etc.) that our society must shift away from in order to survive. These challenges are embedded in economic industries and physical infrastructures that dominate the modern world.

It's not enough for us to plant a garden; in our model, we help community groups turn that garden into a viable and self-sustaining venture that supports the community, creates jobs, undermines dependence on industrial agriculture, and teaches other communities how to replicate it. It's not enough to weatherize a house; we help people create social capital by saving energy together in ways that cut the costs of action, simplify the process, invite others to join in, and give them a sense of ownership and investment that has real financial cost-savings for them – savings that can be reinvested as a neighborhood in a next venture.

Models that are core to the solutionary method – the cycle of empowerment, viral replication, entrepreneurship – focus on exponential dissemination, self-sustaining expansion, and constant innovation as the competitive edge. We use concrete implementation and grassroots engagement to shift the landscape of political and economic power by helping people enact their dreams to sustain themselves and the communities around them. In doing so, we constantly demonstrate that the green economy is 1. feasible, 2. a good thing, and 3. something people can do right now and get immediate benefit from.

B. Working with Other Organizations to Expand Capacity and Impact

Many non-profits think and work narrowly within the realms of the staff that they direct and the members and volunteers that they mobilize. Grand Aspirations thinks actively about its place in a system of change and seeks to interconnect and leverage far more capacity and potential that we directly control. This comes in the form of trusting our strategy and our methods to whoever will use them on the recognition that the impact the use of that strategy has – regardless of who uses it – advances our mission. It means recognizing that there are dozens of local organizations at the grassroots that have the capacity and insight to run effective Summer of Solutions programs and sustainable community development projects and are far better rooted, as local organizations, in local communities, than many program leaders and participants, who may not have years or decades of work in a given place, are. As a result, it's just as effective to us to find a local organization to host and implement our programs outside of our official organizational boundaries than to set up a new group in that location. We see a landscape of competition between social change organizations fighting over the pieces in a small pie and look for ways that we can expand the pie through our work (see below). When we can engage broad-based coalitions in thinking a bit differently and moving towards our model of social change, we see that relationship as a lever for which we serve as a fulcrum. In other words, Grand Aspirations power is not in what its staff, volunteers and resources can do by themselves, it is what they can do by working with other people, groups, and ventures to quietly rearrange the way business is done and unlock new capacity that adopts and adapts our methods.

C. Rethinking Resources as Social Entrepreneurs

Many non-profits think about money (and other resources, but primarily money) as resources to expend in order to do good work. This isn't very sustainable. Adequate funding is, in this model, a prerequisite for achieving mission. Grand Aspirations recognizes that the green economy is more than just a morally sound idea that we should support as a charity activity – it is a new kind of economic development in a market that is most effectively harnessed from the grassroots. Part of the shift we envision is helping both the youth we engage and

the communities we support to think of their livelihoods as something they can create, rather than something that they must convince someone (an employer, the government, etc.) to provide for them. If we are saving energy, generating it, growing food, or designing smarter communities, all those things generate value which can be tapped as sources of income. If we aren't able to turn these activities into jobs that support ourselves and the communities in which we work, our vision isn't very realistic.

These flows of financial resources that we channel can sometimes, but not always, be captured within a non-profit organization like Grand Aspirations. In other cases, our work spawns cooperatives, local businesses, or self-employment opportunities for community members and youth leaders who then go on to use Grand Aspirations's methods to sustain and support themselves and their communities – a perfect application of our focus on partnerships. Entrepreneurship also extends far beyond money – we seek to invest time and energy in people's skills so that they will provide returns of skill, labor and leadership. We invest in the growth of innovative thinking in others so that we can together reap the rewards of that brilliance. We invest in social ties across age, class, race, gender and geographical boundaries because it creates resilience and potential for mutual support in people's time, energy, money, ideas, perspectives, and access to people, space, skill, and other resources. As an organization, we use what we have to generate more capacity, and we teach youth leaders and communities to do the same.

D. Expanding Community Leadership

Many non-profits are managed from a center that determines and delegates scopes of work based on resources that are held centrally. As an expression of the importance of being generative with all resources, cycling empowerment, and expending virally, Grand Aspirations focuses on empowering leaders to start, grow, and sustain nodes of action at all scales. This includes inviting past program participants as well as new partners to learn how to host new or continue existing Summer of Solutions programs, encouraging leaders and participants to turn the projects they start during the summer into long-term jobs, and encouraging well-established teams to form permanent hubs as part of our organizational structure. The collective intelligence that we generate by forming and synergizing so many ideas and minds is far more powerful than what we can accomplish alone. The ability of diverse local teams to turn ideas and relationships into self-sustaining programs brings in far greater resources (financial, human, social, intellectual) than we could achieve centrally.

