

PUMPS!: GSP 2018 Seed Funding Competition by Karla

Our GSP, "Pumps!" will provide access to school materials to homeless students all throughout Los Angeles in pursuit of expanding their willingness to become educated.

What problem does your GSP seek to address and what community are you trying to serve?

Money, drugs, intimidation, fear, and lack of resources are few of the many barriers that students in South LA face and the only way to get out of the "ghetto" seems to be by pursuing a higher education for oneself. Our GSP addresses the lack of encouragement that many homeless students have faced on the daily basis which can actually get them to rise out of poverty.

Why do I believe that it is important to address the problem I am trying to solve?

When I was in 9th grade, one of my classmates attended school everyday the first 3 months and after, began to become absent various times a week. Our teacher would ask us to have the necessary materials and out and ready to be used, however, the lack of money in my classmates household become a barrier as she did not have the money to purchase the necessary materials needed to become educated, so she stopped attending school. Immediately my teachers became aware of the problem and were able to provide her with what was needed.

However, there are many students in Los Angeles who do not have this support and to me, providing school materials to students who are unable to purchase them for themselves is essential as it will only motivate them to continue showing up to school and eventually, graduate.

What is my proposed solution (GSP)?

Through hosting a school material drive, "PUMPS" has already provided access to school materials to 10 homeless students at Animo Jackie Robinson. However, to continue this project and serve those students surrounding our community, my group and I will be hosting our very first Spring Fling at school. Ticket prices are as low as \$4 (food, snacks, etc. will be sold separately). With the money raised, our project will buy wholesale backpacks, pencils, notebooks, crayons, etc. to go inside. Along with this, we will save some of the money to buy snacks to continue to fundraise for school materials.

How is my project uniquely situated to improve the lives of my target community?

Due to being involved in various homelessness clubs and having received feedback from homeless, I know that food and showers aren't enough to support the homeless community. Not only this, but homeless are often dehumanized and isolated, so my project's purpose is to humanize and encourage homeless students to expand their education. To me, it seems that knowledge is power and power will enable them to realize that they can do what they wish in this world. By having school materials readily available to homeless students, students will realize that they have many materials needed to become educated and improve their lives for themselves.

Who are my collaborators and what roles do they play in supporting my GSP?

Jasmin Gonzalez and the Feed the Need club at my high school have had a great impact on this project. Jasmin Gonzalez, has served the role as my mentor for the past 7 months or so. She has been my to-go to person as she has helped with the organizing of our school material drive, Spring Fling, and uniting our community to empathize and give back to those in need. Nevertheless, the Feed the Need club has been of great help with promoting publicity of all our events and giving advice of what could be most successful or not. Not only this, but also donating school materials and having helping hands whenever in need.

Lastly, we have also partnered with 2 Senior Homelessness Action Projects which have agreed to sell food and snacks at the Spring Fling in order to continue supporting our cause.

What is my vision for my project? How do I define success? How do I plan to support a sustainable venture?

Since last year, the high school graduation rate has only increased by 5 percentage points. My vision for this project is to make many in my community aware that this is actually a huge and important issue in Los Angeles as I want many more students to graduate and become whoever they want. After making many aware, together, we will give back to those in need and support our students with necessary materials to motivate them to continue their studies. The long-term goal for this project is to expand this idea to other schools and maybe even cities.

Success will be evident when my group and I have noticed that many in our community have become much more empathetic and have continued this project by their lonesome. Not only that, but once my heart feels fulfilled knowing that we have attempted to better the students' lives, I'll know I have been successful.

My group and I have created an annual school material drive at Animo Jackie Robinson. These drives will now take place at the end of our school year (April-May) to prepare backpacks for the homeless students' use in the following school year (August). Not only this, but my group and I will utilize some of the money raised about \$100 or so to continue fundraising money that can be donated to different organizations in Los Angeles that provide school materials to students.

