

Multicultural Heritage Agricultural Society

Project: *Seed an Idea* – Young Agricultural Entrepreneurs Program

Seed an Idea is designed as a four Phase program to introduce Parkland County youth between the ages of 14–18 years old to careers in agriculture and to the business requirements inherent in agriculture entrepreneurship.

In Phase 1 (year one) the pilot program offers a unique opportunity for rural and urban youth to learn about starting an agriculture business and to explore agricultural opportunities. The students will walk through the process that an entrepreneur would take to start a business. Year One will see teenagers participating in educational seminars, an agricultural Speakers Series, and tours of traditional and non-traditional agriculture businesses. Youth will be sponsored by local rural businesses and supported by staff contracted through the Multicultural Heritage Centre, they will meet with experts who will help them in the development of their business model while they explore careers in agriculture, with the intended outcome being a mentored agriculture business startup.

Rationale:

As the next generation increasingly looks to our cities for their livelihood, it becomes ever more paramount that agriculture is seen as an attractive industry for present and future employment and as a contributing and financially viable business. Youth need the opportunity to understand agriculture is not just farming; it's a sustainable way of life. With a growing population and a demand to feed 9 billion people by year 2050, the agriculture industry needs talented, driven and passionate youth willing to make a commitment to agriculture. Most of these young people do not have the production background previous generations enjoyed growing up in.

Goal:

Implement Phase One toward developing a **Youth Agriculture Entrepreneurship Centre of Excellence** in Parkland County.

This project will introduce youth to potential careers and employment opportunities in agriculture, including traditional businesses and the new and emerging careers created as our world changes. Career choices can include (to mention a few): farm production; agribusiness management and marketing; agricultural research and engineering; food science; production science; processing and retailing; banking; education; landscape architecture; urban planning; environment; land use; energy and other fields.

Total financial request from Parkland County to complete Phase 1: \$75,000

Outcomes for Parkland County:

- Website with Agriculture Career focus and information (using Soil to Sky as a starting base – a website developed by AB Agriculture and Food Council and then transferred to the Multicultural Heritage Centre)
 - Current value conservatively estimated at \$75,000 – requesting **\$20,000** from Parkland County to re-design, re-brand and update content.
 - Creating a visual identity for the program and a strong, effective marketing plan before branding the website – requesting **\$10,000** from Parkland County

(Note: In the brief period this site was active under the Ag and Food Council it was receiving 6,000 hits per month.)

- A new youth organization that focuses on agriculture and entrepreneurship/small business
 - Strategy meetings, field trips, surveys – requesting **\$5,200** from Parkland County
- An Agriculture and Youth Action Plan that will have starting measurements points and a plan for Phase Two.
 - Administration, Project Management and writing Youth Action Plan – requesting **\$35,000** from Parkland County.
- Youth more engaged in connecting to the agriculture community via social media
 - A plan to engage youth in getting actively involved in agriculture through social media – requesting **\$4800** from Parkland County
- The Multicultural Heritage Centre and Green Hectares working collaboratively on agriculture solutions and programs that will tie in with the Agricultural Pillar in Parkland County's Strategic Plan

Outcomes for Youth:

- An opportunity for interaction in an environment close to agriculture and food production.
- Youth gaining a better understanding on opportunities and challenges involved in agriculture directly from the local people.
- Development of basic job skills.
- An opportunity to engage in small business/entrepreneurship.
- An understanding of the economics of entrepreneurship.
- Involved, responsible mentors actively engaging with youth.
- Opportunity to express ideas, direction, programs, in order to create solutions.
- New doors and new opportunities.
- Continued hope for the future of agriculture.

Budget:

Agriculture Career focus website	(contract position)	\$20,000
Marketing plan and visual identity	(contract position)	\$10,000
Strategy meetings, field trips, etc.	(contract position)	\$ 5,200
Agriculture and Youth Action Plan	(contract position)	\$35,000
Social media strategy	(contract position)	<u>\$ 4,800</u>

Phase 1: Total \$75,000

Evaluation/measurement factors (tangible):

Parkland County will have an active agriculture careers website, a completed Action Plan (Business strategy), plus a minimum of 20 high school students that have participated in a full year of exposure to agriculture careers and business opportunities.

Evaluation/measurement factors (intangible):

Program marketing plan and Visual identity, survey results, social media strategy, awareness of Parkland County lead on pilot project by agriculture industry, AB Agriculture and Rural Development, Parkland School Division.