Yo! Memphis
The Youth Opportunity Movement

2003 Rudy Bruner Award

City of Memphis
Mayor Willie W. Herenton
November 12, 2002

Mrs. Jennifer Martin  
Executive Assistant  
The Rudy Bruner Foundation  
130 Prospect Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mrs. Martin:

I am pleased to nominate Yo! Memphis Youth Opportunity Movement for the Rudy Bruner Award.

Yo! Memphis is an exemplary program that addresses the most pressing needs of urban youth living in economically distressed areas in the city. This program has strong partnerships with community and faith-based organizations, governmental agencies, businesses, educational and training institutions. This collaborative effort has strengthened this program in providing quality services to its youth.

Yo! Memphis' is more than just a youth program. Its success is built on its campus-centered strategy as a center of activity for youth. The site is now newly-renovated and houses a café, two recording studios, two computer labs, a resource center, classroom facilities, a recreation hall and fitness center and the 'college corner'. The renovation of this building and the presence of Yo! Memphis in this neighborhood have been a cornerstone of revitalization for the surrounding community, replacing a deteriorating eyesore with a thriving place for youth to congregate.

Thank you for considering Yo! Memphis for this outstanding award. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sonja Currie in the Office of Intergovernmental Relations at (901) 576-6566.

Best Regards,

Willie W. Herenton
December 12, 2002

Mrs. Jennifer Martin, Executive Assistant  
The Rudy Bruner Award Foundation  
130 Prospect Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139  

Dear Mrs. Martin:

I consider it an honor for Yo! Memphis to have been nominated to receive the *Rudy Bruner Award*, based on the organization’s capacity to use the integrative forces of politics, the social and urban environment, and community initiative in creating a catalyst for change.

Almost 3,000 youth in the Enterprise Community of Memphis, between the ages of 14 and 21, are either high school dropouts or lack the necessary training to acquire meaningful employment. Another 5,000 are enrolled in school, but are encountering difficulties in completing their education. Yo! Memphis, the Youth Opportunity Movement, is a call to action for local citizens, businesses, government, faith-based and educational institutions, public agencies, and the community to invest in these youth. The primary goal of Yo! Memphis is to increase the long-term employment of youth who live in the Enterprise Community.

Since July 1, 2000, Yo! Memphis has enrolled 2,963 youth and opened the largest youth facility in Memphis, the Main Campus. Four other youth centers have been established in the east, north and south areas. Thirteen career centers have also been located in twelve schools. One hundred and forty-six (146) youth who dropped out of school have now completed high school requirements, 98.7 percent of the youth in 12th grade have graduated from high school, 273 have entered college, 336 have received occupational skills training and 318 have been employed.

The goal each year is to increase enrollment by 50%. By the end of the fifth year, over 7,500 youth will benefit and it is expected that in 10 years, this number could double to at least 15,000.

Local youth are not the only ones who benefit from the movement. Employers benefit from a highly skilled workforce and a healthy consumer base. By providing job training, academic support and social counseling to our most disadvantaged young people, Yo! Memphis helps to develop a strong community that serves as a foundation to ensure the success of our youth and our city.

Sincerely,

Marie A. Milam, Ed. D.  
Executive Director
PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: Yo! Memphis Youth Opportunity Movement
Owner: Dr. Marie Milam, Executive Director
Project Use(s): To increase educational, job training and employment opportunities for youth living in the Enterprise Community.
Project Size: Enroll 5,000 youth ages 14-21 years Total Development Cost: $26,000,000
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate): $4,875,000
Date Initiated: July 1, 2000
Percent Completed by December 1, 2002: 50%
Project Completion Date (if appropriate): June 30, 2005

Application submitted by:

Name: Sonja Currie
Organization: City of Memphis
Address: 125 N. Main Street, Rm. 336
City/State/Zip: Memphis, TN 38103
Telephone: (901) 576-6566
Fax: (901) 576-6570
E-mail: Sonja.Currie@cityofmemphis.org

Title: Assistant Administrator-Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Weekend Contact Number (for notification): (901) 366-4421

