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My Journey to Create a Space for Young Adults to Grow in Community

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Recommended Citation

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Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 349.

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My Journey to Create a Space for Young Adults to Grow in Community

Chelsea Simmeth

An Abstract of a Project
in
Creativity and Change Leadership

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2022

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

Abstract of Project

This project focuses on the development of a safe space for young adults to come together, create community and engage in activities. There is a gap in college-age students' ability to find community outside the university. This project focuses on creating a place where they would be able to meet new people, play sports, and board games, and do arts and crafts. The development of marketing strategies, event planning checklists, and locations for holding events are outlined for the Young Adults (YA)- UNITE (Upbeat, New, and Inviting Transformational Environment) program.

Keywords: young adults, community, creativity, play, event planning, event management, marketing



Chelsea Simmeth

April 28, 2022

Buffalo State
State University of New York
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

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Dates of Approval:

____5/15/22____



Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers
Associate Professor

____5/15/2022____



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Acknowledgments

Thank you to my professors and mentors at Buffalo State College, who guided me on a new path of creativity and gave me academic confidence. Special thanks to Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers, who guided me through this last phase of the master's with a lot of patience. And a shout to my cohort, where would I be without you?

I want to thank my mom, Pamela Simmeth for introducing me to creative thinking. It was love at first sight and I am so thankful that she was the one who showed me the world of creativity.

Thank you to my family who has supported me in more ways and has embraced this journey with me.

I send a warm thank you to all my professors in graduate school and undergraduate, you have made me fall in love with creativity even more.

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SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Purpose and Description of Project

Since I graduated with my undergraduate degree, I noticed that where I create friendships is through Cru, a campus ministry on Buffalo State's campus, and my church. If I didn't continue with my master's, I don't think I would have the friends I do now. College and college clubs and organizations have been where I meet people and make friends. I've noticed from talking with my friends and peers that their source of friendship comes from the people they work with. I'm not saying that co-workers cannot be your friend, but I have heard on multiple occasions that coworkers are not always the best people to be friends with. There is also the age and experience gap that they might be facing which could make it harder to relate. I believe that creating a place for young adults as part of my project will give individuals an opportunity to mingle with one's peers and create quality friendships.

I want to create a place where young adults ages 18-29, including college and postgraduates, can come together to play board games, color, draw, play sports, and just talk. This age group was chosen because my church, Revive Wesleyan, has this as their age bracket for their young adult events. I found this age group works very well for Revive. There are a lot of mentorships that are built-in and having someone that is in a similar stage of life to you is beneficial when making decisions. Building community, networking, and forming relationships with local peers can be very transformational to one's young adult life.

I will be focusing on the Buffalo area and more specifically the southtowns, including Hamburg, Orchard Park, and West Seneca. I have grown so much in the last six months from the community I have been able to surround myself with and I wish more of my peers had the same

connection and opportunity. I believe this would be a fun and informal way to help others connect to local peers and be able to come together and grow with each other.

In a previous graduate class, I was able to research the power of play in adulthood and how continuous play past childhood is beneficial. Learning this, it is even more important to me to implement a place where creativity and play are fostered.

Some of the key concepts that informed my thinking include:

- Play teaches problem solving and stimulates creativity. Free play encourages divergent thinking. Play can expand the ability to “think outside the box.” (Forman, 2018).
- Play can create social connections and create a sense of community. Free play builds connections in the brain and helps the individual navigate complex social interactions (Robinson, 2021).
- Play deprivation can cause anti-social and high pathological behaviors. Lack of friendships can cause isolation which can lead to depression and other chronic health issues. Friendships provide strong support and helps reduce stress (Yenigun, 2014).
- Play lowers stress levels and releases endorphins. Play produces pleasure in forms of small doses of dopamine. Play can improve brain function, stimulate your mind, and boost activities, including memory. “Playful” students demonstrated better coping strategies in stressful situations (Kresser, 2018).
- There are different types of play that stimulate different brain and functioning effects such as imaginative play, object play, rough-and-tumble play, etc. (Forman, 2018).

Through different types of play, we can develop emotional regulation, foster imagination, improve cognitive functioning, and have childlike energy.

I am using this project to focus on the development of my goal and looking at the challenges and overcoming them before it gets implemented. I tend to struggle with jumping from ideation to implementation because developing is boring to me. I want this project to be well thought out and have planned alternative options or steps if necessary. I want to not only look at the obstacles I might face but the best practices and ways to even improve the current processes in place with other organizations.

