



The **Green** Light Project

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1.0 BACKGROUND

Maitland Garden Village (MGV) is a formal, coloured community in Pinelands in the Cape Town area. According to a current community survey, there are 1641 residents in MGV, 457 of whom reside in backyard shacks. Established 89 years ago, MGV has gone through several challenges as a community. In 1964, the government attempted to relocate the residents under the Group Areas Act. However, the community banded together and convinced the government to allow them to stay; and the community has been united ever since. In the years since, MGV has continued to develop the assets that it does have, including closeness as a community and talents of their residents. There is, however, a serious obstacle standing in the way of MGV making drastic steps toward growing as a community – attaining funding for programmes when the majority of the residents are living in poverty. Without the necessary resources, the community cannot execute programmes, including youth development projects that will continue to help them reach their goals as a community.

1.1 BENEFICIARIES

The primary beneficiaries of the programme in MGV are:

- **The MGV community** by way of –
Community service opportunities to aid community members, decreased idle youth problems, less drug abuse, less teenage pregnancy, potential lowering of unemployment rate, further increasing community closeness.
- **The participants of the programme** by way of –
Individual attention that is often lacking, encouragement to succeed, less likelihood of getting involved in destructive behaviour, more opportunities for educational and career success in the future, leadership development, talent development, cultural appreciation, pride in community, pride in self.
- **Programme facilitators** by way of –
Leadership development, increased pride in community, pride in self, work experience.
- **Neighbouring communities** by way of –
Participation in programmes for their community members and youth, interaction and positive collaboration with Maitland Garden Village.
- **Outside sponsors** by way of –
Involvement in community and youth development, positive exposure.
- **The City of Cape Town** by way of –
Development of future leaders, helping the city to achieve their goals in the areas of youth development and arts/culture.

2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A lack of programmes for the community lead to idle residents plagued by substance abuse, crime, teenage pregnancy, and a lack of motivation for career aspirations. Without proper programming aimed toward the community, these problems will continue.

2.1 CAUSES

The reason for the lack of skill development in MGV is a lack of resources, in particular, lack of funding, equipment, and facilities. Since a large amount of residents in MGV are either unemployed and/or are living in poverty, there are not enough funds available for the youth to pursue extracurricular activities outside of school. Since they do not have constructive ways in which to spend their time outside of the classroom, the youth resort to destructive behaviours, including drug abuse, excessive alcohol consumption, and unprotected sex. These problems tend to follow the youth into adulthood due to a lack of community support or intervention.

2.2 CURRENT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

MGV residents have been working recently on developing their youth through some programmes in the community. These include church youth groups, a thriving soccer programme, a drum majorette programme, and a youth band. Other community initiatives have included organising and executing a successful and energetic Village Day, which included a Mr. and Miss MGV pageant and a youth talent show. For the adults in the community, there are programmes such as the Roaring Sixties, a senior group, and Esther's Dream Centre, a women's make-over initiative. While all these programmes have been successful in motivating the community, there are still a lot of people that are not being reached due to the limited resources associated with these programmes. The community does, however, have a strong drive to improve their situation.

3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of this programme is to provide a viable alternative for people to engage in activities beneficial to the community; these activities are also engaging and enriching to the mind and used to foster future success.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

- **Begin a programme with activities of interest to the target audience.**
This will provide the community with an alternative and more positive outlet for their talents and provide them with a constructive way in which to fill their time.
- **Identify individuals invested and able to lead this programme.**
Provide leadership and job opportunities for those who are committed to helping the community advance.
- **Identify a suitable location to hold events.**
Having a location that is conducive for skill development of all types is essential for the success of the programme.
- **Advertise the group, its values, and meeting times.**
Encourage as many individuals as possible to benefit from the programme.

- **Acquire supplies for the group meetings.**

Through fundraising efforts and outside donations, supplies needed to allow the community to explore their talents will be provided.

- **Encourage the residents to grow in positive ways.**

Individual attention and invested interest in seeing residents grow and progress is essential in a successful development programme.

3.2 PRINCIPLES

The MGV development programme is committed to the following principles to achieve its aims and objectives:

- Inspiration and further development of the residents by channelling their strengths, passions, and talents.
- Appreciation of the facilitators and the work that they do.
- Promotion of healthy relationships with others inside and outside the programme.
- Fostering of safe, happy, and healthy living.
- Inspiration of self-confidence and self-worth.