Key Participants (attach an additional sheet if needed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Key Participant</th>
<th>Telephone/e-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Agencies: Memphis Urban League</td>
<td>Marjorie B. Ford</td>
<td>(901) 272-2491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer: Elton Willis Group</td>
<td>Marc E. Willis</td>
<td>(901) 452-7070 <a href="mailto:Looneyyst@hotmail.com">Looneyyst@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Consultant:</td>
<td>Lorene L. Essex</td>
<td>(901) 853-5561 <a href="mailto:Loosenyex1044@aol.com">Loosenyex1044@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Group: Lemoyne-Owen College-CDC</td>
<td>Jeffrey Higgs</td>
<td>(901) 942-6265 <a href="mailto:Jeffrey_Higgs@loc.edu">Jeffrey_Higgs@loc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: PSBV Media</td>
<td>Carolyn Bell</td>
<td>(901) 725-4701 <a href="mailto:Cdpndnet@bellsouth.net">Cdpndnet@bellsouth.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing  X Magazine Advertisement  Previous RBA entrant  Other (please specify)
- Professional  Newsletter  Previous Selection Committee member
- Organization  Magazine Calendar

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Signature: Sonja Currie
### Key Participants Additional Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Key Participant</th>
<th>Telephone/e-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Centenary Ministries, Inc.    | Herbert Lester, Jr. | (901) 774-7604  
|                               |                  | Herbert@centenary-umc.org         |
| Memphis Police Department     | James W. Wooten  | (901) 545-2588                    |
| Memphis City Schools          | Gloria Taylor    | (901) 325-4848  
|                               |                  | Jneil55@cs.com                   |
## Yo! Memphis

### Relevant Project Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 1, 2000</td>
<td>Enroll 100 youth in program</td>
<td>327 youth enrolled in program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15, 2000</td>
<td>Open Main Campus facility</td>
<td>Main Campus opened on December 11, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2001</td>
<td>Enroll 1,250 youth in program</td>
<td>1,826 youth enrolled in program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2001</td>
<td>Place 100 out of school youth in college, occupational skills training, or employment</td>
<td>267 out of school youth placed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2002</td>
<td>Enroll 1,700 youth in program</td>
<td>2,860 youth enrolled in program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2002</td>
<td>Place 200 out of school youth in college, occupational skills training, or employment</td>
<td>311 out of school youth placed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2003</td>
<td>Serve total of 1,727 youth during the year</td>
<td>Total of 1,945 served by November 30, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2003</td>
<td>Place 348 out of school youth in college, occupational skills training, or employment during the year</td>
<td>271 out of school youth placed by November 30, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rudy Bruner Award

Abstract

Yo! Memphis
Youth Opportunity Movement
Project Name: Yo! Memphis Youth Opportunity Movement
Address: 2140 South Third Street  
City/State/Zip: Memphis, TN 38103

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

The City of Memphis is on a determined journey to provide a brighter future for urban youth. Mayor Willie W. Herenton created Yo! Memphis in 2000 with a multi-year, multi-million dollar Youth Opportunity Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Yo! Memphis has since opened four campuses strategically located throughout the city's previously-designated Enterprise Community. At each of these campuses Yo! Memphis offers educational and job training for disadvantaged youth ages 14-21 and has implemented a broadly-shared vision that guarantees exposure, enhanced education, skills development, employment and post-secondary opportunities, strong linkages and support services designed to help our youth succeed.

Yo! Memphis' is more than just a youth program. Its success is built on its campus-centered strategy as a center of activity for youth. The main campus is a 52,000 square-foot building previously used as a warehouse, but vacant since 1993. The building was covered with gang signs and vagrants frequently congregated in the parking lot. The site is now newly-renovated and houses a café, two recording studios, two computer labs, a resource center, classroom facilities, a recreation hall and fitness center and the 'college corner'. The renovation of this building has been a cornerstone of revitalization for the surrounding community, replacing a deteriorating eyesore with a thriving place for youth to congregate.

Yo! Memphis seeks to address the most pressing needs of urban youth to help them stay in school and graduate, earn a GED, learn job skills, attend college, trade school or technical school and achieve long-term employment. Its major emphasis is on re-engaging out-of-school youth in academic and employment-related activities.

Recent census data indicates that there are approximately 8,000 youth who reside in the seventeen census tracts previously-designated as the Memphis Enterprise Community. Approximately 3,300 are classified as out-of-school youth - those who have not graduated from high school or those who have graduated without the skills necessary for gainful employment. Since, July 2000 Yo! Memphis has enrolled 2,930 youth in the program: 1,125 out-of-school youth and 1,805 youth still enrolled in grades 6 through 12. The program will enroll 2,000 additional youth over the next two years.

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence?

Yo! Memphis merits the Rudy Bruner Award because it has developed an innovative approach to address multiple barriers our urban youth face today. The model Yo! Memphis has implemented demonstrates urban excellence at its best and has sparked new partnerships in the community with local businesses and created more neighborhood pride and involvement. Through this program, disadvantaged youth are given a second chance at achieving their goals by providing them all the tools they need to be successful.