I have begun to formulate a mission statement for this project. The mission statement right now reads “We exist to provide a safe space for young adults to grow in community through events and activities that foster playfulness, creativity, and fellowship.”

My Personal Goals

- To learn more about the structure of planning a successful ongoing event
- To be a strong leader and be able to create something that I think a lot of young adults will be thankful for and find benefits from participating
- To be able to be flexible and not scared to change direction, and not be closed-minded in modifying my initial plans
- To have a strategic plan, mission, and vision statement
- After this project, I hope to have a well-rounded plan of action that I can implement for the summer/ fall
- I want to improve my developing skills
 - To slow down my process and not get overly excited about executing.

Rationale for Selection

I really like the idea of my project. It encompasses all my passions, and I think what I learn throughout this experience to execute this idea can be translated to my future jobs. I love planning events, especially for college students and I like playing volleyball, board games, and getting out of the house. I believe having community and people in one's support circle is important for one's mental health. Adding volleyball, basketball, and other sports will increase physical health as well. I've talked to my friends, members of Cru, and my boss for my graduate assistantship about my idea. They love it and asked when it would be implemented.

This place I'm creating would be a safe place for people to express themselves and their creativity. I would love to have others share their own passions with the group if such as showing artwork or playing a song they created. My overall long-term goal beyond the masters project is to have a space for young adults to hang out, play games, and grow in community. It would be great if I created a place for college students and postgraduates to have a place to go and feel like they belong. The options are endless on what I can provide for them. A major focus will be to reach out to professionals and discuss events that could give me insight into the behind-the-scenes and ideas about what events to throw for young adults.

This project will help me grow in multiple ways. The first is, growing my leadership skills in event planning. This is the most direct skill I will learn, and I think my focus on developing will show future employers that I can think through an idea and be thoughtful with what and how I choose to implement it. I have had a passion for event planning since I was part of my undergraduate student government. I think this would be a great opportunity for me to improve my skills and be able to learn tools and techniques for my events to be even more

successful. Growing in community, friendships, and networking with people my age will also be helpful in the short and long term. I can build friendships now and down the road, there are high possibilities of running into those people again at job interviews, events, or collaborations in the future.

SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE AND RESOURCE

Literature I want to explore includes event planning with young adults. It also includes how to plan a successful ongoing event, the steps that need to take place before implementing a small event, how to get the word out there about the event, what advertising to do, figuring out possible financial issues, creating a website for the events, creating a Facebook and/or Instagram for the events, and whether an event like this can be self-run.

I'm looking to connect with professionals in the event planning field and/or who work with young adults to get their feedback on best/worst practices in their experience. I reached out to the Small Business Development Center on Buffalo State campus to speak with someone about a mission, vision, strategic planning, and getting to see if they have a roadmap or a plan that could be easily implemented with my focus. I have also reached out to Josh Rutherford, the Young Adult Pastor at Revive Wesleyan. He also plans the young adult worship nights and other events for the young adults at the church.

Literature Review

Activity Ideas

When exploring the possible activities that are intriguing to young adults, I found some possibilities that would work in the space and time that I envision having. These activities include but are not limited to Game Show nights (Family Feud etc.) scavenger hunts, minute to win it games, team building exercises, taking spirituality type quizzes, progressive dinners, small group discussions, and artistic/ crafty projects (Smalldon, R., n.d.). I love the idea of offering multiple themes/ activities because not everyone is going to like volleyball and board games. I want young adults to come into the space and think "there is something here for me, and I don't

have to pretend to be someone I'm not." I think it is also essential to have debates and discussions on important topics and bridge the communication and create deep conversations leading to deeper understandings of one another. Showing a movie could also bring some new people to join especially ones on the introverted side who won't feel extreme pressure to be social (*Ideas for ministry to young adults*. USCCB. n.d.).

Marketing

When researching marketing for young adults, many pages gave tips and ideas on how to market to this generation. With that being said, I felt a lot better that there were people also struggling to market to young adults who are not the easiest people to reach and encourage to go to your event. This is what I found most beneficial and what I'm planning on using in my own practice. What I see myself doing is providing content on the Revive Young Adult (YA) Instagram page at least in the beginning. The followers already are the target audience and with the close collaboration my event will have, and the events Revive YA has already planned, I think this would be appropriate.

