

New York Community Trust Grant - DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

XYZ is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the belief that there is much to gain from an investment in ignored, untapped inner-city youth talent. This type of investment will not only impact the lives of the individuals it aims to serve but also provides a profound impact on the prevailing American social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and moral attitudes and assumptions of these children at-risk. We believe that children need to channel their energy positively or else they will direct it in less productive ways. Without a proper athletic outlet and sufficient academic support, they increase their chances of becoming self-destructive and harmful to society. However, a positive investment into the lives of at-risk youth will strengthen their purpose and self-worth, which are often the ingredients for success.

Setting the foundation for kids to acquire successful life skills and habits is the primary objective of our organization. Founded in **(year)** by **(founder name(s))** in New York City, **XYZ** was conceived and organized to address the social, athletic and educational needs of inner-city children that are at-risk of falling behind and making unhealthy life choices. Their program recruits at-risk children at the local area schools in Harlem who showed a history of having high energy and disruptive behavior in the classroom. The program goals of **XYZ** are to:

1. To serve youths of various talents and use the activity of wrestling training to teach life skills;
2. To offer an Olympic style wrestling training program for an at-risk male population of kids that lack having a stable home or school life, are not engaged socio-academically, and are not regularly involved in other activities;
3. To provide educational, recreational, cultural, health and lifelong learning skills and opportunities for at-risk youth in New York City;
4. To offer tutoring services and educational advancement opportunities for children in New York City who are considered to be at-risk of being left behind.

The organization's efforts, implemented by a well-trained staff, provide many opportunities for the growth and expansion of **XYZ's** administrative and overall program operations. This will help increase the number of inner-city youths who will learn positive skills such as how to succeed in life by making healthy decisions and being goal-oriented. With its goals of supporting the development of social skills, athletic, educational and personal growth, **XYZ** provides many under-served youth in New York City with an opportunity to learn how to improve their potential for success in life.

Recognizing the needs that exist, the organization's current vision is to improve and expand its program and administrative operations as well as hiring more staff in order to continue our growth and capabilities to serve at-risk youth in New York City.

XYZ's goals are accomplished by implementation of stimulating activities and materials that are organized around a well-developed prospectus. Ongoing evaluation assures progress and cost-effectiveness. Fund-raising is a continuous, ongoing effort. We are requesting (\$ amount to be determined). This funding will be used for costs related to program expenses.

AGENCY INFORMATION

MISSION:

XYZ is a 501 (c)(3) grassroots community organization dedicated to improving the educational, social, behavioral and athletic growth of at-risk youth in New York City.

OVERALL GOALS

1. To serve youths of various talents and use the activity of wrestling training to teach life skills;
2. To offer an Olympic style wrestling training program for an at-risk male population of kids that lack having a stable home or school life, are not engaged socio-academically, and are not regularly involved in other activities;
3. To provide educational, recreational, cultural, health and lifelong learning skills and opportunities for at-risk youth in New York City;
4. To offer tutoring services and educational advancement opportunities for children in New York City who are considered to be at-risk of being left behind.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

1. To provide eight six-week sessions (60 new students each session and they are encouraged to reenroll for subsequent sessions) throughout the year that offers Olympic style wrestling training, after-school tutoring, individual mentoring and field trips free of charge to New York City youth that are at risk of being left behind and making unhealthy life choices.
2. To record on video all facets of our program in order to visually document the athletic and personal progress of the inner-city youth's involved.
3. To teach these kids how to experience a wrestler's lifestyle in an urban setting while capturing their struggles and achievements on camera.
4. To offer at-risk youth in New York City everything they need to succeed in life by building self-discipline and teaching them how to work hard toward the fulfillment of their dreams.

HISTORY:

XYZ was formed by (founder names) in 2007 when they first launched a preliminary wrestling and mentorship program in the area of Harlem that falls within a 5-mile radius of the Jackie Robinson Parks Facility located at 85 Bradhurst Avenue. In the fall of 2007 they launched the first test site at that Parks Facility, conducting wrestling practice open to all school-aged youth in the surrounding area. The results from this preliminary test proved successful and provided significant data and information throughout the school

year that would prove useful in setting up XYZ's primary program and operations on a larger scale.

After a year of testing its prototype-wrestling program, XYZ officially began the complete after-school program at the same Jackie Robinson Parks Facility on a year-round basis. This included recruiting at-risk youth at the local area schools in Harlem who had a history of showing high energy and disruptive behavior in the classroom. Once they entered the facility they would start off with a an academic tutoring session to go over their homework and courses of study at school and then a snack prior to warming up and wrestle.

Since its inception, XYZ has gained a variety of donations from corporations, private individuals and partnering organizations. *(name of Organization)* has donated two 40'x40' wrestling mats which are valued at \$6,500. These enable our recruits to practice the art of Olympic wrestling. We constantly have fundraising drives from corporate donors and vendors to provide athletic clothing and running shoes, which would be free of charge to our program participants. HSBC Bank, Whole Foods, Trader Joes, Banana Distributors of New York Inc., C-Town and Vita Coco have also provided food and other type of corporate donations to XYZ that are ongoing.