Grand Aspirations leads through community, but this intentionally does not mean universal or homogenous roles in leadership. We seek a model for change that doesn't try to get everyone doing the same thing – we need organizers and economic planners and gardeners and factory employees all together. Similarly, we focus on carefully identifying what decisions and realms of work should be managed centrally and which should be distributed throughout the network to create quality standards, prevent fragmentation, and avoid duplication of efforts while empowering innovation and diversity. This structure allows us to invite new leaders and new ideas to plug in, test and prove their ideas, and apply and expand them in a far broader scope than they would be able to do alone.

E. Constant Learning by Action

Many non-profits focus on developing a program precisely, ensuring that they have all the necessary resources, and then execute exactly what they established. Grand Aspirations has a more entrepreneurial approach of experimenting and testing many ideas with little resources and identifying the ones that are remarkable successes because of the innovative and self-sustaining power of the idea. This also follows the systems change methodology of trying many paths at once and adapting constantly, or as social change theorist David Gershon puts it; "ready, fire, aim." In the 2008 program, we launched our first programs with little experience in program management – some things worked spectacularly and others were

mediocre. We applied those insights intensively in 2009, where we again experimented extensively by trying to run a national program with little experience coordinating at that scale. There were a great many failures in this process – whole programs disappeared, and many programs were much weaker than we had hoped due to inadequate planning and support. But some of them really thrived, allowing us to launch nine programs, about half of which really took off, and engage 120 young people nationwide in two months of work for a total budget of around \$13,000 (other funding in 2009 was outside the Summer of Solutions program).

Part of this strategy is staying quiet, flexible, and small scale during the experimentation phase and allowing the upward spiral to take its course when self-sustaining momentum behind working models is ready. We learn a lot from the things that don't work well and replicate and expand what works. This principle works on all scales – from how we seek funding to how we work with community partners to how we train people, recruit summer participants, plan programs, and coordinate nationally. Grand Aspirations is a learning community not just for the participants we train but also for leaders who are learning the process. We thrive by always operating on our edge and institutionalizing new insights and knowledge rapidly.

III. How To Partner

Now that you have a bit of the theory behind partnerships in Grand Aspirations, here are some great pointers for the practice of how partnerships work, how to build them, and how to cultivate collaboration that allows your SoS program and your partners to thrive!

Solidarity and Mutual Support

Developing partnerships is all about understanding solidarity and mutual support. Healthy partnerships are developed from a desire to see each person/group's needs met, increasing the capacity of each person/group in what they are trying to achieve, and to find creative and new ways of working together that meet the needs of individuals, communities, and the world. Solidarity is a sense of collective responsibility for not only the well-being of yourself and your organization but also for the people (and organizations) around you. Our society and culture often encourages competition and individuality, but we can be much more powerful if we can find ways to identify our shared interests and goals, and develop projects and action that support everyone.

Tips and Tools:

- Always be clear and straightforward about the goals, intentions, and needs of your group and ask your potential partner to state their goals, intentions, and needs
- Have a conversation identifying shared goals and the potential for helping the other meet their needs
- Build personal relationships with individuals in your partner organization to foster trust and good communication
- Operate under principles of solidarity: offering help or support when your partner needs it and being clear about when you need help or support

Listening and Learning

One major key to a strong partnership is listening. In your initial conversation with a partner, your focus should be on listening. Try to spend 25% of the time talking and 75% of the time listening. This is an important way to change the culture in that meetings with partners can often feel competitive with each group trying to prove their legitimacy and get their asks in. If we can step back from that and give our partner time to talk and share their mission, goals, story, etc. this fosters a better understanding of our partner and sets a more collaborative tone. Once we understand our partner's mission and purpose, we can have a better understanding of how to support them and identify what our "asks" for them are.

Tips and Tools:

- Start all partnership meetings by asking your partner to tell you about themselves/their organization
- Express your intentions for listening and learning at the beginning of the meeting
- Practice active listening: eye contact, asking questions, positive body language

Asks and Offers

Asks and offers are the exchange that goes on between two people or organizations in a partnership. In order to have a mutually beneficial partnership, it's important to have a sense of your asks and offers before you approach a potential partner.