My focus would be on providing engaging and interactive content on social media. Examples of this include posting dynamic photos and interesting videos on Instagram. TikTok is also a growing platform, and we could use short videos to advertise our events and what's going on, making our mission clear and that our purpose of existence is strong (Boostability. 2021).

Focus on word of mouth is another way to market to these young adults. When talking to Josh Rutherford from Revive Church, he mentioned that the best way he noticed to get the most people involved in the young adult events was word of mouth. "Don't sell products, sell your purpose." Even though I'm not selling a product, I am selling an experience, and I want to be able

to sell my purpose and know why I'm doing this in the first place. Making it post-worthy goes back to Instagram and Tiktok, having items that are instantly shareable both in real life and online. In the article, this refers to food and having menu items that are above and beyond. In my situation, I can use this marketing technique and spin it in a different direction and make the space and activities Instagram worthy, with having places to take pictures with your friends and possibly having fun food. Appealing to FOMO (fear of missing out) is probably going to be one of the strongest marketing tips I will use. By not having these events every week, I can make them sound special and unique. Having multiple people posting about them can encourage others to come because it's something that they don't want to miss, especially if they know many of their friends will be there. Listening to young adults is also crucial. They are going to tell me what they love and what they hate and it's important for me to take that into account when implementing the program. I want them to tell me what they want to see, and I could do this by having suggestion cards at the event and/or having direct messages open on Instagram where they can feel free to share their thoughts (DesMarais, 2017)

Location(s)

When talking to Josh Rutherford from Revive church, we discussed possible locations where these events could be hosted. I had in mind “The Hub.” It is in the parking lot of Revive and has been used to host middle school and high school nights, and adulting 101 workshops. “The Hub is a 26,000 square foot facility designed with teenagers in mind. The Hub desires to partner and network with community organizations that work with middle school, high school, and college students” (*The hub*, 2022). The Hub consists of 3 smaller areas that could get use during the events. The first one is the gym. It's perfect for basketball and volleyball and even has

locker rooms, showers, bleachers, a scoreboard, and a sound system. This would be perfect to host the volleyball games and have fans in the stands for ones that just want to watch. Next is "the garage." The garage is equipped with lighting and sounds and is meant for occasions like a concert, presentation, or banquet. It can seat up to 150 people at tables. My vision for this room would be for the arts and crafts and board games. Having different stations set up with art supplies and board games gives the young adults a quieter space to engage in creativity and play games. The final spot in the hub is the café and game room. This space has bubble hockey, foosball, ping-pong, pool table, air hockey, and video games. There is also a café area where concessions can be served and comfortable couches that could be used for small group discussions and to play board games (The hub, 2022).

The other area that Josh Rutherford suggested was one of the rooms inside the church. This room has been vacant and is under the supervision of the young adult ministry to use at their disposal. This would limit the volleyball aspect of the event but is big enough to hold board games, crafts, and bingo. This would be an ideal space for young adults to meet up after church since it is right outside of where the service is being held. This is a large room but intimate enough for conversations and discussions to take place.

With these two choices available, I think keeping both doors open is in my best interest. Both these spaces would be great places to host, and they are on Revive property and would be free to use. I think this would be perfect and a great way to enhance the fellowship already created among the Revive young adults. With both options available, the location can switch depending on the activity for that night, or if one of the spaces was already booked, there would always be another option available for us.

Annotated Bibliography

DesMarais, C. (2017, April 20). 27 expert tips for marketing to millennials. *Inc.com*.

<https://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/27-expert-tips-for-marketing-to-millennials.html>

Marketing to millennials tips. The first trick is to get their attention and keep it. Focus on word of mouth, a millennial is more likely to do something when one of their friends tells them about it versus from an ad. This article gives 27 tips on how to attract young adults and ways to keep their loyalty.

Georgia Tech. Event planning checklist. *Georgia Tech*. (n.d.).

<https://specialevents.gatech.edu/resources/guide/checklist>

Event planning Checklist for special events from Georgia Tech. There is a downloadable word document that lists everything one needs to complete when having an event. This checklist keeps event planners on track and makes sure they don't miss anything. It also has a spot where you list your goals and objectives for the event to make sure you are reminded of what your end goal is.

