Session 5: Equitable Approaches to Safe Routes to School Programs

10th Annual Silicon Valley Bike Summit Aug 6 & 7, 2020
Creative, Emotional, & Empowering Youth Engagement

James Rojas, Place It
Creative, Emotional, & Empowering Youth Engagement

Designing a safe street
Hands-On Approach

• 50-60 minutes
• Easy to facilitate (Objects & Prompts)
• Helps student understand their relationship to the built environment & each other!

Humanize Mobility
Objects help expand thinking
Ask a simple prompt?

Build your first mobility experience (2-12 grade)

Or

What do you like to do in the City (k-2 grade)
Unlock personal knowledge through their senses, memories, and aspirations

Discover their attachment to the Environment

Why their voice matters

Participants realize they’re the experts of their environment!
Youth: What do you like to do in the City?
1 minute to present
Transform ideas, thoughts, and emotions into negotiable realities.

Biking to work through a forest.
Realization: “I didn’t know what I knew until I built it.”

Project: Pedestrian Safety, Create your ideal Street
Partners: LA Streets Blog
Location: Boyle Heights
Collaborate

• Learn how our ideas impact each other!
• Experience the importance of diversity (age, gender, race,)
• Nurture Community

There are no right or wrong answers, only how ideas impact each other to create solutions!
Build your ideal walk to school
Team presentation for 1-2 minutes
Building Together
What Youth Say!

- It's Fun, Creative, and Hard
- You have to work as a team
- You have to use different peoples ideas
- There are different ways to solve a problem
- You need a vision to plan a city
- It’s starts out over there and ends up here
- Why can’t the city I live in look like the city I Imagine?
Outcomes

• Use more of brain capacity
• Critical Thinking
• Interpersonal Skills
• Empathy
• Civic Literacy
PLACE IT!
INTERACTIVE PLANNING

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Amplifying youth voices in SRTS

Joelle Alley, Earth Team
AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES IN SRTS

Best Practices from Earth Team’s Sustainable Youth Internship Program
Established in 1994, Earth Team is committed to delivering quality service-learning projects by partnering with the strongest educational, environmental, and government organizations.

Earth Team students **think globally** by using the vast amount of information offered, **connect regionally** by working with students from other communities, and **act locally** in community-based projects.
EARTH TEAM EMPOWERS URBAN YOUTH TO BECOME LIFELONG ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND THE BUILDING OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
Program Planning

- Collect student reflections at the end of each year to assess strengths and weaknesses
- Invite current students or alumni to planning meetings
- Share draft documents with youth volunteers who can review for content, readability, and applicability
- Build in flexibility: this will allow for adaptations as students voice new ideas or seek new directions for exploration
Team Building

- Emphasize social-emotional learning and team development early in the year
- Focus on building trust in relationships between students and mentors
- Continue to spend time LISTENING to youth both about their project and their lives
- If you are able to create a safe and brave space for youth they are more likely to stay engaged and contribute honestly and vulnerably
Asking Questions

- Take advantage of scientific processes to teach critical thinking and increase buy-in

- Ask questions → Make hypotheses → Collect data → Draw conclusions → Start again!
  - This process encourages students to direct projects themselves
  - Make sure projects are place-based so students have a connection with the work
Youth-Led Outreach

- Develop outreach and engagement skills early on through fun games and activities
- Public speaking game: Ask students to list all the words they think should not be used during professional and public speaking and write them on the board. Then, take turns assigning students funny, random subjects and ask them to speak about these topics in front of the team for 1-2 minutes without taking any time to prepare. Tally all the times they use the words on the board, winner gets a prize!
- Encourage creative approaches to outreach like videos, rewritten song lyrics, or board games
- Amplifying youth voice in outreach efforts helps students develop critical skills but it also makes programs more effective
  - Young people have unique perspectives on issues of the environment, climate change, and sustainable transportation
  - They are the target audience and therefore understand how best to reach their peers
  - They are often the ones relying on alternative transportation to get to and from school, and as a result are very familiar with flaws and strengths
  - It is more work, but developing engagement strategies at the school and neighborhood level ensures culturally relevant and effective outreach
Amplifying Youth Voice

- Through involving youth in program planning, fostering social-emotional and public speaking skills, building investment through direct scientific processes, and allowing for youth led outreach, students will leave your program with an incredible skillset.

