

# Community Center Proposal

## **Our Hope and Vision**

The Mantua Center School Community Center is a grassroots, community project to bring much needed social services, community building, and recreational opportunities to the Crestwood Community and surrounding areas. Currently the building houses township offices, a free-clothing giveaway program, dance classes, and a gym which is frequently rented for parties and community events. We hope the rest of the building would be renovated to house more community resources that may include a Teen Cafe, after school program, business incubator, recreational classes (dance, martial arts, and other sports), and many other proposed ideas. Local organizations, community members, and churches have invested time, energy, and resources to make this possible and continue to look for ways to partner with others who share this common vision.

## **Partners**

This is a **community-based** project. There will be local government, service organizations, individuals, and church groups that want to get involved and propose ideas. Below are several ideas that will be proposed to the township sub-committees and then to the Trustees. Currently a representative task force is being assembled to help guide this start-up process. Two interns have already been identified. One from the National Benevolent Association (NBA) Xplor Resident Program (through the local Disciples congregations and co-sponsored by MARS) and a senior from BioMed doing a community service internship.

## **Renovation**

We are pledging the support of community and church volunteers to renovate the spaces below, but we will also need the added investment of the Township. The volunteers will provide the physical labor and the Township would provide the resources needed. If there are specific projects the Township would like to contract, we will be open to their suggestions and expertise.

### Building Renovation Prep

- Wi-Fi accessibility throughout the building
- Intercom System
- Electrical upgrading
- Materials and Supplies for Renovation through Township Operating Budget

### Renovation of Center Room on First Floor

- Clean Out
- Carpet removed
- Floors refinished
- Walls repaired and painted
- Lights updated
- Tables, chairs, podium
- Projector and Screen
- Wiring for technological connection
- Wired for speakers
- Computers for Community Use

- United Way Bookshelf
- Portage County Library Relationship (populating shelves/automated check-out system/e-book access)

#### Renovation of Central Basement Room

- Clean Out
- Ceiling/Wall Repair
- Paint Walls
- Paint or Laminate Flooring
- Window Fix/Replacement
- Specialty Decor - Mural
- Install exit steps
- Adult Size Commode(?)
- Water hook up/sink(s)
- Furniture: Couches, Tables, Chairs, Stools, Counter Surface

#### Renovation of East Basement Room

- Paint Walls
- Paint Floor
- Install Exit Steps

#### Gymnasium

- Replace and Set up Basketball hoops for game playing

### Summary of proposed investment

#### *Mantua Township :*

Provides materials for all renovation

Provides furnishings and tech media for Community Room

Funds for these would be paid through the Township Budget:

1. Line Item: Repairs and Maintenance
2. Line Item: Operating Supplies

### Rental Proposal for Non-Profit Tenants

\$.50 per square foot

10 hours gym time/week (scheduled through MARSJ intern)

10 hours of community room time (scheduled through MARSJ intern)

\* Highlighted Materials indicate things that could be accomplished by volunteers

### Proposed Ideas for Community Spaces from Rev. Chad Delaney and Rev. Jeff Jackson

With excitement we want to propose several ideas to increase the use and impact of the Mantua Center School in our local community. The community is fortunate to have such a unique and sound

space We have been pursuing the ideas below for about 3-4 months and have high hopes that they be accepted and implemented. Each will take various degrees of commitment and investment, but we believe each of them are a response to community needs.

The summaries below are for a Teen Cafe and Business Incubator. If more details are desired, please feel free to be in touch.

### **Teen Cafe**

In the winter of 2015-2016 we contacted the Crestwood Schools administrative staff with questions about what the needs of the parents, teachers, and students were. We received great feedback and generated lots of ideas based on their comments and suggestions. One of the primary “take-aways” was responding to the opioid problems in the our area and the need for more after-school opportunities for our students. The first idea that emerged was a Teen Cafe.

A Teen Cafe would be a place to safely hangout after school for those students who need a place to belong. Many students need a place to be after school (especially if they aren't involved in an extracurricular activity) and there is very few (if any) places for teens to congregate with each other in our area. This reality puts more kids at risk to drug-use or other unhealthy/harmful activities.

We envision the Teen Cafe to have entertainment features (ie. ping-pong, pool, or other games to enjoy.) A snack and coffee/soda bar for refreshment. Couches and tables to sit together and hang out with friends. We also want to have designated places for students to work on their homework and even get help from tutors or other adults present to help them. We also hope to have the space wired with internet and have computer access available. Our understanding is that 40% of kids in Crestwood Schools have no access to this kind of home technology. We also hope to have local experts, entrepreneurs, community members offer programming to give youth good examples of career paths, new hobbies, and ways to serve their community.