Ideas for ministry to young adults. USCCB. (2022). <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/campuses-and-young-adults/ideas-for-ministry-to-young-adults>

Activity ideas for churches to do with young adults. These activities focus on voting and citizenship because young adults are the least active voters in the United States. The events include having small groups, discussions, and debate nights to talk about social issues. I think

this article would be helpful for this project because it gives me more ideas on what activities to have with young adults that are engaged.

Key strategies for marketing to a younger generation: Boostability. Blog. (2021, July 14).

<https://www.boostability.com/content/mind-the-gap-four-key-strategies-for-marketing-to-a-younger-generation-of-clients>

Marketing ideas and tips to attract young adults. It shows that one should pay a heavy focus on what you put on your website and social media pages. One should make their posts engaging and interactive and have a mission that is bigger than your sales. This article is useful to me because it gives me new ways to look at my social media pages and how I can create a “brand” for these events and have more participants.

Dawson, R. (2010, February 22). *8 guiding principles for pilot programs: A key for enterprise*

2.0. Ross Dawson. https://rossdawson.com/8_guiding_princ/

Step to run a pilot program. This focuses on what one needs to work on and develop before and during the process of doing a pilot program. Selecting a pilot team is most critical and getting people involved and enthusiastic about the program, then everything else will be a lot easier to take off the ground.

Smalldon, R. (n.d.). *Ya ministry event planning resource - wordpress.com.* Young Adult

Ministries. <https://youngadultministries.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/ya-ministry-event-planning-resource.pdf>

Step-by-step planning guide for young adult events for a church. It has a graph that shows the order in which things should be done. It also gives ideas for events including social events,

spiritual development, and service projects. Gives examples of what you need to keep in mind when planning, the who, what, where, when, and why of the event.

Young adults event calendar. The Crossing Church |. (2021, May 20).

<https://www.thecrossing.cc/young-adults-event-calendar/>

Church's calendar of events. They have events Monday through Wednesday ranging from meeting people when one is feeling lonely, young adults gathering for coffee and a short message, and worship nights for college students.

Youth and Young Adult events. Montreat Conference Center. (n.d.). <https://montreat.org/y-ya-events>

Youth and young adult events at a conference center. They have music and worship nights and youth conferences throughout the year. I think this article is beneficial to me because it can give me more ideas about what other churches plan for their young adults.

Young adult events. The Basilica of Saint Mary. (n.d.). <https://stmaryoldtown.org/young-adult-events>

Event ideas for young adults from a church. Events include young adult study for engaged and married couples, jeopardy/ trivia nights, and theology nights at a local bar. This is another article that can give me more ideas on what churches plan for their young adults and that I could potentially use in the future.

SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes.

Below are some concrete ways I can track my progress.

- Networking with those working in the field would have insight into what I'm working towards
- Having a mission and vision statement, beginning a strategic plan
- Narrowing down places that would accept these activities on their property
- Having a list of the expenses that would need to be covered or paid for by the participants
- Possible collaborations with Cru, church, or local colleges
- Create a plan of action

Project Timeline

- February 16th: Meet with the Small Business Development Center- Vision Mission, Strategic plan, name
- Before March 1st: Meet with Josh Revive Church- Obstacles and best practices for young adult events
- Before March 15th: Marketing- finding best practices for reaching young adults, research
- Before March 15th: Activities/ Other ideas- research other activities that could also be fun for young adults
- Before March 15th: Options for where to host, research
- March 21st: Section 1-3 due

- Before April 15th: Come up with a final plan of action
- April 4th-10th: Write up results
- April 18th: Section 4-6 due
- May 2nd: Complete Masters Project
- May 9th: Upload to digital commons

Evaluation Plan

I think one way I might reflect on my success on this project is by assessing and evaluating my overall knowledge of event planning. That could be learning a new way to look at an event and learning how to deal with obstacles of running an event at this scale. It would be also beneficial to come up with my plan of action so that when I do implement the event, everything will already be in place. Talking to event planners and the small business center are benchmarks. By looking back on my initial plan and mission and vision statement I will make sure I stay focused on what I was able to accomplish.

SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

I set out to develop a plan to implement a space for young adults to grow in community. I wasn't sure about the direction of what it would look like or where I would put it but I wanted to explore ways to find a place for adults ages 18-29. I am a part of a church in Hamburg called Revive and they have a young adult ministry already in place. I talked to multiple staff on the young adult team and was invited to share my idea and project at one of their meetings. They loved what I had to offer and related to the struggle of finding community after moving away for college and thought my idea would feel a very necessary need in the community.