- Celebrate this skillset by setting up presentations to city council members, school boards, project partners and more.

- Young people will gain public speaking experience and will be validated as experts on SRTS and local decision makers will gain new insight into critical issues.
Covid 19 Considerations

- All meetings switched to Zoom on March 17th
- We spent even more time than usual prioritizing social-emotional well being and setting aside time for students just to connect with peers and mentors
- Interns reflected that this space was a unique opportunity for them to maintain relationships when they otherwise felt isolated
- "Earth Team virtual meetings have been beneficial in the way that they keep enriching our knowledge about the earth, and they are also motivating because every week we meet and we get to see and talk to each other during these difficult times." Maria, Earth Team intern
Obstacles to access SRTS information

Jose Palma, City of Palo Alto
Lost in Translation

Obstacles to Accessing Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Information
Jose Palma – Palo Alto SRTS Coordinator

August 6th, 2020

www.cityofpaloalto.org/saferoutes
SRTS in Palo Alto | What Makes Us Unique?

• Two full-time SRTS coordinators

• Current Partnership – adding youth soon

• City/School Transportation Safety Committee (CSTSC)

• Currently working on a SRTS Equity Action Plan

www.cityofpaloalto.org/saferoutes
PAUSD/Palo Alto Demographics

Palo Alto HUR/SES populations
- ESL (English as Second Language) Data
- Low-Income Data

VTP (Voluntary Transfer Program)
- Is an outcome of a desegregation case in 1985

VTP Relationship with the City and SRTS Program
- Walk and Roll Map for EPA

PAUSD Student and Family Engagement Specialist (SaFe) Program
- Working together with SRTS team

www.cityofpaloalto.org/saferoutes
Translating is Not Enough (Part 1)

- Some families have low literacy skills
- “Nodding Head” does not indicate comprehension
- Build rapport

- Different Spanish speaking countries have different words for transportation terms and infrastructure
- The importance of graphics and videos
Translating is Not Enough (Part 2)

- SIP – Challenges and Opportunities
  - *Physical Material to Families*
    - Are flyers enough?
  - *Online Material for Families*
    - Provisional of online access and lack of online literacy
      - How do you connect online?
      - How do you find what you need?
  - *Preventing Chronic Diseases*
    - Increasing physical activity reduced chronic diseases
    - Increases chances of surviving COVID if exposed

Credit: San Mateo County Office of Education/Alta Planning + Design
Importance of Building Relationships

How to build better relationships with these communities

1. Material and vocabulary should be appropriate
2. Outreach program and non-profits
3. Ask for a recap
4. Learning by doing

Knowledge is power

If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.
– Albert Einstein
Interview with Christian Muñoz, SaFE Representative

1. What is the best way to reach out to families who have limited English skills during SIP? Or who might not have access to online resources?

2. How can practitioners in the transportation field address the cultural bias towards driving? Is buying a car a status symbol of success?

3. Access to bicycles can be a barrier to families who would like to bike to school. What other barriers to walking and biking to school are there for HUR/SES populations?
Thank you!
Health and Equity in Practice: A Data Driven Approach to Equity in Safe Routes to School Programming

Vanessa Castro, San Mateo County Office of Education
Health and Equity in Practice: A Data Driven Approach to Equity in Safe Routes to School Programming

Vanessa Castro, Safe Routes to School Project Specialist
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30% or more San Mateo County residents live below 200% Federal Poverty Level ($48,500/family of 4)
Office of Traffic Safety Funding
• Highest rate of crashes in the county within .50 miles of a public school
• 68.1% of students are eligible for Free/Reduced lunch
• 63.6% of students are English Language Learners
• Located in Top of the Hill district and is intersected by major corridors. Many families have to cross 6 lanes to get to school
• Limited access to parks
Partnerships
Walk Audit
Second Harvest Food Bank
What’s Next?

- WW now has turf lawn on campus that is open on the weekends for recreational use
- Awarded infrastructure funding to create a bike path on campus
Thank you!

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