We have also been in contact with the Hiram Entrepreneurial Department and the Crestwood Schools about possible connections to this initiative. It will be a “cafe” providing drinks and refreshments so there is an opportunity for a “small business” experiment by college or high school students. It will give them experience, but also generate income for purposes of sustainability.

In sum, we hope to benefit teenagers in Crestwood by offering:

- Safe, drug-free environment for building peer relationships and having fun after school
- Opportunity for Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship
- Establish Positive Role Model relationships with adults who care
- Homework help and encouragement
- Access to internet and Technology

Proposed income sustainability:

- Income from the cafe
- Grant Funding Support - County, State, Church grants?
- Vending Machine income
- Music (Jukebox-like) Income
- Arcade game income (if applicable)

- Donations and Sponsorships
- Rental of space for Birthday Parties????

We also discovered that these concerns were also shared by the county in their Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This initiative is included under the Mental Health portion of the CHIP plan for youth and young adults. The following is the insertion for this in the Community-Wide Planning document that is currently being finalized:

<p><b>Year 1:</b> Explore options, community partnerships, and funding sources for renovation and development of the former Mantua Center School into a “Center Café” community center offering teens and young adults a healthy community space to build positive peer and mentor relationships and explore new opportunities, hobbies, and career paths</p>
<p><b>Year 2:</b> Complete renovation and open the community center.</p> <p>Work with community partners to establish and expand programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local artist co-op including artist mentoring/teaching</li> <li>● Life skills and employment networking</li> <li>● Homework assistance</li> <li>● Education and social service programs including mental health and substance abuse, etc</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 3:</b> Expand programming</p> <p>Establish a community meeting room and offer additional community-wide programming including all CHIP priorities</p> <p>Incorporate a Social Enterprise Incubator</p>

**Business Incubator**

One of the exciting ways communities are infused with new energy is through these business incubators that are popping up around the area. The idea is that there are folks who are looking to start or have just started small-businesses with a Social Enterprise component, but need space and professional development support. Small business start-ups would rent space within the Mantua Center School to begin building their business. Surrounded by others trying to do similar projects there is an infectious energy and built in support as people try new things and gather ideas from each other. This would include business owners, college entrepreneurship leaders, and school children and youth. With a venture like this there needs to be an experience person leading and organizing the space and offering support to the small business leaders. Space is provided not just for their own business needs but also to meet the need for creativity, encouragement and guidance, and feedback. In addition, this provides a practical meeting and conference space to meet with potential clients or partners.

We visited incubators in the area--there are incubators in Chesterland, Youngstown, Shaker Heights, and Ravenna that are trying this model. The NBA is affording us an opportunity to visit a teen incubator in St. Louis and Chattanooga. Hiram College is very interested in what might come of this development. We look forward to learning more and seeing if this is a viable option for the Mantua Center School space. We hope that it would not only help start-ups in the community, but also bring sustainable income streams to help undergird the social service and charity efforts working out of the school.

**Proposed Ideas for Community Spaces for YMCA Opportunities**

Recently, the Greater Cleveland Area YMCA came to our neighbor Garrettsville to set up in their old Middle School. Currently there are exercise classes, youth sports programs, and other kinds of community activities sponsored by the YMCA and housed in that building. YMCA is currently in conversation with Crestwood Schools to be present in our area and to begin programming sometime in the next year. The YMCA currently doesn't have a "building" but will work out of the Crestwood Schools and will look for other locations for different programs they will be doing.

We have had discussions already with the YMCA to see if they might be interested in running programs in Mantua Center School space. They were very enthusiastic even hoping we can set some things set up for 2016-2017 school year. They are interested in the outdoor space for flag-football, soccer, or other sports. They are interested in using indoor space for exercise classes (Zumba!), martial arts, basketball, and/or volleyball programs. It is just a matter of setting up the spaces and agreeing to rental cost. The YMCA handles all the sign-ups and keeps things going.

We believe this, too, will be an excellent opportunity for helping the community and using the Mantua Center School in a wonderful way!

If you have any questions about any of these possibilities please contact us anytime. We are gathering these ideas and moving on them, but have other things in mind too. We are also more than open to other possibilities and ideas within the community of folks working on this. We only want to add our voices and excitement to the development of the Mantua Center School as a community center.

Thank you for your attention and let us know if there is any more we can do.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Jeff Jackson

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