Yo! Memphis celebrates the strengths of young people and builds upon qualities that need enhancement. This program gives urban youth the opportunity they have been waiting for - a chance to break the continuous cycle of poverty and achieve their full potential.
Rudy Bruner Award

Project Description

Yo! Memphis
Youth Opportunity Movement
Project Name: Yo! Memphis Youth Opportunity Movement
Address: 2140 South Third Street  City/State/Zip: Memphis, TN 38103

1. How has the project impacted the local community?

Yo! Memphis is designed to impact the youth in an urban community filled with poverty and with little hope for a better means of living. This program gives youth a chance to change their impoverished existence by providing them with the essential educational and job skills needed to transform their dreams into a flourishing future. Yo! Memphis has achieved the following:

- 2,227 youth are currently enrolled
- 84 have attained their GED
- 268 have been awarded a high school diploma
- 256 are enrolled in college
- 16 have been awarded a college degree
- 286 have entered occupational skills training
- 60 have earned training credentials
- 366 have been placed in unsubsidized employment
- 1,045 have been promoted to new grade level

The positive impact of this program continues to change lives and create dreams for youth which transcends to their families and community.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The underlying value of this project is to partner with local entities (government, business and non-profit agencies) to invest in youth today so that they can become capable leaders of tomorrow. It is our duty as public servants to revive their spirit so they will have the will to work to be independent adults. Without hope, there are no dreams. Without dreams, a positive future is unimaginable. Yo! Memphis strives to be the cornerstone of hope, love and determination, which will lead to success for young people who may have been ‘written off’ as failures in the past.

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

Yo! Memphis was created after Memphis applied for and was awarded a Youth Opportunity Grant from the U. S. Department of Labor. During the application and implementation process, a collaboration was formed between the City of Memphis and grassroots citizens, business, clergy, educators, government officials and non-profit agencies that are dedicated to helping youth develop into productive and contributing members of the community.

Critical to the initiative was the establishment of the Main Campus and several satellite sites, with a core staff of highly-qualified youth development specialists. Campuses were established in the east, north and south areas of the city. Each campus has a special focus and is located near many community resources. Yo! Memphis campuses are electronically linked, allowing immediate access to youth employment, education, job training, health and wellness and placement services, augmented by a complement of support and development in a centralized location.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

Over 70 activities have been developed to provide a varied menu of programs and services for youth to gain, retain and build on educational and employment opportunities. Some activities are provided especially for out-of-school youth, however most are available to all youth in the program.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

Funding for the program is provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. A total of $17,875,000 has been awarded to date, at a cost of about $2,033 per year for each youth. Yo! Memphis recently collaborated with several area government and educational institutions for a YouthBuild grant of $217,000.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The program is unique because it is a true 'one-stop shop' for all available youth services in the Memphis area. It is also unique because youth are involved in all aspects of program development. Presently, youth are planning to open and operate the Yo! Café, the video studio and the recording studio as community businesses. Youth enrolled in the building trades program are designing and erecting the stores to be located in a business mall at the Main Campus. Yo! Memphis addresses significant urban issues and is adaptable to other urban settings. The program includes:

- Comprehensive assessment (academic, job readiness, psychological, social services, health & wellness components)
- Focus on objectives
- Data-driven gap analysis
- Competencies mastery model (scale that measures youth progress within the framework of economic indicators)
- Immediate connection of youth to program activities
- Program staff placed in schools (tutoring, standardized test preparation, Achievement Academy)
- Integrated center activities with both Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and In-School Youth (ISY)
- Customized GED program for OSY
- Emphasis on advantages of post secondary education and skills training
- Assistance with entry and reentry to college and skills training; financial support
- College Club (regular meetings, community service, peer mentoring, etc.)
- Satellite center on college campus
- Intensive job readiness component (Level 1 Level 2 Career Academy)
- Leadership development academy
- Required community service
- Intensive follow up process
- Shared resources
Rudy Bruner Award

Perspective Forms

Yo! Memphis
Youth Opportunity Movement
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name: Mr. Jeffrey Higgs
Organization: LeMoyne Owen College-CDC
Address: 802 Walker, Suite 5
Fax: (901) 942-6448
Title: Project Director
Telephone: (901)942-6265
City/State/ZIP: Memphis, TN 38126
E-mail: jeffrey_higgs@loc.edu

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Signature: [Signature]