Asks: What are you looking for from them? What kind of support? Attendance at something? Input on a certain idea? Approval before moving forward?

Offers: What is in it for them? What value can you provide for them? What will they get out of doing this? How does their support/input/participation further their missions, values, and goals?

It is important to be explicit about this in your communication to avoid distrust, misunderstanding, and confusion, and to build a clear, mutual understanding

Tips and Tools:

- In email communications, summarize all correspondence with phrasing like: "To summarize, what we are looking for is..." and "We hope this will further your mission to... by..."
- Start with offers when talking. It allows partners to know that you are conscious and considerate of their interests and goals as well as your own.

Legitimacy and Professionalism

As young people, it is really important to think about how we want to be perceived and how we can present ourselves as legitimate, professional, and capable. The keys to this are the three-fold, being: Consistency, Responsibility, Follow-up

Consistency: "Being there" when you are expected, being there not only when it is in your interests, but also in the interests of others (ex. going to community meetings), having steady communication and a steady contact person, maintaining relationships, having regularly scheduled/accessible meetings

Responsibility: Taking responsibility for action items, being proactive in your communication, completing tasks you have committed to doing, taking serious the work you are doing and the work of others, responding to communication from partners

Follow-up: Checking back with people who have given you time and support to say thank-you or to continue a conversation/point of collaboration, meeting/talking again to maintain the relationship or check the status of your collaboration

Tips & Tools:

- Build agendas when you are meeting with partners to be clear about what you wish to talk to them about and to be efficient with your time (of course where it feels appropriate)
- Take notes during meetings and send out a summary to people present afterwards to solidify agreements and be clear about next steps
- Select one point person from your team to be the contact for each partner to keep communication consistent as much as possible

Commitment and accountability

In partnerships, it is important to talk about what kinds of partnership you want to have, for how long, and to reach what goals. This piece is being explicit about some of the previous parts mentioned: writing down/stating shared goals, identified projects or activities to work together on, how often you will be meeting, and confirming meeting times. This can take the form of a verbal summary at your first meeting or a written statement or “partner agreement”. This helps you identify expectations so none of the partners feel annoyed by communication, unsure of why someone keeps trying to reach them, or feels like the partnership is dwindling prematurely or dragging on too long.

Tips & Tools:

- Talk in meetings about your expectation for a partnership between yourselves or organizations
- Write a partnership agreement together
- Identify norms for working together and respecting each other through your work
- Establish norms for preferred modes of communication: phone? email? in-person?

IV. Fulfilling needs through partnerships

Identifying specific partners who can help facilitate program unmet needs is a effective way to not only find necessary program resources, but to also share practices, experiences and skills. Most communities and cities already have the community resources or groups that are required to administer a Summer of Solutions program; the key is to identify your program needs and then perform a calculated exploration of organizational and individual networks. In some cases, furthering your mission and goals may be an adequate exchange for the benefits these partnerships provide; in others, you may need to offer money, work, or support of another effort in return - think carefully about when and where additional support strengthens or undermines your work. The following is an initial list that through 3 years of programming we have crafted to assist program leaders in how and where to identify these partnerships.

- Programmatic Partnerships: These are partners that will play a role in the projects and content of your program
 - Local organizations that may be even tangentially related to your area of work.

Community organizing, anti-foreclosure, food, transit, energy, environment, job access/ employment training, youth engagement, business development, labor, local government, small business, cultural, faith, educational, and many other types of groups may have an interest in your work and working together to achieve common goals.

- Housing and Space
 - Churches, schools, community groups, in areas with vacant (livable) housing, talk with local banks or municipal governments. Talk to local organizations about using existing meeting space.
- Food and Materials
 - Local stores (restaurants, super-markets), Food Not Bombs, in-kind donations from hardware or gardening stores or from community members in the neighborhood. Work for food at local gardens.
- Outreach and Engagement
 - Schools, youth programs at social service organizations, employment centers, city governments, churches, existing organizations doing neighborhood outreach
- Funding/Resources
 - Local foundations, local businesses. Well-established local non-profits including academic institutions. Prominent/ wealthy individuals in the community (for large amounts) and crowd-source small donations from large numbers of people.
- Unexpected/Cross-issue Partnerships
 - Depending on the program goals and objectives, some partnerships can be made based upon fringe connections of both organizations. For instance, a social justice organization, who's main objective or campaign is to create city-wide equitable work pay, can be collaborated with within a SoS program to share and facilitate green job creation that has fair wage practices. Some SoS programs might partner with (renewable)industries to share technical skills to provide the initial groundwork for an individual to become a professional technician within the solar, wind, or bio-mass industry. These types of partnership are key in displaying the diversity of support necessary to connect all social, economic and cultural sectors in order to achieve framework/systematic change.