I was able to get the green light from the young adult ministry at Revive to implement my project in real life. Everyone on the young adult ministry team was very onboard with my ideas about the different events we could hold. The group was so inspired by my ideas as a group, we decided that this was an opportunity for young adults to meet. One advantage would be that they wouldn't need to consistently meet. For my events, we thought having it quarterly (four times a year) would be the best. This would give us a lot of time to send out "save the dates", advertise, and set up the event. I think having it quarterly would help increase the fear of missing out (FOMO) that I mentioned in the marketing strategies. This shows them that these types of events don't happen often, and one should make sure they go to make sure they don't miss out.

Marketing Plan Through Revive Church

Through my research and talking to staff at Revive, I found word of mouth is extremely powerful in the young adult community. I think this often gets overlooked. If I think about it more, I would be more compelled to go to something that was recommended by a friend or co-worker. I think it comes down to a sense of trust when we have a human connection and someone specifically talks to us about something. In this day and age, there are scams on the

internet. This makes social media not always reliable, and I think that makes it hard for young adults to trust events that are happening based on a Facebook advertisement.

My vision for marketing is to have a small group of people have all the information about the event. They then "telephone" that information to their friends and acquaintances. My "telephoning" one person tells a friend and then that friend tells their friend, and then those people tell their friends and the word spreads. I think there needs some marketing on social media as well to show that it is a real professional event and all the data needed for them to come.

List of possible event ideas

I have been asked multiple times, "What activities would you have?" I brainstormed a list of the activities and events I could see happening at the Hub. This is a realistic list, and I considered the minimum budget I have and the prep work that would go into setting the activities up. I also considered the age range as well as the diverse skills and athletic abilities that would be attending. I thought it was a good list to have handy for when students or staff at Revive ask what would be going on at the Hub, they would have a sense of what to look forward to. The idealist includes:

- volleyball
- basketball
- cornhole
- spike ball
- board games
- Trivia night
- bingo

- karaoke
- discussion nights
- potluck dinners
- speed friending with questions
- softball
- kickball games
- showing a movie
- doing game shows like Family Feud
- arts and crafts
- music, bring their guitar, piano, etc.

The cool thing about the venue being at Revive is there is amazing outdoor space to hold a kickball game or play around with a volleyball or play spike ball. Not all my event ideas need to be indoors, and I don't think they should be. Of course, with the crazy unpredictable weather in Buffalo, having indoor space and a backup plan is a must. Revive also has an outdoor area next to the Hub with a firepit. We can also utilize this area and have s'mores, hotdogs, and discussions around the fire.

Company with a Similar Vision- Events and Adventure

One of my classmates suggested that I check out a company called Events and Adventure (<https://www.eventsandadventures.com/>). They are a company that organizes events where singles (21 and older) can meet each other naturally. I called them to get a little more detail to share. They first have a membership application with basic information, and they require the potential person to go through an interview process with one of their staff. I asked them why they do an interview and they said to make sure that person doesn't have any felonies, is over 21, and isn't

married. They are considered a private club so not everyone can see the schedule of events, only the members can. A person must be 21 because they serve alcohol during the events, and they don't ask for ID. I asked what the company's overall goal was from their services and they said, "social connection, and if someone finds someone, they want to date they could go for it but Events and Adventures would stay out of it because they are not a dating service." I thought what this company is doing is awesome and it's great to see someone else has realized this gap in social connections among adults. They are meeting in 12 cities and there are over 30,000 members so far. Sadly, they don't offer any events near Buffalo. What I can gain from talking to them and seeing their website is that they have standards for letting people in. There are some benefits to screening people, but I do not think it would be necessary at this time to implement with my event since this will be so closely impacted by the young adult ministry at Revive. I do like how people get to be referred in; this is kind of like how the marketing of word of mouth would go.