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

I have participated in several ways with the Yo! Memphis project. Initially, just as a community based non-profit connected to a historically black college to support any and all efforts that assisted the youth and the disenfranchised in our community. Secondly, working with other organizations that had contracts and were working with the Yo! Memphis Initiatives. Finally, this year as a service provider to the project. I have seen the initiative development from a grant proposal to what we see today, a thriving organization that is helping young people change their lives in meaningful and positive ways. Our program with Yo! Memphis offers construction trades training for young people seeking to enter the industry. These young people come to us often lacking the necessary skills needed to enter the industry and we have provided those entry level skills needed to either start work or being additional training and education. LeMoyne-Owen College and LeMoyne-Owen College Community Development Corporation have been an integral part of this Initiative since its inception.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Yo! Memphis has made a tremendous impact on the lives of the young people in this City. As being an organization that has been involved with the Initiative since its inception, I can readily see the positive changes that the Initiative has, made. I have seen first hand, test score improve because of the math and reading prep classes, I have seen young persons with no computer skill improve those skills and are now productive tax paying citizens and member of the community in a positive manner, the TV production is all the buzz on cable access in this city the young people are very professional, poised and produce a quality program each week finally, our FUTURES construction trades program, has been embraced by the young people as yet another tool to be used as a way to success. The impact is very evident, when you see these young people interacting in every trade area of the industry, when you see journeymen take these young people under their tutelage and expose these young people to all aspect of the trade they are working in. LOCCDC has seen the focus of the program first hand, the disciple the young people have gained and the commitment the staff has to the program has made it a unique program in this community and one that is being watch very closely as to success, and indeed that success is occurring daily.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

LOCCDC has not really experience any trade-offs or compromises during the project development or implementation. What we have seen is that it takes special skills to be capable of working with young people who have skills deficiency for whatever reason. Young people in this program come to us for the most part without the necessary polish, lacking the human relations skills, not knowing certain etiquettes of life, so LOCCDC has taken the time to reinforce those skills and in some cases even teach these rudimentary skills. It is paying off in young people who will graduate the program, ahead of where they started. Graduate with more that just a construction skill but, enhanced life skills.
4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

LOCCDC and our staff consider the greatest aspects of the program to be its ability to reach young people and change lives. Without a doubt this program has created some opportunities in the area for young people, who would not have been there, if not for the program. Conversely, the initial start-up and some of the early problems made the program difficult; however, those have been overcome and are normal part of any new initiative. Overall, LOCCDC would do it again if the opportunity presented itself; we remain a strong committee partner to the Initiative.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

No I would not.
Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name: Marjorie B. Ford
Organization: Memphis Urban League
Address: 413 North Cleveland
Fax #: (901) 272-1673
Title: Training Manager
Telephone: (901) 272-2491
City/State/Zip: Memphis, TN 38104

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Signature: ____________________

1. What role did you play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

The Memphis Urban League has participated with Youth Opportunity Memphis over the last three years as a contractor to provide job readiness and job placement assistance as well as behavior modification training and counseling services to program participants.

We have historically served both adults and youth from the empowerment zones through job training, behavior development and placement programs at the Memphis Urban League. Youth Opportunity Memphis gave us an added opportunity to serve the youth residing in the empowerment zones through a cooperative effort along with other Youth Opportunity Memphis services to achieve a holistic approach to youth development.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

Youth Opportunity Memphis has had a significant impact on local communities. More youth have taken advantage of the opportunities for personal, academic and cultural growth and development through Youth Opportunity’s activities as opposed to the falling prey to negative influences of juvenile delinquency.

3. Describe the project’s impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The involvement of the Memphis Urban League was to assist with the economic development of the youth through preparing them to enter the local workforce at the entry level. The achievement of job placement would therefore increase the household income for residents living in the empowerment zones.

The Memphis Urban League did not experience any trade-off and or compromises in offering services to Youth Opportunity participants.

The Memphis Urban League provided structured classroom instruction in job readiness and culminated each training cycle with a job fair, which included the participation of local businesses in search of entry-level employees.
4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The balance and variety of services offered by Youth Opportunity Memphis is unmatched by any other youth services provider in the city. The interests and talents of the youth are being developed along with their academic and life skills to create a well-rounded young adult who can make a positive contribution to the community in which he/she lives. Youth Opportunity campuses have become community centers of stability and guidance for area youth. The program has used its role to form stable partnerships between local, state and federal agencies, community-based organizations, private agencies and businesses.