3.3 PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

The uniqueness of this programme stems from the fact that it is community driven. This approach teaches the leadership development and responsibility. The community is able to take pride and ownership in the programme, which makes them more invested in making it successful. Therefore, there is the opportunity for the programme to be sustainable. Something else that makes this programme stand out is the fact that it will not just serve the MGV community – it will help surrounding communities who will be encouraged to be a part of this programme, as well. There is also the opportunity to strengthen relations between MGV and Oude Molen Eco-Village (OMEV). Since some of the locations to be utilised by the programme are in OMEV, there is the chance for the participants in the programme to become familiar with OMEV's resources so that both communities can grow from interactions with one another. Finally, a major highlight of this programme is the fact that it utilises the already exceptional talents of the youth and adult residents of the community. By taking advantage of talent and passion, the programme will prove to be successful.

3.4 INITIAL PLANNING

Starting in October 2011, a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in Massachusetts, United States of America began work with the leaders of MGV to help them to achieve their goal of successfully initiating a development programme for their community. There has been extensive communication and collaboration between the students and the MGV residents to establish a vision for their future. A group of leaders has been established for the programme, as well as an outline of what the programme will entail. There is also a target audience that the programme will benefit. Locations for the programme have been researched, and plans for supplemental fundraising have been made. There are also plans to train the leaders of the programme to ensure that the participants have the most qualified assistance possible.

3.5 MAKING PROGRESS

In order to widen community participation, the WPI team welcomed residents to attend a community development meeting. This would mark the first meeting of anyone and everyone that had an interest in creating a youth/community development programme. The meeting was structured and organised so that the discussions would be geared towards obtaining the information needed, while also being relaxed enough so that the attendees could break unexpected grounds that may not have been predicted. Under the leadership of Scott Jiusto, the students' advisor, the meeting's discussion was focused, while occasionally allowed to flow freely. It was pivotal that the leaders in the community were taking charge when planning next steps and leadership roles because another necessary outcome of the meeting was the gradual decrease of the WPI team's involvement. It was essential that planning from

here after was done with minimal support from WPI's end so that the project remains sustainable after the departure of the group.

4.0 THE GREEN LIGHT PROJECT

4.1 COMMITTEES

As a result of the community development meeting described above, the Green Light Project formed into nine committees.

4.1.1 FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Members: Margaret, Elenore, Elaine, Macey, Sheila, Ronell

Mission: To raise money for the other committees to purchase equipment

Description: The Fundraising Committee is responsible for funding the initiatives of the other eight committees. As such, they were the first committee to take immediate action toward achieving their goals. Their first fundraising effort was a boerewors sale on the community soccer field. WPI invested in the project with a donation to allow the committee to purchase start-up supplies. Then, on 2 December and 9 December, the members of the committee sold the boerewors to community members. The money raised was used to purchase paint for the MGV Methodist Church hall because the Green Light Project is using it as its main venue for programme meetings. The funds were also used to purchase water bottles for participants in the Gym Committee. The Fundraising Committee plans to execute other fundraising efforts biweekly including karaoke contests and talent shows, cake sales, and clothing sales.

4.1.2 AWARENESS COMMITTEE

Members: Caren-Lee, Jamie-Lee, Kershia

Mission: Raise awareness of issues including HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, verbal)

Description: The Awareness Committee, led by a nineteen year old young woman, has been making great strides to raising consciousness of important issues plaguing MGV. Most immediately, the group has planned an AIDS awareness presentation on 20 December during which a person suffering from HIV will speak to the community. The leader of the committee recognizes that there are difficult situations facing the residents of MGV that are not discussed because they are sensitive topics. However, if more attention is brought to these difficulties, then progress to overcome them can be made.

4.1.3 DANCING COMMITTEE

Members: Bernodean, Ryan, Charlton, Ashney

Mission: Choreographed and freestyle dancing led by a youth instructor

Description: The Dancing Committee is an excellent example of the method of youth leading youth. Taught by a very talented seventeen year old young man, the participants learn choreographed dances, while also being allowed to express their natural talent. This committee is evidence to the immense talent that is present within MGV that was previously not given the outlet to develop.

4.1.4 GYM COMMITTEE

Members: Esmeralda, Lucia, Lena, Fiona

Mission: Hold fitness classes based on demand

Description: The goal of the Gym Committee is to provide all members of the MGV community with the opportunity to lead more healthy and active lives. If the residents can take pride in their health, then it may motivate them to improve other areas of their lives. The leader of this committee is a trained fitness instructor who plans to lead various gym classes including walking, spinning, zumba, yoga, and aerobics. Currently, a walking group has been started up in which members of the community meet multiple times each week to walk around the village.

