

Urban Agriculture and Food Security Initiative---Community Gardens & Community Meals Initiative

Established through the TAGOS (Tailoring Academics to Guide Our Students) Leadership Academy

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Introduction: With the closure of General Motors and related businesses in Janesville and Rock County, our community members are facing serious economic challenges. The unemployment rate in Janesville remains one of the highest in the state at 12.8%*. Nearly 6,000 workers have been displaced by these closures, impacting all aspects of community life. Families and children are struggling with issues related to availability of food, and adequate and quality nutrition. Acquisition of real-life job skills for both students as future workers and currently displaced workers is urgently needed. Poverty becomes a self-sustaining cycle, as students with inadequate nutrition struggle with lower achievement, lower achievement leads to a lack of job skills and decreased employability, and obesity causes higher medical costs related to health issues. Both Blackhawk Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Rock County are experiencing high enrollments, and many popular career programs have waiting lists.

TAGOS Leadership Academy in Janesville serves students in grades 7 through 12 who come from diverse economic backgrounds. Many of our students and families have been strongly impacted by the economic crisis facing our community. TAGOS offers a range of services to assist families, including onsite counseling. TAGOS focuses on service learning and project based learning activities, putting TAGOS in a unique position to positively impact lives of students and families, as well as the larger Janesville community.

Project Goals:

In 2009, TAGOS Leadership Academy received funding from the Sprint Foundation and donations from Hendricks Development Group to begin a greenhouse program on campus. Through this program we have been able to add fresh produce to our students' lunch program while teaching them valuable nutrition and gardening skills. TAGOS seeks to expand this program to include larger outdoor gardens and a fruit tree orchard on the TAGOS campus, and in the future, facilitate the creation of additional community gardens throughout the city of Janesville. There are many areas where a community garden, created by our students and maintained by student and community volunteers, will be a valuable asset to the larger community, providing adequate quality nutrition for families while building a strong sense of community. As a part of a larger health and nutrition component, TAGOS will add a commercial kitchen and bakery to the campus. These additions will serve a number of purposes within the school and community. TAGOS will partner with Blackhawk Technical College and existing School District of

Janesville programs to begin a formal culinary arts program within the school. This program will be located on the second floor of the current TAGOS building and will become an extension of the existing BTC program. BTC culinary arts students will learn alongside TAGOS students. The commercial kitchen will provide a staging area for production of prepackaged meals which will be made available to TAGOS and community families for purchase at a low price, providing key nutrition to families and students at an economic price.

Partnerships:

TAGOS Leadership Academy will partner with the following organizations to implement an urban gardening program, a culinary arts program, and a community meal program within the TAGOS campus and the Janesville community: Blackhawk Technical College, Hendricks Development Group, Panoramic, Soergs Meats, Meals on Wheels, City of Janesville, Rotary Club, Rotary Gardens, Master Gardeners, Kiwanis, community service organizations, and others as appropriate.

Goals:

- Provide real-life job skills training for TAGOS students and displaced community members through a culinary arts program.
- Address health and nutrition needs of TAGOS students and Janesville families by providing fresh nutritious meals.
- Provide educational seminars and workshops in job skills, health and nutrition, and finance to TAGOS students, families and the community.
- Address economic concerns of area families by providing prepackaged meals at an affordable price.
- Promote a sense of community pride through establishment of community gardens on the TAGOS campus and throughout Janesville.
- Provide educational outreach to displaced workers by offering evening reading, math, and GED preparation programs.

Timeline:

In year one of this program, we envision creating a large outdoor garden and orchard to supplement the existing greenhouse. Produce grown on campus will be used to supplement our students' lunch program and to create prepackaged meals which will be for sale at low cost to student and community families. An on-site commercial kitchen and bakery would be the stage for this process. Through partnerships with Blackhawk Technical College and current School District of Janesville culinary arts programs, TAGOS would provide an additional space within the community to teach real-life job skills to students and community members alike. By the end of year one, TAGOS will host a culinary arts program for students and community members, provide prepackaged meals at a low cost to families, and host nutritional seminars for the community. We envision offering monthly community cooking experiences, where families are provided materials to create a meal, learn how to prepare it, and are able to take their prepared meals home with them.

During year two, TAGOS will expand the existing garden program into the community, partnering with the City of Janesville, community service groups, Rotary Gardens and the local Master Gardeners

program to begin a number of community gardens within the city, including the Fourth Ward and low income neighborhoods. The TAGOS greenhouse will raise starter plants for all gardens. TAGOS will provide seminars on how to set up a garden, and work with the City of Janesville on a compost site for high quality soil. Student volunteerism will be a key component of the project as students will plant each spring, and harvest produce in the fall. Canning and baking will be included in the culinary arts program, and those products will become part of the food used for prepackages meals. TAGOS will partner with Panoramic for custom packaging for meals, and with Soergs for organic, quality meats. Year two will see our meals program expand to include catering for community organizations as a way to publicize and sustain the program.

By year three, the community garden/meals program will be self-sustaining.

Budget: In order to begin such an undertaking, TAGOS requests funding for the following items:

Community Gardens / Community Meals TAGOS Leadership Academy	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Kitchen Manager	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
.5 FTE Family and Consumer Education Teacher	\$ 29,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 31,000.00
Build out of 9050 sq ft.	\$500,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Rent (includes all expenses and utilities)	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 43,260.00	\$ 43,658.00
Yearly Operation Budget (seeds, supplies, food)	\$100,000.00	\$110,000.00	\$120,000.00
Maintenance / Custodial	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 34,000.00
Marketing	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Logo and Brand Identification	\$ 6000.00	0	0
Kitchen Equipment Purchases	\$200,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Greenhouses (purchase, installation, electrical, plumbing)	\$ 30,000.00	0	0
Construction Materials for Community Gardens (Yr 1- 6 gardens, year 2- 12 gardens, year 3 – up to 24 gardens)	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Bakery Buildout	\$ 80,000.00		
Utility Truck	\$ 40,000.00		
Covered Trailer with logo	\$ 10,000.00	0	0
Mini-bus (student/worker transportation to various sites)	\$ 75,000.00		
Transportation maintenance and insurance	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 16,000.00
	\$1,214,000.00	\$360,260.00	\$349,658.00
		3 year total	\$1,923,918.00

Project Evaluation:

Success of the program will be evaluated by the following measures:

- Number of students and community members participating in the culinary arts program
- Number of families impacted by the Meals program
- Number of partnerships created by the program
- Number of community seminars/events held at TAGOS and within the community

Summary:

As part of the larger Janesville community, TAGOS Leadership Academy seeks to address the economic and nutritional needs of our community by providing a real-life job skills opportunity to our students and displaced workers within the community, establish a sense of community pride by beginning urban gardens within the city, and address nutritional and economic needs within the community by providing prepackaged meals at a low cost to families.

**Unemployment rate as of March 2010, source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,
http://www.bls.gov/eaq/eaq.wi_janesville_msa.htm*