The incorporation of services offered to youth by both government agencies and private contractors has created a learning environment supported by individuals and organizations who stand as leaders in a wide variety of specialty areas, such as educational assessment and instruction, counseling, job training, cultural enrichment performing arts, economic development and financial investment training.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects of the Youth Opportunity Memphis Movement are the fact that formerly underutilized buildings in the empowerment zones have been transformed into centers of activity for area youth which provide a safe environment for them to receive instruction in academic skills, personal development, performing arts and athletic and recreational activities. Youth Opportunity has been effective in reaching out to the surrounding neighborhoods for participation and support of the youth served by YO Memphis through cultural events, which showcase the accomplishments and talents of the participants. The result of efforts of YO staff, contractors and community support has been an increase in the graduation rate of YO participants, increased number of participants passing the GED, increased number of participants enrolling in postsecondary education and an increased number of participants retained in higher education through continued support from YO and other government agencies. The challenge continues to be the recruitment and long-term retainment of those youth most at risk to become or return to juvenile delinquency. The incorporation of the behavior Modification Training and Counseling program through the Memphis Urban League is but one of Yo! Memphis’ many efforts to address this challenge.
DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name: Marc E. Willis  Title: Owner
Organization: Elton Willis Group  Telephone: (901) 452-7070
Address: 3673 High Point Drive  City/State/ZIP: Memphis, TN 38122
Fax:  E-mail: looneyst@hotmail.com

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Signature: ____________________________

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?
DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name: Marc E. Willis
Organization: Elton Willis Group
Address: 3673 High Point Drive
Title: Owner
Telephone: (901) 452-7070
City/State/Zip: Memphis, TN 38122
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Signature

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

The Elton Willis Group became involved in the project midway during the first year of operation of Yo! Memphis. We have provided consulting for the administration and direct programming to participants. In the early phase of our relationship we assisted in the development and final design of the Yo! Memphis Recording Studio. Our goal was to create an environment for learning, complete with equipment. The current program of Music Production and Industry was developed in partnership with Yo! Memphis and has been going strong for about two years. In this course, participants learn how the music industry works, the structure, the areas for careers, etc. Students also are able to create and produce an original song and record it in the Yo! Memphis Recording Studio.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

Originally, the plan was to use an outside vendor to construct the recording studio. However, we were able to work with the administration and develop a plan of action that included the design of the studio and the construction of the studio for less money. We used City of Memphis Facilities Maintenance staff to complete the work. The result was a better-constructed studio that was less expensive.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

The monies used for the development of the Recording Studio and the student curriculum came from the Yo! Memphis Grant.

4. How did the economic impacts of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

The results of the building the recording studio and the student course are many. Students will use and spend time in a real studio. Because the studio has just been completed the plans for its use have now begun to take shape. Students will be able to use the studio at an affordable cost. This will allow many of them to experience something that they would have not been able to afford to experience otherwise. The recorded projects that are developed will lead to improved skills by the participants. This will in turn lead to more opportunities for employment for the participants.
DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

All program developers should be open to using a mix of outside resources and internal resources to achieve the goals of the program. This has worked so well because Yo! Memphis worked hard to develop a good relationship with the contractor, to have us really become "partners" with them instead of "vendors".

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of the program is providing the participants with a real world experience in music production. Many of the students are extremely passionate about this curriculum.
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Lorene L. Essex
Title: Consultant
Organization: 
Telephone: (901) 853-5561
Address: 560 Kenrose St.
City/State/ZIP: Collierville, TN 38017
Fax: (901) 572-2555
E-mail: L Essex.1044@ aol.com

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Signature: ____________________________

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

3. Describe the project’s impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.
4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?
1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

I have served as a consultant to both the staff and out of school youth for the past year. During this time period the focus for the staff was on team-building; building positive inter- and intra-communication as well as establishing better foundations for trust. As this organization has experienced growth and development as a newly formed corporate entity, it has faced the challenges of growing and developing a newly formed work force.

Although quite challenging, the staff has assumed an integral role in forging ahead to ensure effectiveness in these areas. While expanding and ensuring staff effectiveness, this organization has taken on the challenges of being a one-stop service entity for many at risk students in a segment of the Memphis community. While many of the youth are not considered a viable influence in the mainstream population, YO has and is aggressively working to ensure that many students are prepared to blend back into mainstream society as productive, effective contributors to society. The challenges of their students range from academic deficiencies, to lack of productive behaviors to engage effectively in the world of work. This past year I have worked with out-of-school youth in the Leadership Academy, Team-Building, Effective Communication.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The YO organization is essential to the productive growth of the young men and women they serve. The youth that have participated in YO have hope and an attainable future, which was not possible prior to YO. These young adults while planning for a productive future are actively and effectively
maintaining jobs that will enhance their means of being productive members of society.

