

Avondale Kick It Series – MLK Park

Last updated 6/8/21

Over the past few weeks there have been growing concerns about traffic from MLK Park impacting the safety and well-being of residents at the nearby Crescent apartments. Complaints from residents are more frequent and center around loitering in the courtyard and the trash that is left behind. This has prompted a thoughtful response from The Community Builders, Avondale Development Corporation and Avondale Community Council who must balance the needs of residents as well as the community at large. The Kick It Series will provide a safe, organized and intentional space for people to have fun. What's more it creates the perfect venue to engage the community by providing access to resources to address food insecurity, mental health needs and employment.

- **Strategy:** To address loitering and safety concerns at MLK Park with ongoing activities according to desires of nearby and impacted Avondale residents.
- **Partners**
 - Avondale Development Corporation
 - The Community Builders Inc.
 - Avondale Community Council
- **Scope of Work**
 - Survey project lead by ADC in collaboration with Avondale resident liaisons to identify desires for leisure activities at MLK Park.
 - Survey results will be presented to Avondale Safety Group on Thursday 6/17.
 - Partners will host on going activities at the park throughout the peak summer season (July-September)
 - Weekly on Friday/Saturday (Time will be determined post resident survey)
 - 5P-9P (Tentative Timeframe)

**Kick It Series
Proposed Budget**

Expenses		Budget	
Outreach (flyers, yard signs, liaison outreach stipends)		\$600.00	
Showmobile/Stage rental		\$15,000.00	
Police Detail (\$35/hour, 4 officers per event, 12 events)		\$5,000.00	
Portable toilets (2 per event, \$100/toilet)		\$2,400.00	
Tables/Tents (Cincinnati Toolbank)		\$4,000.00	
Advertising		\$1,500.00	
Permits		\$500.00	
Clean-up Crew		\$3,000.00	
DJ		\$6,000.00	
Refreshments/Participation incentives		\$6,000.00	
Entertainment		\$6,000.00	
Total Expenses		50,000.00	



Avondale Fence Art Project

Purpose: The purpose of the Avondale Fence Art Project is to reduce violence in Avondale by reaching out to youth who seem to be heading in the direction of negative life choices. They will be recruited to paint art on placards on a temporary 2,900 SF fence in the Avondale Business District. The fence is owned by the Uptown Consortium. An artist who also is a therapist at Children's Hospital will lead the effort and help to build relationships with the youth. The ultimate goal is to encourage the youth to join the Avondale Development Corporation's newly formed Youth Ambassadors Program. When the fence is removed, the placards will be placed in other locations in the Avondale community. The fence is temporary, but the art will be permanent.

Background: In 2020, Avondale experienced more gun violence than any other Cincinnati neighborhood. Several murders occurred in the heart of the Avondale Business District on Burnet and Forest avenues. Due to problems with loitering, Cincinnati Police Dept. District 4 asked the Uptown Consortium to put a temporary fence around a large vacant expanse of land in the Avondale Business District. Beth Robinson, president & CEO of the Uptown Consortium suggested some sort of positive messaging on the fence. In November 2020, Ms. Robinson asked Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney to convene an Avondale Safety Group to work with the Avondale Community Council, Avondale Development Corporation, Uptown Consortium, residents, ministers, POAH Properties, business owners and other stakeholders.

At the initial meeting, it was said that youth are feeling "hopeless and bored," and these conditions are leading some to move toward gang life. Councilmember Kearney proposed using the temporary fence as a way of building community engagement with the youth, and bringing them into ADC's Youth Ambassadors Program.

PLAN: Artist Brent Billingsley, a therapist at Children's Hospital, led South Avondale School children in creating a mural on a large wall at the school. See attached article. He currently has plans for a Truth and Reconciliation art project across the city and proposes to use the Avondale fence as one of the sites for the paintings of iconic figures. Although the fence is temporary, the art will be permanent. Upon the fence being removed in a year or longer, the panels will be moved to another site.

Cost: Artist Brent Billingsley recommends approximately 20 youth as the painters. He and another artist will organize and lead the work. He estimates that the cost for materials will be \$30,000, and he recommends about \$10,000 to compensate the artists and youth for labor, for a total cost of \$40,000. The youth will be recruited by the Avondale Development Corporation and the Avondale Community Council.

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