4.1.5 GARDENING COMMITTEE

Leader: Nathan Hardenberg

Mission: Lead beautification of the community

Description: The leader of the Gardening Committee is a young man who is very passionate about planting and making MGV a more beautiful place to live. His goal is to bring the garden back to Garden Village. After obtaining the necessary start-up supplies, the committee set out to start their community beautification initiatives on 15 December by cleaning up yards and planting gardens. The goal of the program is to inspire the residents of MGV to take pride in their homes.

4.1.6 SOCCER COMMITTEE

Coach: Germalowdean Rezant

Mission: Support a competitive under-nineteen youth soccer programme

Description: There already exists a vibrant and popular youth soccer programme in MGV. The goal of the Soccer Committee of the Green Light Project is to provide those older participants in the program the opportunity to truly develop their athletic talents in a more advanced way. By training competitive athletes, the youth can work to make a future out of soccer.

4.1.7 DRUM MAJORETTES COMMITTEE

Coach: Natasha Hendricks

Mission: Practice new dances so that the team may be competitive

Description: The Drum Majorettes Committee is designed to support the already existing team. A drum majorette programme has been established in MGV since the 1970s. However, due to a lack of finances, the team has not been able to be competitive recently. Through support from the Fundraising Committee, the coach of the Drum Majorettes Committee hopes to purchase the proper uniforms and equipment for her majorettes. In general, the group is another opportunity for the youth of MGV to develop their talents and to give them something about which to be passionate.

4.1.8 HOMECARE COMMITTEE

Leader: Miriam

Mission: Care for elderly residents of MGV

Description: The Homecare Committee is in place to aid the elderly residents of MGV. A group of volunteers will go to visit the older people in need of assistance and help them to carry out simple tasks such as washing, cutting nails, restocking toiletries, and cleaning the house. This programme is a fantastic opportunity to include all ages of residents in the Green Light Project.

4.1.9 MUSIC COMMITTEE

Leader: Robyn

Mission: Practice instrumental and vocal music

Description: The Music Committee capitalizes upon the vast interest that is present among the youth of MGV in music. Through this programme, the youth's talents can be developed in a positive way. The programme will include creating instruments on which the youth can practice, as well as vocal lessons.

4.2 PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION

The organization of the Green Light Project administration will be divided into three tiers.

Tier 1 – Oversight Committee:

This committee will be comprised of three individuals who will act as trustees for the programme. In order to make fair and unbiased decisions, the three members will not have any direct involvement within the youth development programme. The duties of the oversight committee are as follows: they will aid in the development of the Green Light Project, assist the programme directors and coordinators in any decision making processes, oversee the project's overall progress, provide guidance to programme faculty when needed.

Tier 2 – Executive Board:

The Executive Board consists of two parts; the first being the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary and the second being the program leaders.

Chair – duties of the Chair are as follows:

- Oversee all programs and programme leaders
- Run meetings and create agendas
- Maintain contact with outside stakeholders

Vice Chair – The duties of the Vice Chair are as follows:

- Support and assist the Chair in their initiatives
- Aid the Chair in overseeing the project programs
- Be available to aid and assist programme leaders when Chair is unavailable

Secretary– The duties of the Secretary are as follows:

- To record all meeting minutes and agendas
- Maintain timely and efficient communication between the Green Light Project leaders

The leader of each programme – The duties of the committee leaders are as follows:

- Organize and plan their committee's meetings and events
- Educate the participants in their committee and encourage self-growth by building self-esteem, confidence, providing leadership opportunities etc.
- Control and authorise all expenditures involving their committee
- Oversee the participants and overall programme progress

Tier 3 – Community Volunteers and Outside Participants:

These community members and outside participants will aid the Green Light Project in their initiatives, assist youth and administration when needed for weekly classes, help facilitate weekend programmes, annual events etc. Assist in fundraising efforts and applaud youth in their progress and contributions.

4.3 VENUE

There has been research conducted into obtaining a venue to house the above described programme. This research has resulted in the location of three sites:

- The Eco-Theatre in Oude Molen Eco-Village,
- The community hall, and
- The Methodist Church Hall in MGV.

Discussions with the people in charge of the locations have commenced and the three locations will be utilized for various programme activities as appropriate.

5.0 SUMMARY

Receiving any guidance, equipment or additional funds would greatly benefit MGV's Green Light Project. Guidance and advice would expedite the projects progression as well as facilitate sustainability. Since the programme is new, any support would greatly aid MGV and neighbouring communities, as well as the city of Cape Town as a whole. The project focuses on teaching important life skills that residents could use to benefit themselves, their families, the communities in which they live and the city. In its entirety, the Green Light Project will help develop the future of the city of Cape Town. Using early intervention strategies will encourage youth to strive for success as well as a happy and healthy life style.