3. Describe the projects impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

Students who had not completed a High School Diploma were provided support to complete GED studies. In addition they were provided support to attend college or technical studies as well. Students are provided an opportunity to realize a future that was not possible through their ordinary experiences. Many of these students were not responsible or possess the tenaciousness to navigate through the academic bureaucracy to secure the support and assistance available.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

The compromises in working with these students revolve around time. Many of the students are responsible for assisting in supporting of their families. No matter how committed they are to projects or activities, their family obligations outweigh other commitments. They are actively and truly committed to work because families rely on their resources for survival.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

The one-on-one involvement to assist students in obtaining their goals. Other persons in the work-place may require the same type coaching to achieve their personal goals. Such a personal process provides support and problem solving opportunities that would enable many people to realize their own personal goals.
6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most effective is the personal Coaching opportunities. The least effective is the lack of consequences for failure to follow through by students.
OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Signature:  

1. What role did you play in the development of the project?

YO! Memphis has been one of the single most rewarding experiences of my professional career. As a contractor for the project, PSBV Media conducted media-based behavior modification and learning programs for youth ages 14 to 21. Our Graphics Design and Stock Market Literacy program served youth in one junior high school and three high schools in the YO! Memphis target communities. The Distance Learning/Superschool, City-Wide Music Video Contest, and PSBV Partners programs served both in-school and out-of-school youth. PSBV Media activities complemented other YO programs and played a critical role in helping students to develop academic and self-development skills necessary to achieve success as contributing members of the community and the greater society. In addition to my role as the director of these programs, I also run an advocate and ombudsman for YO! in my capacity as a public servant for the city of Memphis. Since YO Memphis was a brand new concept, created just three years ago, it is continually necessary for the community to become acquainted with the services and opportunities it provides. Often make promotional statements for the organization, helping to introduce it to the community to maximize the potential for YO! to interface with other programs and resources pertinent to the YO! mission. This year PSBV Media conducted a how-to workshop on the music video contest as a behavior modification tool for other YO! programs from around the country. I also make frequent appearances on behalf of YO! where other youth services programs and program reviewers make site visits to the city of Memphis. YO! Memphis is number one among YO! programs throughout the country largely because of the inspiration and fine work of its leadership, and the interaction between staff, contractors, participants, and parents. PSBV Media is pleased to be part of this intangible creation.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

After less than three years since its beginning, YO! Memphis has broken the city of Memphis in a manner that is unimaginable. The name YO! Memphis has become a household word. Within a few months after its inception, director of other service programs, residents, parents, and in-school and out-of-school began to buzz about the new YO program in Memphis that offered opportunities for youth, not only in the work-force area, but in all facets of youth development. The YO! Memphis choir performs regularly for many different school and civic events, the youth in the program take an annual college tour, a higher than average number of out-of-school youth complete their GEDS and advance to college, and high school students elevate their TCAP and ACT scores. A collaboration between YO! Memphis, Lenoir-Rhyne College and a community-based organization, Community Health Resources, Inc. has spawned a residential learning center for youth that is scheduled to begin to serve troubled youth in 2003. My favorite YO! program, and admittedly I am a little prejudiced, is the City-Wide Music Video Contest. Children and youth from any community in the city are offered an opportunity to strut their musical talents and video-making prowess in a medium that has captivated the hearts and minds of young people throughout the world. An impressive finale at the Peabody Hotel one year and the Memphis College of Arts the second year made the youth think and feel that they were on the likes of MTV. The videos prompted the Memphis Indie Film Festival to add, for the first time, a youth category which featured videos from the contest. But the YO! videos offer much more than just a contest. The contest guidelines requires the entries and the messages in the music to promote "positive social behavior". If this concept is duplicated through other youth opportunity programs, behavior modification through music could become a social movement in inner cities throughout the country. Last, but not least, the 2002 YO! Memphis Bells and Gent's Ball was absolutely enchanting. Young women and young men, wete it not for YO! would never have experienced a formal introduction to society. The event made an indelible impression on the hearts and minds of Memphians throughout the city.
OTHER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