V. National partnerships

Grand Aspirations grew out of and still relates closely to the work of the emerging youth climate movement, though it also connects strongly to the emerging green economy sector and grassroots community development movements. The concept of Grand Aspirations developed at a youth climate movement leadership summit drawing youth innovators from across the country in January 2008. A team of students in Minnesota invited youth leaders nationwide to this summit for a series of focused dialogues on the future of the movement and how to concretely build a green economy. Grand Aspirations is closely tied to these organizations, most of which are partners of the Energy Action Coalition, while also seeking to create a particular movement space for innovative application. Below is a list of our current National Partnerships and some opportunities for local and national teams through

them:

Energy Action Coalition (EAC) - a coalition of almost 50 organizations including Grand Aspirations working to build the youth climate movement and confront the energy and climate crises.

Our Relationship: GA is a member organization and participates in monthly decision-making calls with a vote in a consensus process. As a member, we shape coalition priorities and are eligible for funding.

Opportunity: 2012 general campaign funding

ATTN: Program Leaders hoping to recruit program leaders with low-income backgrounds/ work in Environmental Justice communities; National Gatherings Team; Resources Team.

What: Grand Aspirations applied for fall funding focused on training and empowering leader in Environmental Justice communities to lead programs, and also to support program leaders at the January Gatherings - we may get up to \$25k. If received, there will probably be an application for either local programs or individuals to apply to receive this support.

How to Participate: Casey Wojtalewicz (casewoj@gmail.com) or Timothy DenHerder-Thomas (timothydht@gmail.com) will update national and local teams when we hear back.

Opportunity: Clean Economy Campaign Proposal

ATTN: Program Support Team; Resources Team; Hubs Development team;

What: Over November/ December, we will be working with Clean Economy partners Green For All, Global Exchange, and possibly others with EAC Central to develop a large-scale proposal for funding clean energy work over the next several years. This could bring in hundreds of thousands for solutionary work both in the Summer and sustaining it beyond. Probably the earliest round of funding from it would be in the Spring.

How to Participate: Talk to Casey Wojtalewicz (casewoj@gmail.com) or Timothy DenHerder-Thomas (timothydht@gmail.com)

REAMP - a network of 120 non-profits and foundations in the Midwest working together to reduce carbon emissions 80% by 2050. They have a Youth Allies Caucus that we participate in.

Our Relationship: GA is a member organization, votes in Steering Committee elections, has members attend the Youth, Sustainable Communities, and Energy Efficiency Working Groups, and attends annual meetings. GA leaders have been participating since 2007.

Opportunity: Media Development Support

ATTN: Media Team

What: REAMP has a Media Center that can provide both technical assistance and funding for media projects to partner organizations. At the early-September Annual meeting, they mentioned potential support for Facebook or Twitter campaigns to build membership.

How to Participate: Contact Timothy DenHerder-Thomas (timothydht@gmail.com) with what you are interested in doing.

NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) - a national organization with local chapters that does community and advocacy work around community safety, civil rights, health, economic development, and racial justice. They have a climate justice campaign and youth leadership development in communities work.

Our Relationship: GA started reaching out to the NAACP when recruiting for 2012 program leaders. They felt that their climate justice leadership was not adequately developed to launch new programs, but they are interested in directing NAACP youth leaders to SoS 2012 programs and providing stipends so that they can participate in these programs and then work to launch them in 2013.

Opportunity: SoS Participants who are leaders in communities of color

ATTN: Local SoS programs nationwide

What: NAACP will promote participation in Summer of Solutions programs to youth in their networks, and will possibly provide stipend funding for those youth to participate in SoS. participation by these youth leaders could also be an effective way to build relationships with existing racial justice groups and communities of color in your program location if they are from that city.

How to Participate: Emphasize your interest in multi-cultural engagement and promoting social justice in your program description and stay in touch with your Program Support team person to get updates on this opportunity.

