



SIDEWALK UNIVERSITY
ENRICHING THE MINDS OF TOMORROW'S LEADERS



SUEE Girls Leadership Development and Entrepreneurship Summer Program[©]

Sidewalk University (SU), is a non-profit (501)(c)(3) organization that was founded on January 10, 2001. We are proud to be celebrating our 10th anniversary this year. SU is committed to helping youngsters in urban and underserved areas become leaders in their communities. We advocate this mission through educational and cultural programs that expand the horizons of our youth by supplying them with the tools, resources and skill sets they will need to lead successful and productive lives. Our goal is to train our teens to think and see the world as visionaries, innovators and entrepreneurs, by providing them with an integrated set of portable business planning and financial skills, community focused skills, and to increase their personal confidence and self-esteem to propel them forward to become a productive citizen of the world.

SU has built a solid reputation of providing workshops to build and foster financial awareness and skills of young people. In the past, SU has facilitated this learning through partnerships with Ramapo College, New Jersey Institute of Technology, St. Peter's College and Rutgers University. Last fall we partnered with Rutgers Future Scholars Program in Newark, New Jersey.

Recently, SU established Sidewalk University Economic Empowerment (SUEE). This new affiliate will continue to provide mathematical and financial workshops to our youth. However, we are expanding our horizons to encompass broader areas of economic empowerment. For example, every summer we will offer a Leadership Development and Entrepreneurship summer camp in the urban communities of Plainfield and Rahway, New Jersey.

The camp has five focus areas: **self-esteem, career development, social networking and community focus, finance and fitness**. Additionally, we will provide our participants with a variety of cultural experiences through local field trips. We will also provide participants with team building exercises with local retailers and Chef Carl Redding (founder of Amy Ruth's restaurant in NYC and Redding's in Atlantic City, NJ).

We challenge youth to become more aware of educational opportunities by preparing students physically, mentally, and emotionally to meet the challenges of life. We teach youth how to navigate their lives through higher education, trade schools, the corporate environment and entrepreneurship. Finally, we encourage youth to develop a sense of community.

Program Overview

Sidewalk University Economic Empowerment has developed a summer program designed to promote leadership and entrepreneurship amongst teenage girls from ages 12-17. Developmentally, this is a key age where teenagers are challenged to figure out who they are and what type of life they want to lead. Quite often this period in life is described from the adult perspective, as a time of stress and storm. Many teenagers do not realize that the decisions they make in current time, can shape their future for many years to come. We would like to help youngsters realize the importance of making a good impression, the first time, while also helping them realize that every failure in life can be considered a triumph--if the lesson is learned. In order that everyone involved will have an enriching experience, we encourage participants to come from all walks of life and income brackets.

Our partnership with the Healing Hands...is an essential element in our participant's development. We will teach young women the importance of having a healthy mind and body and teach them how to promote a positive self-image.



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We will encourage the young women to be visionaries, innovative, artistic, and holistic in their thinking. Instructors will help the participants strengthen their skills, develop their weaknesses and identify career paths suitable for their strengths. Our instructors will help participants gauge the amount of education, finances and effort it will take to facilitate their goals and help them find resources to achieve their goals. We would like to teach participants to break gender stereotypes and to work in a more cooperative/community environment rather than competitive.

At the beginning of the program the participants are assigned a partner and a professional mentor. They will be responsible for working in pairs and presenting in pairs throughout the program which will foster a sense of community and cooperation; ease the pressure of speaking in front of an audience; build a team environment and an environment of trust. Each participant's progress will be measured by what they contribute to each team building exercise. Each two week period will end with a field trip which could include a museum, botanical garden or team building exercise.

The **first phase** of the program is called the self-identification phase. During a two-week interval, participants will learn to identify their key personality traits i.e. what motivates them as a person and how they interact with others who are similar and different from them. Many people go through life struggling to identify the characteristics of their personality that allow them to engage others in a successful manner. We will teach participants tools to self-identify, identify their personality language and how to identify motivating passions in others. Participants will have access to Compass coaching program for teens to help them set goals, track their goals and see them to fruition.

In the **second phase** of the program the participants will take what they have learned about themselves and use the information to identify careers and/or businesses that will continue to motivate them and grant them success. Our goal in this phase is to teach participants how to marry their passions with a career. For many years media sources such as Diversity, Inc. and HR Magazine have listed career challenges as one of the top three reasons why people are dissatisfied at work. If our two-week exercise is successful we hope that an investment in our teenagers at an *early* age will help them become a happier person, happier employee, a happy entrepreneur and more importantly a happier citizen of the world. We would like to see if the philosophy, *Do what you love and the money will follow*, extends to teenagers. In this phase participants who have identified a passion to start their own business will work with our partners to learn how to write a business plan.

In the **third phase** of the program, participants will learn the art of social networking. Many professionals have offered that social networking can facilitate many successes. Some professionals will agree that networking can be a very difficult skill to master and getting in the right doors can be challenging at times. Through various interactions with in-house staff and our professional partners, we will teach participants a few of the necessary social networking tools needed in the corporate environment, in entrepreneurship and social events. Participants will also learn the value of investing physically and mentally in their communities and how their immediate surroundings can have a trickle affect on their lives.

In this phase participants will also learn basic skills such as table etiquette, appropriate conversation in a professional environment and at social events. They will learn physical etiquette and how to present themselves in a public forum.



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Participants will also take part in a round table where they will have an open and frank discussion with mentors from various professions.

Over the years, the New Jersey State Police have seen a rise in cyber crimes against children. Therefore, we will engage the Child Assault Prevention Program to teach a Teen Cap workshop to participants. The focus areas will be on cyber bullying, safe dating practices and predation.

In **phase four** participants will learn about finances. Whether participants choose to work in a corporate environment or become an entrepreneur, it is necessary for them to learn about how to manage their money and how to map out their future financial goals. At SUEE we understand that money is a very important motivational tool for teenagers. If we receive the funding required to facilitate this program, in this phase, each student will receive \$25 for each **full week** they have participated in the program. Each student will be required to participate in Phase IV in its entirety in order to receive their earned funds. SUEE will create bank accounts for every participant eligible to receive the money.

Other information:

At the beginning of each two-week workshop, participants will be given a team building exercise. They, along with their partners will be responsible for presenting what they have learned, with their partner, to their peers at the end of every two weeks. Participants will be challenged to present this information using various creative and technical vehicles (for example in the form of a RAP or using graphics). At the end of the eight week program participants will showcase their learning experience to parents and friends.

Obesity has become a national concern, we will address this dilemma amongst our participants by engaging a personal trainer once a week (**phase five**) (*if funding permits*), to teach our participants how to eat and exercise properly with minimal resources. The trainer will teach participants how to exercise even if they have minimal or no equipment at home.

Finally, while our passion for developing children is great, measuring our success is just as important. We do recognize that children need their parents input in order to develop successfully. Parents are a **key** component in their child's development. Therefore, parents will be required to fill out a survey at the end of every two weeks to let camp facilitators know if there are any visible signs of their child's development at home. Parent feedback will be weighed against facilitator feedback in order to get a comprehensive evaluation of whether our program is actually successful.

For more information about this program, please contact April Robinson
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