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED & FUNDING PROGRAMS:

New York City is facing a crisis. According to the New York City Department of Education, the graduation rates for the New York public school system for June 2011 is a dismal 65.1%, while only 35% of those graduated were deemed prepared for college. The state defines college readiness achieving a score of 80 or better on the state math Regents exam and 75% or better on the English Regents Exam. Black and Hispanic students make up about 70% of the city's 1.1 million school children and only 61% and 58% respectively graduated compared with a graduation rate of 78% for white students and 82% for Asian students. However, the lower graduation rates raises concern that there will be fewer qualified professionals educated by the New York City Department of Education to replace the aging baby-boomer population.

The city's disconnected young people, who are deemed as being at-risk youth, comprise a local, untapped resource. There can be tremendous positive effects on the city's economic and cultural health if an organization such as XYZ is able to reach these children in time and help them utilize our educational and life building programs. We are requesting *(\$ amount to be determined)*. This funding will be used for costs related to program expenses and enable us to better serve the needs of the children.

1.) RECRUITING AT-RISK CHILDREN FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS:

XYZ recruits at-risk children at the local area schools in Harlem who show a history of having high energy and disruptive behavior in the classroom. Our recruiting efforts are based on the belief that there is much to gain from an investment in ignored, untapped inner-city talent. We primarily reach out to an at-risk male population of kids that do not

have a stable home or school life, are not engaged socio-academically, and are not regularly involved in other activities. These kids need to channel their energy positively or else it is directed in less productive ways. Without a proper athletic outlet and academic support, they will become self-destructive and harmful to society.

2.) TUTORING SERVICES: Tutoring is the entry point for any youth to be a part of our complete program, which is a series of eight six-week periods. We begin our recruiting process by selecting kids and offering them approximately two after-school tutoring sessions at their school with XYZ program director, who uses these sessions to screen the candidates for acceptance into the first six-week period. In these preliminary sessions, we will simply use each student's homework as the starting point for instruction. The student will be asked to start completing homework without help and, after being observed and asked questions about the student's personal process, will be given guidance to do that day's homework most successfully. If the candidate is responsive to the preliminary tutoring and committed to at least six weeks of involvement and if we have the cooperation of the parents, guidance counselor, and teachers, then we proceed toward matching up the youth with a paid tutor (and training the youth in wrestling).

We hire these tutors from some of the best colleges and universities, including Columbia University, New York University, and City University of New York's Hunter College. Each paid college student takes on a few young wrestlers and helps them with their homework and study skills. Information obtained from school guidance counselors and teachers contributes toward academic support customized to each child's areas of deficiency. XYZ staff therefore requests parental permission for meetings with school staff that would permit disclosure of grades, test scores, and other records helpful for us to examine. Parental authorization is a prerequisite for participation in every part of our program. Parental consent is also required for our tutors to meet with the youths' guidance counselors and teachers who can help the tutors tailor the sessions specifically to their pupils and direct the tutors as to how to best execute the instruction. We cannot begin working with any youth until we obtain parental consent for that individual. The meetings between our tutors and school staff take the place of tutor training. Our tutors will come with experience working with children and/or they will come from strong academic backgrounds as proven by their records and professor recommendations. In addition to receiving advice from the school staff and drawing from the tutors' own personal techniques for success, our tutors will be provided with educational materials given or reviewed by professional educators.

XYZ will rely on the help of volunteer educators, with whom we already have relationships, to develop a solid study skills curriculum. That curriculum, together with the practical applications derived from the tutors' and school staff's experience, should give substance to the tutoring component of our program. After one six-week intensive period, our young participants should have acquired certain fundamentals for a successful academic career and, if enrolled in subsequent six-week periods, will build upon that foundation. We plan to encourage each tutor to ask questions to assess their pupil's learning style, personal study environment, study time, and goals. In addition to working on homework assignments, each tutor should work with our participants on the following

skills with a degree of emphasis dependent upon the pupil's needs: reading, writing, listening and concentration, note-taking, memory, test preparation and test taking, organization and time management, computer skills, and general study habits.

3.) HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAM: We will offer the kids a healthy snack and water in order to give them the energy they need for athletic activity as well as to have an opportunity to teach them about nutrition. We will also bring in specialists such as nutritionists, doctors, trainers, coaches, athletes and healthy eating advocates speaking about the positive effects that healthy eating and healthy choices can have on their lives.

4.) EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL FIELD TRIPS: The field trips planned for the kids vary from taking them to compete with other young wrestlers, to watch an international wrestling competition at the New York Athletic Club, to visiting museums, cultural and historic sites, and to exposing them to the corporate world as well as meeting with professionals on different career paths. XYZ staff will select no more than eighteen kids to go as one group at a time by public transportation. For safety purposes, the group of kids will be further broken down into smaller groups for the travel. Trips generally take place on Saturdays and require parental consent as well as supervision by XYZ staff. We want to pursue all the possibilities that broaden the horizons of our inner-city youth and open them up to the world so they become very well-rounded athletes. Prodigal's founders have built and will continue to develop relationships with individuals who give us access to their workplace and allow our youth to envision a bright future for themselves. XYZ will pay for all transportation costs related to these field trips. We do not plan to pay for any admission costs, because New York City and our relationships offer many free educational opportunities.