Event Checklist

I love having checklists and being able to cross tasks off when they are done and be able to see how much I have accomplished and see what else needs to be done. With event planning, there are a lot of tasks that can get overlooked and forgotten about. When looking at event checklists online, there wasn't one I could find that had the layout I was looking for with the steps that I thought were needed for my project. The checklist I liked the most, that seemed to have the details I was looking for was from Georgia Tech. I decided to use that form as a guide and adapt it for my purposes. I like how Georgia Tech's checklist gives you what order you should figure things out, comments on the item, and a box to check when it was completed. I wanted to add a "complete by who" section (a person that is responsible for the task) and a "by

when” date (when the task needs to be completed). This will give a sense of ownership and a specific timeline of when it needs to get done. Using my research of other checklists, I looked at, I created one that I feel encompasses everything my event needs to do. I took out a lot of stuff from the other checklist that I felt were unnecessary like travel costs, entertainment (bands), and book caterer, these are tasks that don't need to be accounted for at my events. In Appendix A you will see my checklist. At this point, these items feel necessary. What I am still unsure about is the time frame starting with twelve weeks out, I think that is a little too intense when I feel like many of these tasks don't have to get done so far in advance for my purposes. What I love in my checklist is "the person responsible" "the task" and "date to be completed by." This is referencing a plan of action that you would normally make at the end of a Creative Problem Solving session. This will allow my team members to feel a sense of responsibility as well as a deadline to get it done. I think it will also encourage others to volunteer for these tasks when they realize the huge event gets broken down into tiny, manageable tasks.

Additional Needs Before Implementation

I intend to implement it this summer (2022) at Revive. I think it's important that these events and my initiative have a name. A name that is welcoming for young adults. I first want to create a name for the event as well, similar to Resonate is the name for our worship night. I was looking at a few options like Connect, Breakthrough, Gather, Unite, or Encounter. I was also thinking having an acronym would also be catchy and be able to show part of our mission. I mostly want a name that sounds pleasing to the ears when someone says, "Hey are you going to blank tonight?" I think having a team together to brainstorm ideas would be amazing and then agree on something together. I think building off ideas and having multiple people agree and have a connection with the name would be beneficial.

Before my team and I start making flyers and advertising, we would need a name. Before we get to the stage of the name, I think just mentioning the idea to friends to help build that excitement and curiosity about what we would do would be beneficial. I know word of mouth is a big thing in the young adult community; I believe the more people that know about and support us before the first event even takes place, the easier it will be to market when we do pick a date. These people will already know what it's all about and be excited to attend. I am in the process of getting that group together and hopefully, we can meet and brainstorm ideas before the end of the semester. I'm planning on doing a traditional I'm going to plan to do the brainstorming sessions which would be in person with a group of 6-8 people. This would include flipchart paper, sticky notes, markers, forced connection pictures, and toys to increase creative output. It would be facilitated by someone else so I would be able to generate ideas with the resource group.

During my brainstorming session, we were able to come up with a lot of different options for names. The trickiest part was finding a name that sounded natural when you say, "Hey come to blank with us!" After a half-hour brainstorming session, we concluded that YA- UNITE was our name. Not only does the name say "Young Adults Unite" but we also created an acronym. UNITE stands for Upbeat, New, and Inviting Transformational Environment. I love this and I think it encompasses my mission statement of being a safe environment and the word unite means coming together. Transformation to me means growth and positive change and that is what I hope young adults get out of this.

We are getting a new young adult pastor at Revive in May. Since my Buffalo State final projects including this master project are due at that time the implementation of this initiative will start in the summer. My thinking behind this is to wait until I can spend most of my time

finding a team and planning out the events and have a pastor that is invested and not leaving in a month. I want whoever is coming in to have that shared vision of these events and be supportive and willing to dedicate some time to help it get implemented. I have created a draft email that I will deliver to the new paster so they can get a better idea of what this is all about Appendix B. This conversation could also be done in person but for the sake of understanding, a mock email is easier to transcribe.

SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

When I was talking about my master's project direction to others, I would get excited and then I would get overwhelmed and drained about how much work still needed to be put in to make it a success. I found the hardest part of event planning is finding a team that shares the vision and goals of the project. For this project, I wasn't actively looking for a team because I didn't feel like I was in the position to need one. I wanted to focus on the development of the project, and I thought where I would need a team would be towards the implementation. With these being individual projects, I also didn't think it was fair to have people spend their time helping me with a project that wasn't theirs. When a project like this falls into my lap in the future, one of my first steps would be to find a team with members that are dedicated to the vision and project. I think the support system and being able to rely on others in a project like this would help tremendously. What I was not expecting was to have a whole organization (Revive) behind me and support my efforts. When I was networking with others about this project, those people could see my passion behind it and fed off my excitement.