Generation Waking Up - a global campaign to ignite a generation of young people to bring forth a thriving, just, sustainable world. Generation Waking Up uses multi-media "Wake-Ups" to inspire and engage young people in leading our current moment of transition and supports youth groups in developing local coalitions and innovative solutions. Generation Waking Up is collaborating with Grand Aspirations in integrating wake-up activities into Summer of Solutions programs and harnessing Grand Aspirations opportunities as action outlets. Generation Waking Up is also collaborating directly in supporting the 2011 Oakland Summer of Solutions program. www.generationwakingup.org

Opportunity: Leadership Development and Training

ATTN: Hubs, Local programs, National Gathering Team, Leadership Development Team

What: Generation Waking up will provide curriculum and/or facilitators to run a "Wake Up" during SoS program orientations, gatherings, or other events or programming throughout the year.

How to Participate: Get in touch with Joshua Gorman (joshua@generationwakingup.org | (703) 380-0913), Coordinator with Generation Waking Up, to be connected to Wake Up facilitators in your region.

Opportunity: Collaborative Hubs Development

ATTN: Hubs, Hub Development Team

What: Generation Waking Up is currently developing Hubs around the country as centers for young people to find education (workshops, cafes), Community (art events, music, potlucks), and Action (projects, campaigns). There is great potential for GA hubs developing to link up with the hubs developing from Generation Waking Up.

How to Participate: Contact Joshua Gorman (joshua@generationwakingup.org | (703) 380-0913), Coordinator with Generation Waking Up

Opportunity: Recruitment for Program Leaders and Participants

ATTN: Program Leaders, Program Support Team

What: Generation Waking Up has a broad network of young people who are trained and/or emerging leaders who have participated in Wake Ups. They have offered to reach out to their networks to encourage people to join SoS programs, either as program leaders if they are interested in more in-depth involvement or as participants during the summer.

How to Participate: Contact Ashley on the Partnerships Team (ashtrull@gmail.com) to let her know you would like to post a listing for a position as a program leader in your program to be sent out in Generation Waking Up's communication.

Green For All: Provides communities of practice with information and expertise from practitioners in various fields. Also runs Capital Access program connecting social-justice minded green entrepreneurs with advice, capital, etc. Also runs green economy efforts through the College Ambassadors program at HBCUs in the Southeast. Also runs a Fellows program for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Opportunities: Technical advising and partnership support on green economy issues.

ATTN: Local teams looking to create solutions, especially around energy efficiency, water systems, and green jobs access to low-income and minority communities.

What: It's not yet clear, contact Timothy (timothydht@gmail.com) if you want more info - describe what you are looking for and he'll see what we can do.

SSC Opportunities: Members of the Sierra Student Coalition and Grand Aspirations are currently working on a proposal for collaboration between SSC trainings programs, (SPROGs) Anti-Oppression initiatives, and campaigns, and GA's Summer of Solutions and hub-building work. Plans thus far involve stimulating outreach between SoS Program Leaders and SPROG Directors, working with SSC's Anti-Oppression Committee and SSC's diversity consultant's organizational policy recommendations on points that would benefit directly from solutionary campaign work, and continuing to swap trainings templates to improve the curriculum of both GA trainings weeks and SPROGs. The GA point person for this partnership is Pablo Baeza. (pabloandresbaeza@gmail.com)

The Energy Action Coalition (EAC) is a coalition of non-profit organizations focused on mobilizing the youth voice on climate and energy issues. The coalition has had an increasingly strong focus on justice, and growing interest in green economy work, although many of its partners and much of its past campaign work have focused on campus sustainability, federal and international climate policy, and stopping dirty energy. Many of the leaders of Grand Aspirations came to sustainable community development work through engagement in the climate movement and work with EAC partners and the coalition as a whole regularly, including as volunteer leaders of local programs and campaigns and as members of national EAC committees. Several members of EAC have become closely involved with Grand Aspirations, including Global Exchange (our current fiscal sponsor and also coordinator of the Detroit Summer of Solutions), Green For All (project supporters and hosts of green economy fellows we work with), and the Sierra Student Coalition (see trainings below). Grand

Aspirations is an EAC member, which gives us a role in coalition-wide decision-making, access to funding and other supporting resources, and greater identification with the extensive youth base of the coalition.

Grand Aspirations is developing a core competency in a leadership development and mentorships method that fuses grassroots community organizing, social entrepreneurship techniques, and transformative leadership practices. We have extensive existing skills in this realm and are forming relationships with other sources of expertise to bring our methods to the absolute cutting edge. We formed our relationship with the Sierra Student Coalition (SSC), which has been a major player in training youth climate leaders for several years, to help anchor our base of leadership development experience while helping expand training capacity. We are complementing this training's experience in grassroots community organizing with transformative leadership curricula such as that developed by the Center for Whole Communities and Generation Waking Up. Social entrepreneurship thinking (training people to act in ways that generate more resources and further opportunities for engagement) and viral organizational strategy (actively empowering, replicating and diversifying efforts rather than attempting central control) complete our approach to training.

