

ITSCOOL2CARE.ORG

April 8, 2009

What if one key to reversing apathy is helping passionate youth find the way around an obstacle before they feel helpless to affect the issues that concern them? We believe in engaging kids of every age in projects that support their passion. We believe that equipping teens with project management training is a powerful and positive way to affect change. We provide the "yes" that makes the difference to them and to the causes they can affect when given the tools and support they need.

the how,
the why, and
power of YES

By Brooke Summers-Perry

Are you ready for 'yes'?

What does ic2c do and why?

In 2005 I was introduced to a non-profit that consistently received volunteer request forms from people 18 and under. The youth had tried other organizations and were turned away because of their age. I wanted to help passionate kids find a way to help their community. I started this program because I didn't want them to hear the words, "you can't do that", "that's nice, but it doesn't work that way" one more time. For the past four years, I've been developing an efficient and effective system that can easily be implemented. If you think it requires A LOT of time, it doesn't. I had a 5 year old, a 2 year old, and a full-time/high pressure career when I started doing this "on the side". I've also learned that some non-profits that have youth volunteering opportunities may not be tapping the full potential of the youth. We think the kids that volunteer deserve the opportunity to DIRECTLY contribute to the mission of the organization. If you are willing to really LISTEN for 15-20 minutes, you can provide the right "yes" at the right time for a kid that cares about something.

I don't want to hide the idea, I want to share it. I want to train others. I want to empower a lot more kids!

Here's the system:

I meet with kids to help them find how their passion, skills, talents, schedules, and mobility/availability can best be matched with opportunities in the community. Sometimes I end up working with organizations to show them how to create opportunities that can directly support their missions and the needs of the youth that would like to help them.

The best way I'm finding to be the most supportive for the youth is to do an **interview**. I have a few key questions and it takes about 15-20 minutes. I have a list of opportunities that get narrowed down to **three volunteer options that best fit their needs/situation**, then I make sure they have what they need to get started. I like to do a **follow up interview** after some of the work is performed so that we can maximize fulfillment in the system and discuss opportunities that surfaced since the initial meeting. I think using the system is important to address the child's need to contribute and to make sure that they have the tools they need to be successful. The system is important but very simple!

Here's how we expand:

I can train others on how to perform the interview and how to create the list of opportunities (technically savvy youth actually do your research and can help you develop age appropriate tasks for the list). As long as you have access to non-profits in your area, this should work in any city.

Here's how we help kids manage their own projects:

For kids that have independent or group projects and want project management training and life coaching, I am available for recurring meetings as a fee-based service. We will soon be applying for grants to provide sponsorships for kids who need financial assistance. We are putting together a program for the Boys & Girls Clubs to offer their Keystone Clubs with project management training components.

Questions for YOU:

Do you know anyone under 18 in Houston that would benefit from being interviewed?

Would you like to become a supporter for a younger relative or a friend's child? I'd be happy to share the tools and the principles required to support young visionaries and activists in this manner. All you have to do in return is share your story with me to inspire others to do the same!! I will be loading our stories on a blog page at www.ready4yes.org.

Are you interested in helping expand this service to others? If you have an interest in training, volunteering, grant writing, marketing (including internet social networking, blogging, and Twitter), please go to www.itscool2care.org and click on the CONNECT tab and send me a message.

Do you use Facebook? Please join the www.itscool2care.org cause.

Are you ready for "yes"?

Examples

So what does an **interview/volunteer opportunity connection** sound like?

I met with a VERY creative 7 year old that loves animals. He is coming up with 50 (I said 15, but he had 15 in 1 minute, so he settled on 50) unique names that will help a local animal shelter make their adoptable pets more memorable. Sound too simple? When you are armed with understanding how important each item on the list of opportunities is to the non-profit it benefits, the potential is obvious. Does this seem too easy to be "making a difference?" You have to see a child's face light up when you read the short list of opportunities that match their skills - a simple yet POWERFUL moment!

So what does an **independent project/training consultation program** look like?

This is the kind of ongoing support that requires regular meetings and community connections: I am not a vegetarian, but I work for a bunch. I secured a web domain for them to use called "meat rehab" - this is the brainchild of Kalyn and Angel. I've been working with them since 2006. I have connected them with nutritionists and organic farmers that want to help, so we are about to load the site with

information and discussion forums. The two teens were interviewed on 90.1kpt with Pat Greer in January and they are in the process of developing a vegetarian cookbook with nutritional information specifically addressing the needs of younger vegetarians. We figure the kids who are determined to give up meat are going to do it. Let's support them in doing it well and educating their friends, families, and followers. Do you have vegetarian recipes you can share with them? Do you have experts that would like to help them? You can be another "yes" on their journey!

In Process:

The process for filing for 501c3 status has begun and there will be an expansion of the program, including new ways to support our mission. Parents that would like their kids to participate are being asked to volunteer in 2-3 hour shifts. Please contact me for an interview to find the best way you can support cool kids that care!

Thanks for all you do!
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