I found I like coming up with the event ideas, brainstorming, and figuring out what is needed to make it happen. This is my ideator side coming out (Grivas and Puccio). I was able to work with twenty6 productions for a couple of events this semester. They are an event management team that will put on events for organizations like Step Out Buffalo. They oversee the production of the event, including tickets, set up, tear down, and making sure the event runs smoothly. After going to the first event, the Whiskey Riot, I realized this wasn't part of the event planning that I find joy in and I was turned off by the implementation of an event. My Foursight preference came through again. The early stages of the planning are what I liked the most. The Whiskey Riot was where whiskey makers from around Buffalo come together and have people

sample their whiskey. I am not a drinker and I also get scared of the unpredictability of drunk people. I was out of my element and comfort zone which might have been why I disliked this event. The second event I attended was the Easters Shakers and Makers. It was a local craft show. This event in my opinion was way better and more my speed. I loved seeing what everyone was making, and everyone was just so nice and down to earth. I changed my mind about not liking the implementation part of an event. I found out that my opinion of an event is determined by what type of event it is and who it attracts.

The experience I had with twenty6 productions has been great and it has given me a backstage view of how events go on. I still do not have a full grasp on what exact details go on to get the event from an idea to the start of the event, but I know more than I did before. I found out for the Shakers and Makers event that each vendor must pay an application fee to be considered for the event, and then when they get approved, they must pay an additional fee to be able to go. The vendors also get a part of the admission on top of their sales. I never thought the vendors would get any part of the ticket sales, but I'm glad they do. This doesn't have much to do with creating a place for young adults, but it does give me experience with helping run an event with over 1,000 participants and have it be successful. I think just the knowledge of me knowing what a smooth event looks like can help me create one.

What I surprisingly liked the most was the research. There was some great research out there that was specific to young adult events and marketing which was very helpful. I got an insight into different marketing ways to attract young adults specifically. Some churches also had checklists for their young adult events that work perfectly for what I want to accomplish.

Unforeseen Outcomes

As I mentioned in the Key Learning, I was able to work briefly with twenty6 productions

team and help at two of their events this semester. After the last event, Easters Shakers and Makers, Grace (the co-president of twenty6 productions) offered me to start working them and get paid. Her team is amazing and friendly, and I know I will love working with them again. I don't have many details on how many hours I would work or what would be expected of me, but I'm still excited for the opportunity.

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION

I feel like I have accomplished a lot on this project and what I am most proud of is how close I am to implementing it. I'm excited for this to come to life. I would like to reflect on the original evaluation criteria.

- Having conversations with those working in the field or would have insight on what I'm working towards- I was able to talk to Josh the young adult pastor at Revive and Grace from twenty6 productions about working in events and with young adults. Josh is not an event planner, so he needed people on his team who had those abilities and passions, and he was very excited that I was interested in taking on that responsibility.
- Having a mission and vision statement- I was able to come up with a mission and vision statement with the help of the staff at the Career Development Center at Buffalo State.
- Having a pilot event to track what still needs to be worked out and which parts worked smoothly- I could not host a pilot event. With the time constraints and not having a clear vision of what I wanted, having a pilot event didn't seem as necessary as I thought it would be in the beginning.
- Narrowing down places that would accept these activities on their property- Lucky with Revive the help of Josh, I can use the Hub and I didn't need to look at other venues.
- Having a list of the expenses that would need to be covered or paid for by the participants- With the activities I brainstormed, the cost looks to be zero. If there

is any cost that will come up in the future, it will be minuscule and will get covered by Revive

- Possible collaborations with Cru, church, and local colleges- I was able to connect with Revive. I have mentioned my idea to members of Cru and Cru staff, and I believe when we start the implementation process, they will be willing to help in any way they can.

What I see myself doing is finalizing loose ends with the Revive to get my event up and running. When I say loose ends, I mean telling the young adult team that I am serious about taking action beginning in the summer and creating a team that will work with me to help plan. I'm going to talk to my friends with Cru, members of community groups with Revive, and young adults that go to Resonate at Revive and see if they would be interested in implementing this with me. I now know how important a team is with event planning and want to make a significant effort in finding a great team.