Finally, Grand Aspirations relies heavily on local partnerships - many of our local efforts are run by community groups, and those that are hosted within Grand Aspirations partner with many community organizations. As an organization, we provide a method, valuable and effective strategies, and a coordination and facilitation role for other local actors. We help local groups identify assets and opportunities to work together to build a green economy.

VI. Stories from the on the ground and in the community

This section describes real-world examples of all different kinds of partnerships past Summer of Solutions programs have formed. For more examples, check in with your Program Support Team person, other local teams, or visit the Solutionary Knowledge Bank.

LETS GO Chicago 2011: Partnership with United Church of Rogers Park

Our main partner is the United Church of Rogers Park United Methodist Church (UCRP). We partnered with UCRP to develop an environmental education wing of their after school and summer programs for youth.

We established this partnership through one of our Program Leaders who started the education program in 2010 by request of the church clergy. He had been working as a tutor in the after school program and was identified as a candidate to lead an environmental initiative. Summer of Solutions Chicago grew out of this initiative as a way to both support the summer gardening classes and also bring our vision beyond the church walls.

LETS GO Chicago brought a connection to a large network of solutionaries as well as a framework for involving youth older than 16 in the church's programs.

Our partner provided housing, office space, a small plot of land, and classrooms for our summer program.

Outcomes: With the help of Grand Aspirations, United Church of Rogers Park was able to take their summer gardening classes to a new level of organization and capacity. Our team provided the staff and physical resources to run the program and UCRP connected us with local youth to participate in it. The combination of vision and experience shared by our

organizations made it possible for big ideas to flourish.

One lesson we learned about partnerships from this experience is: no matter how much you know the partner organization, always write and sign of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Because we didn't have clearly defined boundaries this summer, there were a couple of instances where our partner expected more from us than we were able to provide.

Other teams should know: Churches are an incredible resource. I highly recommend finding congregations who share your vision and reaching out to them. Many churches and religious organizations have existing relationships with local families and institutions and will support work that aids the community. Because of our shared goals of community development, I am surprised there are not more SoS programs working in partnership with the religious community.

Summer of Solutions Twin Cities 2010-2011: Partnership with Sibley Bike Depot

Sibley Bike Depot is a community-based bike shop. They help people connect with bikes by providing free open shop hours, free classes on fixing and building bikes, and earn-a-bike programs where people can earn bikes by volunteers. We wanted to be involved in sustainable transit and we've always had a bike-heavy program. Sibley received our volunteer time, in which we accomplished things they had been putting off for months or years, and we received bikes for our participants to use during the summer.

We established this partnership by doing a lot of re-evaluating the partnership and assessing how to make it better, and clearer communication and expectations was one of the biggest things. We decided to make rough workplans and goals for our participants to use during the summer, which was super helpful.

Summer of Solutions brought in our time and some of our participants' existing knowledge, plus a passion for bikes and sustainable transit.

Our partner provided free loaner bikes to our participants for the summer. During 2011, we got a small grant to pay them to offer bike mechanic classes to interested participants, so our participants gained skills and they gained \$750.

Outcomes: During 2011, we conducted the first survey of their volunteers about their experience and satisfaction with Sibley's volunteer support systems. Because Sibley is a hugely volunteer based organization, this was really valuable for their ability to provide good service to the community. We also did a lot of doorknocking and outreach in the neighborhood surrounding the bike shop, which is largely African American and Hmong, two groups that aren't always represented in the people who come into the shop.

One lesson we learned about partnerships from this experience is: Communication and expectations are super important. Also, it was important to aim to do things at the scale of our capacity -- we had 5 projects with them in 2010 and 2 in 2011, but that scaling down was very intentional and led to us being more productive. Communication and knowing what everyone is expecting.

Other teams should know: Establishing communication and expectations are very important to developing strong partnerships.

Summer of Solutions Hartford 2011: Partnership with Hartford Areas Rally Together (HART)

HART is a well-respected organizing non-profit in Frog Hollow, Hartford. Their work focuses

on South End revitalization, and neighborhood leadership. They run programs for first time home owners, and parents navigating the educational system. They have been working with the Somali-Bantu since their arrival. We partnered because they have been working with the Somali-Bantu and they have been looking to start a community garden for a while. I thought they sounded cool so I requested a meeting. As it turns out, we had many of the same interests and our needs meshed.

