



EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO DESIGN PUBLIC SPACES

A Strong Neighborhood Program Strategy Overview

We catalyze and sustain opportunities to improve social conditions and improve physical environments in the Mt. Pleasant, Woodland Hills and Buckeye neighborhoods.

GRANTEE PARTNER: KENT STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION, INC. AND THE CLEVELAND URBAN DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

As the outreach division of the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State University, the Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative works to improve the quality of urban places through technical design assistance, research and advocacy.



WHAT WE FUNDED

The Foundation's grant (\$73,966) supports The Public Space Youth Build workshop, which will enlist and train 10 to 12 Buckeye, Woodhill, Shaker Square and Larchmere students as designers to design and construct community environments and playscapes at Saint Luke's Oval.

KEY COLLABORATORS INCLUDE:

- Boys and Girls Clubs;
- East End Neighborhood House/East End Youth Services;
- LAND studio;
- Cleveland Neighborhood Progress;
- Diverse team of local design professionals.

THE NEED:

- More shared public spaces;
- Better utilization and visibility for Britt Oval;
- Opportunity to involve youngsters in design decision-making;
- Greater diversity in design professions.

GOALS FOR THIS GRANT

- Stimulate dialogue about where and how to improve the physical environment;
- Increase the capacity of partners to engage youth in decision-making about the physical character of their neighborhoods;
- Increase collaboration across community organizations, residents;
- Build a deeper sense of ownership and shared stewardship in the neighborhood.

THE APPROACH WE SUPPORT

Phase 1: Capacity Building

- Participants will brainstorm ways that their neighborhoods can promote physical activity and community connections.

Phase 2: After-School Design Studio and On-Site Fabrication

- Meet with community partners;
- Student-facilitated design exercises and collaboration on design alternatives;
- Construction of initial site scheme and second site scheme;
- Preparation of conceptual plans for permanent improvements.

Phase 3: Programming & Website Updates

- 2 community events;
- Creation of an Instagram account to post photos and interact with student participants.

Phase 4: Assessment

- Conduct interviews and record visitors to assess project's impact.

IMPACT

- Enable middle-school students to take on a leadership role in the work as they advance into high school;
- Increase student engagement to broaden the reach of the work with more kids and their families;
- Progress from temporary interventions to semi-permanent and possibly even permanent improvements to our current Britt Oval site;
- Exploration of other sites in the neighborhood that could benefit from placemaking and youth-build efforts;
- Further integration of youth engagement strategies into all of the CUDC's planning and design work, in Cleveland and elsewhere in the region.