

Boys and Girls Club Project Review

While working with the Boys and Girls Club of Walker County, my team's objective was to find how we could raise and retain the attendance of the free adult education classes. As my team looked over the services provided by the Boys and Girls Club, we saw how useful these free adult education classes could be to the community. We listened to the directors talk about the adult education classes, and their biggest concern was that the classes were not being filled to the capacity that their funding provided for. My team and I knew we wanted to make these classes grow tremendously in attendance, so the Texas Workforce Commission, who provided the funds for these classes, did not feel the need to cut funding from this program. Although some of our recommendations are not possible at the moment, such as transportation options and childcare, we still included them in our report to let the Club know these methods should be something to work on with help from other public services.

When researching Walker County, we found through American Fact finder that roughly 16.4% of Walker County did not have a high school level education. Knowing this we knew these classes were very important to help those few who do not have a high school degree and help them raise their income levels. We believe with our work that we will increase class sizes at the Boys and Girls Club of Walker County by roughly 40%, increasing the class sizes by about 42 people. First, we created a visual aid to promote these classes; this visual aid is eye catching with popping colors to catch the attention of a passerby. It also includes all of the basic information of the classes, so that the reader can understand everything without having to search further (which typically does not happen in busy, adult lives). Next, we discussed options that the Club can include in their program to generate will and drive among the students. These options

include encouraging the teachers get greater detail about the students' lives and using those details to build relationships and to set personal goals with the students' help. Setting these goals will help the teacher keep each student accountable and motivate them to reach each goal within a timeline they have set for themselves. Physically writing these goals down will help the students see what they have to do in order to reach the end goal of graduation, promotions, or passing the citizenship test.

Although I have been on several teams, I do not prefer teams in a classroom setting due to the grading scale that is involved. Usually in a classroom team there is one or two people that put in ninety percent of the work, and the other ten is only done with other members when being forced to spend time on the project in class. I was lucky enough to have teammates who felt as passionate about this research project as much as I did. I believe that this also helps with the final outcome of any project due to the energy of the team being focused on the outcome of the project, rather than spending time on being upset at their team members.

Helping the community has always been a regular part of my life. Community service has been required of me from a young age, and I have even used my dancing background to entertain different crowds, such as nursing home residents, as a service of goodwill. When learning further details about the client we would be working with, I was joyful that our research would be put to use in the coming years instead of going to the desk of a teacher and receiving a grade to end the project. My team and I felt a greater connection with this project because of these same reasons and made us put more effort into the project to actually think outside of the box for the best answers. Knowing that what we were doing would physically help the community of Walker County and the surrounding areas made us want to do better for the people who would better their lives through these educational classes. Personally, this project meant a lot to me because I

know how many people struggle from not being able to take care of themselves or their families financially, and how a simple high school degree, trade certificate, or citizenship card may change their entire life. Overall, I believe this project should happen in many more classes at SHSU, and I believe that this project shows the many participants the reasons why we are learning certain things in our classes.