Summer of Solutions brought labor to construct the garden and worked on creating stronger relationships between the Somali-Bantu and the mostly Puerto Rican neighborhood. We also linked people up to their events and programs. We also provided resource generation for soil, wood, seedlings, and water.

Our partner provided us with help navigating the Hartford non-profit community and hooked us up with the Somali-Bantu community. Quickly, they became our main resource for things like leadership training, contacts, space, political contacts, and media. They also provided a building for the summer camp, community contacts, and great advice.

Outcomes: A few of the members of our garden community are now participating in their larger South End improvement forums and organizing. We had access to far more resources than we would have otherwise. People trusted us more because we had a reputable partner.

One lesson we learned about partnerships from this experience is: in this case, the partnership was founded on individual relationships and continues that way. Trusting each other has been more valuable than an MOU.

Other teams should know: Be honest and if you can, be friends. In this case, HART trusting us opened up many opportunities.

Build-It-Up! West Virginia 2011: Partnership with The Whipple Company Store & Appalachian Heritage Educational Museum

The Whipple Company Store & Appalachian Heritage Educational Museum is a work in progress preserving WV cultural history, celebrating coal mining heritage through hands on education and outreach. Projects are to enhance the understanding the coal camps culture and WV culture. Whipple had the unusual opportunity to put our work in a historical perspective. The store was very educational, even for myself (and I thought I knew coal!) and was rich in lessons on community sensitivity.

We established this partnership by identifying potential partnerships, sending out a site application to potential partners, and then working with a Program Coordinator (identified/provided by the site) to develop projects.

BIU West Virginia provided/traded ~1,000 hours labor (cleaning, organizing, archiving, and archaeological work) for camping space (and a room to sleep in sometimes), cooking space (and sometimes food), and free history and ghost tours of the building.

Outcomes: Lots of (unexpected) personal growth. Myself and McKenzy have both considered working there in the future, and Whipple is my new favorite place on earth. As for Whipple's owner, Joy Lynn, "I had planned 2 years for the amount of work they accomplished in 1 week."

One lesson we learned about partnerships from this experience is: it's important to communicate with partners throughout the partnership, in order to balance expectations you have of each other.

Other teams should know: Partners that focus on education have a lot to bring to your group. And sometimes potential partners are hard to reach because they are overwhelmed and need your help!

Summer of Solutions Cleveland 2011: Partnership with City Fresh and Merrick House

City Fresh is a modified CSA (weekly) which distributes locally grown produce to inner-city Cleveland. City Fresh has around 20 "Fresh Stops" in different locations across the city of Cleveland, and serves to alleviate the food deserts in the city and deliver fresh / affordable produce to both low income residents and otherwise. We worked together on providing the people-power in order to foster the creation of a new "Fresh Stop" which served over 50 people on any given week.

We established this partnership by building on our previous work with them (Summer 2010) and the leadership we knew at the organization. With that relationship already in place, we decided to help them to address some major concerns they had within the organization, namely the volunteers at a new "Fresh Stop" which had previously failed because of lack of volunteers, and some web design work, which was needed to alleviate some public image issues. The relationship was formalized merely by being a reliable partner. We did the work that we were asked, and showed up where and when we needed to show up. This fostered a respect for our work ethic, and aided our partner organizations in reaching their goals. In this respect, we were featured on materials put out by the organization, and received a few media hits in result.

Summer of Solutions provided needed people-power that they did not have access to, and expertise to complete necessary tasks. Both of these needs were not in their funding, and so we volunteered to help at no cost to them.

Our partner provided materials and relationships which we would never have had access to, achieved media hits, and completed projects which were above and beyond what we would have hoped for.

Outcomes: The main outcome of our partnerships was the creation of a very successful program. To quantify, in sheer numbers they received another 50 residents to serve in an at risk neighborhood, as well as another successful "Fresh Stop" location (which is now self-sufficient).

One lesson we learned about partnerships from this experience is that consistency breeds confidence. The mere fact that we were willing to show up every week (City Fresh) or every day (Merrick House) provided them with the tools necessary to be successful. And from that, we gained a bit of structure to our programming, and leverage in our community which we wouldn't have otherwise had.

Other teams should know: Don't force it. Relationships should form organically, and if you are genuine and present at community meetings, and events, partnerships will come.

