ThinkLab

Overview

At the heart of Our Place at Ben Washer Park will be the Think Lab. Housed on the second floor, the ThinkLab will be a multifunctional workspace that will provide opportunities and resources for education and skill building. ThinkLab programs will inspire and activate young people to use their creativity and talents to solve challenges in their own lives and their community. Designed in partnership with CityThink (a local nonprofit that specializes in teaching the crafts of service leadership, financial literacy, and social entrepreneurship to urban youth), the lab will feature the equipment, technology and, human and material resources that youth and young adults need to flex their social entrepreneurial muscles. ThinkLab programing will help young people be better prepared for higher education, career and life. From creating their own products, to starting a business, to designing an innovative approach to a community problem, the ThinkLab will help young people develop and implement their projects. The ThinkLab will also connect senior citizens to technology, providing excellent opportunities for intergenerational activities with two-way learning. In addition, The ThinkLab will offer workshops and training sessions on financial health and community development to members of all ages.

The Think Lab will serve as a hub of engagement for community members to learn, try, create, develop and seek guidance and resources to achieve transformational goals.

ThinkLab Program Areas

Project Development

The ThinkLab will guide individuals and teams through project development. With the help of ThinkLab staff, specialists and volunteers participants will refine and research ideas, develop project goals, identify resources, create written plans, implement and produce. Think Lab Leaders will also work with participants to assess skills gaps and connect participants with training opportunities.

Entrepreneurial Development

The ThinkLab will provide workshops to assist individuals to start or expand entrepreneurial endeavors. Training will include topics covering business planning, marketing, management and building entrepreneurial skills and mindset. Special emphasis will be given to social entrepreneurship and assisting participants with incorporating traditional business models in creating revenue streams that impact community.
**Creative Thinking**

Creative Thinking programs will explore nontraditional ways of thinking and approaching problem solving. The program will help individuals tap into their innate creative skills and, through interactive activities, enhance those skills, learn how they can be applied and build creative confidence. Participants will be encouraged to actively brainstorm, leading them to explore and try new methods. The base curriculum will include learning alternate perspectives and approaches through Mind mapping, Reframing and Insight.

**Financial Wellbeing**

Financial wellbeing programming will equip participants with the knowledge and skills to reach financial stability and thrive. Workshops will use real world scenarios and practical approaches to help young adults secure financial wellbeing for themselves and their families. Participants will expand their understanding of the impact of financial wellbeing on the long-term security of their families and how that contributes to the overall economic health of the community. Addressing various stages in life, workshops will include budgeting and saving, managing debt, building credit, homeownership, insurance, investment tools, and financial planning to weather emergencies and meet long term goals.

**STEM**

ThinkLab S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) will be a curriculum-based program that gives youth an opportunity to learn next generation science standards and understand science fundamentals. Our S.T.E.M. programs will promote qualities of creativity, self-efficacy, creative confidence, and self-reliance and skills of divergent thinking, convergent thinking, design thinking in children and youth. Programming will use custom designed fun and interactive workshops to stimulate participants to explore and research their interests, develop and test theories and design practical applications to real world challenges.

The ThinkLab will make technology accessible to all ages, providing participants with a wide array of tools to solve problems, express their creativity and enhance their lives.

**Design & Fabrication**

“We Made It” is an intergenerational program that will teach people how to problem solve, design and build, connecting active learning with community engagement. Through We Made It, participants will create with their hands, learning to work with different materials and fabricate with tools, unleashing their imagination and creativity while building confidence and universal skills. We Made It will demystify design through skill building workshops using the free software Sketchup Make.