The YO Memphis Program is in a constant state of development, and by its very nature requires flexibility in the model. This flexibility has been there since the program's inception. The project's director had a vision from the very beginning to set the program up on the "campus model". Multiple satellite campuses feed into a central complex. Limited only by resources, the campus environment model can expand and contract as the need for services expands and contracts which is governed in large part by population and ages of participants in the target areas. Several major adjustments have been made over the life of the project. For example, in the instance of the Distance Learning Program, the unavailability of bandwidth and equipment PSBV Media was required to adjust the concept of central broadcast format to a concept of downloading lectures from the Internet and the expansion of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) format. The Sylvan Learning Program services to YO Memphis were significantly reduced in the second year of the program due, in large part, to student's diminished responsiveness to the program's tutorial format. Sylvan services had been written into the national YO! Program format. In another instance, because of reduced funding in the third year of operations the YO leadership made a decision to close the East campus, largely due to population distribution, and to redirect those resources to more needy services such as the residential learning center for troubled students. In other instances adjustments to staff, in the form of downsizing and reassignments, had to be made to accommodate the need for reorganization and restructuring of service delivery models in an effort to assure the availability of the most effective programs for the most vulnerable populations. The YO program the service model is a very inclusive one, and, for the most part, any changes in program design are made with the full participation and input from staff and the affected contract service provider. From the vantage point of PSBV Media adjustments that have been made by YO Memphis were appropriate, and the program continues to grow in character, integrity, and effectiveness in the Memphis community.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The Enterprise communities in Memphis, Tennessee, which are the target areas for the YO Memphis program are fraught with issues and problems that are signatory to most urban environments. YO Memphis also has been quite successful in making the community aware of its services and getting the message out to the young people that they can be served by the program. The fact that YO takes a case-management approach to guide students through the different stages of passage in a youth's life is extremely valuable and almost a requirement if any significant changes are to be recognized in the blighted conditions of urban dwelling. YO Memphis Work Force Development Specialists are required to seek out youth, identify their needs, deficiencies, etc. and work with schools, parents, and community to prevent dropout, crime, low educational achievement, for example, and to insure college preparedness and job skills development and placement. Seldom is total client management a focus and/or outcome of any one program, and by virtue of its placement rates and academic achievements, YO Memphis has been highly successful in managing young lives that otherwise might be lost to follow-up. YO Memphis has an admirable relationship with the schools in its target areas, and communication with school administrators and teachers is extremely necessary to effectively and efficiently case-manage the lives of students-at-risk. If there is a down side to YO Memphis' success it lies in the ability of the program to truly communicate to the community the responsibility everyone must shoulder—not just the schools, not just parents, and not just YO—but that everyone must share in the responsibility to help train youth to create a more a productive and contributive society.
OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Signature

1. **What role did you place in the development of this project?**

   I have been involved with Yo! Memphis since its beginnings. I wrote one of the original letters of support for the program and our CDC continues to be a partner organization. I have attended activities sponsored by Yo! Memphis for both OSY and ISY, and we have jointly sponsored entrepreneurial training classes with Yo! Memphis participants working in and running our Community Pizza Factory.

2. **Describe the impact that the project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.**

   Yo! Memphis' impact on this community has been tremendous. It has been able to recruit both OSY and ISY, and literally give them the direction and support to turn lives of hopelessness and despair into lives of achievement and fulfillment. It has filled a sociological, economic and cultural void in the lives of its participants through its varied programs, educational opportunities and cultural events, and has been a positive influence in the life of its participants by opening up new avenues and vistas for personal growth and development. I know personally of cases where young men with extensive juvenile records, who had for all practical purposes given up on society and socially acceptable ways of making a living, became involved in Yo! Memphis, completed GED and/or high school and are now working, productive members of the community. I also know of cases where teen mothers who had decided that their only option was to work the welfare system after dropping out of high school have either completed GED training, Adult high school or regular high school and gone on to college.

3. **What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?**

   While I was not directly involved in organizational decision-making, Yo! Memphis' practice of working with and informing partners help me be acutely aware of the fact that it has had to work extremely hard at staying focused on its mission in a competitive social services delivery environment in order to achieve its mission, especially as relates to avoiding duplication of services and competition between service providers. Yo! Memphis has managed, in my opinion, to successfully avoid being sidetracked by bureaucratic considerations, turf preserving and the like and focus its energies on providing an unparalleled multifaceted service delivery system that speaks to the need of OSY and ISY.

4. **What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the programs?**

   The transformed lives of the young people who participate in its many programs are without doubt the most successful aspects of Yo! Memphis' program. I consider the fact that it cannot presently serve every child in the metropolitan area to be its greatest weakness.
OTHER PROSPECTIVE

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Name: James W. Wooten  Title: Patrol Officer / Research & Development / Grants Management Office

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1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

The Memphis Police Department was approached by the staff of the Youth Opportunity Movement of Memphis to become a partner in its efforts to provide educational, employment, and crime prevention opportunities for the youth of Memphis. As all of these issues contribute to crime in Memphis and other major cities across the nation, it was a natural fit for the Memphis Police Department to become one of the partners of Yo Memphis.