Full Circles Program in Raleigh 2011: Partnership with Interfaith Food Shuttle

Inter-Faith Food Shuttle pioneers innovative, transformative solutions designed to end hunger in our community. We partnered on a whole foods health curriculum. We provided the audience and materials, and they provided the instruction and curriculum.

We established this partnership by meeting with IFFS in March of 2011 and discussing various opportunities for partnership, although for 2011, the only formal partnership we created was with regard to the cooking curriculum. Other things we discussed, which are still possibilities for the future, are working with IFFS to provide lunches for campers and

providing applicants for their Young Farmer Training Program.

Full Circles provided youthful enthusiasm and an audience for their curriculum.

Our partner provided a well-researched nutrition curriculum that emphasized the importance of whole foods.

Outcomes: Yummy camp classes focused on nutrition!

One lesson we learned about partnerships from this experience is that it's hard to maximize the potential of a partnership immediately.

Other teams should know: Established organizations often want to see how serious you are and how much capacity you actually have before committing resources. This is totally normal and don't feel discouraged if it happens.

VII. Memorandum of Understanding Template

You only need to write a formal memorandum of understanding and pass it through Grand Aspirations nationally when you formalize a partnership, though you may find other instances where this general format is useful. This section describes when those formal partnership guidelines kick in and what to do in that case.

Formal partnership and development of an MOU means:

- 1.) Anything that requires us (Grand Aspirations) to become official members.
- 2.) Any collaboration that involves an exchange of money to or from Grand Aspirations
- 3.) Any partnership that includes an exchange of materials
 - a. Any partnership where GA is a recipient of another organization's materials
 - b. Any partnership where GA releases its own materials to another organization
- 4.) Any partnership that creates an expectation of annual participation by GA

Once it becomes clear you would like to establish a formal partnership with a individual, organization, or other entity you should:

1. Contact the Partnerships team with a proposal for this partnership. The proposal should include:

- a. A brief summary of what the organization is, what it does, and why Grand Aspirations should consider partnering.
- b. A draft memorandum of understanding describing the terms of the partnership (see below):
 - a. if membership into a coalition, what does membership entail?
 - b. if collaboration with an organization, entity, or individual, what are your expectations of what is to come from this collaboration?
- c. Perceived pros and cons of joining versus not joining.
**It is up to the Partnerships team to determine whether your proposal is sufficient for submission to the Advisory Council. This may mean writing several drafts.*

2. Once the proposal is finalized, The Partnerships Team will submit it to the Advisory Council along with any other materials they/you feel will be beneficial

or useful to the AC's understanding of this partnership.

3. If approved, Advisory Council sends approval notice/blurb to Program Support newsletter writer.

The Template for what to include in a Memorandum of Understanding is below.

OUTLINE FOR A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between:

and

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding agree to the following

Article 1 : Purpose and Scope

- Describe the situation of the parties involved and how they relate to each other.
- What services does each party contribute to the deal before, during and after the arrangement.

Article 2 : Conditions and Arrangements

- List:
 - Any restrictions to either party
 - Any disclaimer statements
 - Any privacy statements (such as revealing the sales amount, but not information about the customers)
- Identify:
 - What parts of this arrangement are open to change or negotiation and how.
 - What aspects of the arrangement should require formal notification and how.
 - How disputes will be settled.
- Finances:
 - Who handles the money and how?
 - How people are paid (who pays who, by what method, in what currency, deposited where).
 - When people are paid (the same day every month, immediately after the transaction).
 - How much people are paid (flat fee, a percentage of the sale, if so, does this include tax, a percentage of the profit and if so, what are the applicable costs and how much are they, on all customers, on certain customers and if so, how is sales are tracked and reported).

- How long people are paid (for the initial sale of a customer, for the lifetime of the customer's business, for the duration of the contract, for 6 months after the contract ends).

Article 3: Timing

- When does the agreement start (on a certain date, during a limited event, as soon as a sale occurs)?
- How long does it last (for a certain period, indefinite until someone ends, at the end of an event)?
- Is there any probationary or trial period?
- Are there any set dates to review activity, performance, or satisfaction with the arrangement?

Article 4 : Future cooperation

- What happens at the end of or after the agreement?
- How is the agreement terminated (by one or both parties, under what circumstances, how is the end carried out.)?

The present Memorandum of Understanding describes the general conditions and arrangements for future cooperation between the parties. It is not legally binding on the parties. The exact terms and conditions of this future cooperation will be negotiated in due course and laid down in a contract, should circumstances permit.

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

For and on behalf of: _____ For and on behalf of: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____