Taking this process, a step further, with my new relationship with twenty6 productions, they are in connection with Step Out Buffalo. Step Out Buffalo tailors many events for all ages around Western New York. I think bringing my idea to them could bring new participants that I could never reach on my own. The publicity from them could change the outlook of the event. I was also thinking about getting twenty6 productions involved with the event management as well. At this time, I am not sure if Step Out Buffalo or twenty6 productions are needed to get this event out of the ground. As of right now, I see it as an unnecessary cost and hassle, but in the future, if we need help with either the management or marketing, those would be the companies I would reach out to first for assistance.

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Appendix A

Chelsea Simmeth's Event Management Checklist

Name of event – what	
Date of event	
Time of event	
Location of event	
Event coordinator/contact person	
Target audience – who <i>Who is this promotion targeted at?</i> <i>What does the audience need to know?</i> <i>What will hold their interest?</i>	
Message – what <i>What do you want to say to the target audience?</i> <i>What do you want them to know/do?</i>	
Objectives – why Be clear about what you hope to achieve with this event.	
Description of event – what	
Evaluation criteria established <i>What were our aims/objectives?</i> <i>Did we achieve what we set out to do?</i> <i>How do we measure effectiveness?</i> <i>What tools do we use to measure our success?</i>	
Checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Who will be involved in the event <input type="checkbox"/> Date/s of event determined <input type="checkbox"/> Location/venue for event booked <input type="checkbox"/> Target audience determined <input type="checkbox"/> Message determined <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives set <input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation criteria established	

Early event planning	Person responsible	Action	Date to be completed
Determine goals and purpose of event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is your target audience for the event? • What are your learning objectives, if applicable? • What are your key messages? • What do you hope to accomplish? • How will you gauge effectiveness? How does this event complement the Strategic Plan?			
Select date and time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult calendar/religious calendars when selecting • Think of culture/workday schedule when selecting times 			
Set budget- Optional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research potential funding sources such as partnering with other departments 			
Select and reserve venue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hub • Living Room rm 134 • Elsewhere 			
Schedule rain plan, if applicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select venue • Determine who will make the rain plan call and when you will make your final decision • Speak with vendors about refund and cancelation policy costs and deadlines • Determine how and when you will communicate the rain location to your guests 			
Determine guest list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider your target audience and key messages 			

Early event planning	Person responsible	Action	Date to be completed
4 weeks prior Confirm staff/volunteers for each aspect of the event			
Hospitality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome signage at entrance • Greeters 			
Housekeeping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning before and after • On standby during the event 			
On the day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for set up by whom • Time for dismantle by whom • Tables, chairs layout • Floor plan • Name tags • Clear location directions • Registration desk 			
After the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person responsible • Debrief • Comments on all aspects (negative and positive) • Guest feedback • Guidelines for improvement next time • Evaluation against criteria • Celebration • Thank you's 			

Note: The checklists above were developed through researching many checklists. In particular, the Georgia Tech source was extremely useful

Appendix B

Draft Email For New Young Adult Pastor

Below is a sample email/ conversation with the new young adult pastor phrased as an email for simplicity

Good Afternoon,

My name is Chelsea Simmeth and I am a part of the young adult ministry at Revive. My passions have been events, young adults, activities, and play in adulthood. With all of those in mind, my master's project is about creating a safe place for young adults to grow in community with another. My mission statement is "we exist to provide a safe space for young adults to grow in community through events and activities that foster playfulness, creativity, and fellowship." I would love to have activities and events hosted at Revive, specifically in the Hub. Some of the events could be but are not limited to:

- volleyball
- basketball
- cornhole
- spike ball
- Board games
- Trivia night
- bingo
- karaoke
- discussion nights

- potluck dinners
- speed friending with questions
- Softball
- kickball games
- showing a movie
- doing game shows like Family Feud
- Arts and crafts
- music, bring their guitar, piano, etc.

I have talked to many of my young adult friends about my vision and they love the idea. I know there is a social gap in young adults' life and this would be one of the ways we could close it.

As of right now, I have created a revived checklist of what is needed to be done, mock flyers, and a passion for the implementation of these events. What I would need from you, is your support and resources to get these young adults the social opportunities they need to grow in community.

Thank you so much

-Chelsea Simmeth

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Chelsea Simmeth

Chelsea Simmeth

Date May 15th 2022