5.) OLYMPIC STYLE WRESTLING TRAINING: The wrestling training that our students receive is a modified version derived from the two styles of Olympic wrestling (Freestyle and Greco-Roman). We are modifying the current forms of Olympic wrestling because we want to emphasize overall performance rather than scoring and winning. Our competitive merit system rewards honorable conduct, superior sportsmanship, and wrestling dominance judged by control of opponents on the mat and acquisition of certain predetermined positions of advantage. We do not show numerical scoring during events. By eliminating conventional scoring, we can encourage our students to take risks and wrestle more freely. This way, the sport more effectively serves as an outlet for the youths and incites them to greater athleticism.

Also, our past experience with youths shows that they favor simplified wrestling conducted mainly from the standing position. We will continue to hone the wrestling style most suitable for broad inner-city youth participation. Kids, especially boys, naturally wrestle and have an innate ability. The sport of wrestling fosters discipline, hard work, dedication, and commitment. Wrestling teaches its participants that in order to truly control one's opponents one must first be able to fully control themselves. The character of participants is revealed and proper coaching/mentoring makes the participants more aware of themselves. Our students are taught how to be responsible for

their behavior on and off the wrestling mat and to develop a goal-oriented attitude. Our objective is to set a foundation for kids to acquire successful life skills and habits.

6.) MULTIMEDIA SELF-IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: The media footage chronicles the development of our participants as they get involved in our program. XYZ will obtain parental consent to film the youths for a variety of purposes and own the rights to all footage. Some of the uses of the footage include: transfer of our model for replication, short-term study (as we continually fine-tune our program based on the recorded images of each child), and long-term research (as visual documentation of children's behavior and how they respond to our kind of intervention).

The footage will show an alternative to dealing with failing students and failing schools. It has an immediate effect of raising the kids' self-awareness as they watch themselves on screen. We mainly intend to use the footage however to create inspiring, thought-provoking, and informative entertainment products that tell the stories of transformation undergone by some of our young participants as they experience challenges and success. As it creatively presents the dramatic experience of an urban wrestler's lifestyle, the media endeavor helps our organization fulfill its mission of raising awareness of the sport and its life-changing benefits.

AFFILIATIONS WITH SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER PROVIDERS OF THE SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY:

XYZ has worked closely with several other organizations. These organizations and institutions are concerned about helping at-risk youth in the inner city, but none have the unique focus of combining life skills that our wrestling, tutoring, mentoring, health and cultural development programs provides. XYZ will work with the groups listed below to utilize their resources, expertise and shared interest in achieving program success and development. We will also work with them to provide educational materials, mobilize residents to participate, and assess the program's success.

- 1.) Columbia University, New York University and City University of New York's Hunter College will provide XYZ with paid tutors that are fulltime students at their schools. Each student will be tutoring a few kids that are enrolled into the Prodigal program.
- 2.) New York City school system will help XYZ recruit at-risk children from local inner-city schools who show a history of having high energy and disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- 3.) USA Wrestling is the national governing body for amateur wrestling in the United States and they provide monthly wrestling training and coach workshops for the coaches and trainers who are employed by XYZ.
- 4.) Our relationship with the Jackie Robinson Parks Facility allows us to use their facilities for our afterschool programs.

- 5.) Local businesses and institutions that donate their time and resources to our organization and children who are part of our programs.

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

To provide eight six-week sessions (60 new students each session) throughout the year that offers Olympic style wrestling training, after-school tutoring, individual mentoring and field trips free of charge to New York City youths that are at risk of being left behind and making unhealthy life choices. At the end of each six-week session, students are encouraged to reenroll for subsequent sessions in order to continue improving their educational, physical, social and behavioral development.

EVALUATING PROJECT RESULTS

A projected 480 at-risk youth will participate throughout the year in our after school programs. They will receive valuable skills and information from our coaches, tutors, nutritionists and professional specialists that will help them improve their social, behavioral, educational and athletic performances. These are the necessary ingredients needed to help these kids build discipline, become goal oriented and realize they can create a future for themselves that doesn't look bleak.

Each will be given the opportunity to reenroll for subsequent programs so they can continue their progress. Our relationship with their tutors, teachers and guidance counselors at school will enable us to keep tabs on each student's academic and behavioral performance in order to ensure that we are focusing on their problem areas.

LONG-TERM SOURCES/STRATEGIES FOR FUNDING

We are a non-profit that is only a couple years old, however we have generated several thousands of dollars of in-kind donations for our programs. Our long-term goal is to be able to enhance our program capacities and continue sustaining program services for several years, decades, etc. Our organization also plans on contracting professional fund-raising services to identify and raise funds for XYZ. Individual donors support *(% percentage to be determined)* of the organization's operating costs, and consistently support the organization and its endeavors. Corporate sponsors include HSBC Bank, Whole Foods, Trader Joes, Banana Distributors of New York Inc., C-Town and Vita Coco. We also plan on submitting grant proposals to various foundations in order help cover a significant portion of the costs of running our after school programs.

