



Project: The Sweet Potato Project West Fresno Health Care Coalition

"No race can prosper till it learns there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem."

—Booker T. Washington

LOCATION

Fresno County, CA

TARGET POPULATION

- African American Youth
- Ages 12-16
- Cohort of 35 enrolled

CONTACTS

Yolanda Randles
Executive Director
Phone: (559) 621-2967
yrandles@wfresnofrc.org

Patrick Hamilton
Project Assistant
Phone: (559) 621-2967
phamilton@wfresnofrc.org

SUCCESS STORIES

Ya'J, 12-year-old male (Communication)—I enjoy the Sweet Potato Club because of the communication we have amongst each other. The program has helped me with leadership. I remember playing games that taught me to be a leader in order to win. For example, the other team was taunting me and I started to get upset, I remembered a quote that Patrick often said in the program: "Don't take a long walk off a short bridge," which means to be strong and don't be a follower.

Joy, 12-year-old female (Leadership & Entrepreneurship)—I have used some of the things I learned in the program in my everyday life. I have learned about leadership and what it takes to be a good leader. One of my favorite parts of the program was learning what it takes to be an entrepreneur. We learned those qualities at Fresno State during the summer. I like the program because of the different topics and games we have played that will help us in our everyday lives and in our future.

Rayshad, 13-year-old male (Communication)—I enjoy the Sweet Potato Club because of the activities we did. They made me think before I react and work as a team. We learned a game with a chess board called make your best move your next move. It made me pay more attention to each move. It also related to the choices we make in life.

Kiyanna, 14-year-old female (Self-Esteem)—Some of the things that I learned were how to harvest Sweet Potatoes, how to work with others, and leadership skills. I feel that this program has affected my life in a good way. It has helped me focus on important things and making good choices. I am still learning things and using the skills we have been taught everyday. If I wasn't in the program I would probably be doing something that is not beneficial to me.

Noah, 13-year-old male (Self-Esteem)—The Sweet Potato Project helps our community because kids get caught up in the wrong things at a young age. So this can be an outlet to them so they would hopefully do the right things and lean toward a better future for themselves.



OVERVIEW

The Sweet Potato program at the West Fresno Family Resource Center (WFFRC) is a prevention program that aims to prevent and/or reduce school drop-out, gang involvement, and substance use initiation for African America youth ages 12-15 by decreasing internalized oppression, hopelessness, and low collective efficacy, while increasing engagement in collective economic activity, college intentions, mentoring, and leadership development.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Team Building



Juneteenth 2019



Healing Through Mosaic Art



Plant Day



Pictured with Council Member Miguel Arias at Saint Rest Farmers Market Plaza



Visit with Dr. Joseph Castro, President CSUF-Fresno



Volunteered at 17th Annual Back to School Health Fair



Youth Attend Video Game Training



Wells Fargo Team Build Farm Stand



APPROACH

Phase 1:

April—The Sweet Potato Club will begin with team building, leadership and agricultural Education. Youth will meet at WFFRC Monday's & Friday's from 5p,-7pm.

May—Youth will plant sweet potato slips on two acres of land.

June—Youth will begin research on Sweet Potato Product and food preparation training and visit sweet potato site every other Saturday.

July—Youth will participate in a 5-week entrepreneurial and business skills training at California State University, Fresno, Lyles School of Business. Youth will create a business plan and marketing strategy for turning sweet potatoes into a product that can be sold.

August—Teams will participate in "Pitch Day" at Fresno State to highlight product and business plans.



TODAY'S HARVEST CHANGING TOMORROW'S FUTURE

Phase 2:

September—Sweet Potato Harvest. Youth will attend and be a vendor at the Sweet Potato Festival in Livingston, California. Youth will plan and organize Sweet Potato Expo in Fresno, California.

October/November—Youth will use business skills to sell sweet potatoes and sweet potato products.

December—The program concludes with an end of year celebration.

OUR STORIES (QUALITATIVE DATA)

Hip-Hop Musical Rap Lyrics In Progress

Allison: I think about my life wow
What happened to the kids down the street
Not talking just wondering on
My life is great and I don't want it to end

Paige: Some people clownin' in life with no direction at all.
I keep my mind on what's right and isolate them all
People gone get in the way and say
Some silly stuff, but words don't hurt I keep my head up

Kalon's: Okay I'm different, and that's how I want it to be.
They say I'm ugly, but that has no effect on me. I know I'm intelligent and I'm not perfect
But that's just how I want it to be

Payton: I'm workin' hard every day, I'm working hard every day.
I'ma be workin' hard to get good grades
Some people say that I'm lazy, But I go away with them hating,
People say this, People say this, But all they do is talk trash

Darius: They all want to categorize us like we all went to public schools,
But if we all went to school why they be acting like these guns are fools,
Sometimes to motivate myself I look in the mirror,
But then thoughts come as if I wasn't here

Taylor: I'm different from these kids shooting all the guns,
They say I'm not smart but they are really the dumb ones,
They're trying to ride my way watching ways without my tide
They're trying to kill my shine but I'm one of a kind

FUTURE PLANS: SUSTAINABILITY & ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