MPD officers have provided security for various events sponsored by Yo Memphis. Officers have also served to orient staff member in gang awareness and crime prevention issues to better enable them to deal with situations they may face in the day to day activities dealing with today’s youth. The Command Staff of the Memphis Police Department has provided support in the form of personnel and grant funding for Youth Opportunity Movement of Memphis activities. My duties have included supplying Yo Memphis with a liaison to the Command Staff of MPD.

2. Describe the impact this project has had on your community? Please be as specific as possible.

The Youth Opportunity of Memphis has provided a vehicle to the City of Memphis that allows opportunities and assistance to area youth. The educational opportunities to youth that have dropped out of the conventional educational system as well as assisting youth that want to pursue educational opportunities in colleges or vocational schools. The program also serves the community as an intervention program to positively influence youth of Memphis. Along with the activities conducted by Yo Memphis individually, the organization strengthens the efforts of the community by providing a partner for other activities. The Memphis Police department has programs such as the Juvenile Violence Abatement Project and the Police Readiness Entry Program that partners with Yo Memphis to reach youth in the community.
3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

The support of the Mayor, Memphis Police Command Staff, and the City Council of Memphis, there were no actual trade-offs from my perspective. There was a unified sense of importance of the project that initiated a cooperative effort of all involved in the planning process. The Memphis Police Department has provided in-kind services and assistance for Yo Memphis in its efforts to help the Youth of Memphis.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

I consider the fact that the Youth Opportunity of Memphis offers opportunities to young people that get them prepared to become productive members of the community. Additionally, some of these individuals have no other avenues at their disposal to improve their future chances for success. The hands on contact with the staff for the participants shows a caring atmosphere some of them have not had an opportunity to experience since a young age. The program also offers the opportunity for participants to come in contact with law enforcement officers and community officials in a different light than usual contacts.

I feel the most unsuccessful aspect of the program is the fact that the participants are chosen by geographical factors. I would like to see the program expanded with additional funding and facilities to serve more of the community's youth.
OTHER PERSPECTIVE

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Signature: Gloria Taylor

1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

I represent the Memphis City School system, one of the many agencies that agreed to be a collaborative partner in this project. The organizers identified critical partners with a shared vision in the project's success. I participated in many of the planning phases of the project. Memphis City Schools has operated both in-school and out of school projects with similar objectives as this. However, the scope and vision of this project exceeded many of the services that we were providing at the time. I assisted in identifying and recruiting eligible youth for this project.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible.

This project has had a tremendous impact on the Memphis community. It has coordinated a comprehensive network of services for youth residing in the most economically disadvantaged areas in the city. The project has been successful in assisting the public school system in its efforts to positively impact the drop out rate. The project has provided needed resources, programs, and services to the school system that could not otherwise be provided because of the budget restraints imposed on urban school districts. The project has provided academic services for low performing students and assisted them in attaining required credentials leading to graduation.

Historically there has always been a correlation between drop out rates and crime in urban communities. This project has also identified and targeted services to a population of youth who have dropped out of school and become involved in criminal activity. Services have been intensified with this population and resulted in their reintegration into academic components, attainment of the GED, vocational skills, and employment.

Their efforts have been community based. They have coordinated linkages with agencies through out the community including law enforcement, community services agencies, public and private business entities, churches, and schools.
3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

The trade-offs and compromises required during the development of the project were in its decision to identify specific areas targeted for services and restricting services to the entire city.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of the project has been its ability to motivate its participants to improve the quality of life for themselves and their community. They have taken ownership in the project and have developed a strong sense of pride and appreciation for humanity. The environment created by the project and its staff has been influential in strengthening family and community bonds. It has allowed young adults to experience successes that will have long term effects on the economic growth and viability of the Memphis community.

The least successful aspect of the project is that its services are restricted to specific communities and is not a citywide initiative. This project is a model project with long term benefits to the community and would be more successful if its services were extended throughout the city of Memphis.
Rudy Bruner Award

Pictures

Yo! Memphis
Youth Opportunity Movement
After
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Yo!
Memphis
The Youth Opportunity Movement
The mission of the Youth Opportunity Movement is to help all youth, particularly those most in need, to acquire the necessary skills and work experience to grow into successful adults and explore careers, further education and training.
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Yo!
RECORDING STUDIO