

# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES  
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jill Bourne

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON COLLEGE AND  
CAREER READINESS  
INITIATIVES

**DATE:** October 30, 2019

Approved



Date

11-4-2019

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the update on the College and Career Readiness Initiatives being implemented throughout the City of San José, including San José Engage, San José Aspires, Career Online High School, Working Scholars, San José Works, and SJPL Works.

## OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee will be informed about progress to date on the following specific programs that support College and Career Readiness outcomes for City residents:

- San José Engage, which seeks to inspire social action and local civic engagement of teens within their communities;
- San José Aspires, which seeks to provide San José's students with the skills and knowledge needed to achieve their academic or career goals;
- Career Online High School, which offers adults the opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma and a career certificate;
- Working Scholars, which offers Career Online High School graduates an opportunity to earn a college degree;
- San José Works Youth Jobs Initiative, which is a partnership between work2future and the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) operated by PRNS and aims to provide 1,000 youth with employment opportunities; and,
- SJPL Works, which provides an extensive network of resources for small business owners, entrepreneurs, and career/employment seekers.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Education and Digital Literacy Strategy approved by City Council in May 2018 provides a framework for organizing and enhancing City efforts to impact educational outcomes for youth in three developmental categories: Early Education (*Entering School Ready to Learn*); Learning by Grade Level Proficiency (*Expanding Education Beyond the School Day*); and Pathways to Post-Academic Success (*Graduating Ready for College and Career*). An overlay priority that is intrinsic to each developmental stage is the need to acquire age-appropriate digital literacy knowledge and skills.

Every student should be able to choose a meaningful path upon graduating from high school, whether it be attending a community college or four-year university, launching a small business, or developing valuable trade skills. Specific actions include connecting potentially at-risk youth with quality programs earlier in their school careers so that graduation and future success becomes an expectation.

## **ANALYSIS**

The City employs an iterative approach that utilizes small scale pilots and gradual expansion to ensure that programs meet the needs of the community, and that City staff are able to develop and deliver quality programming at scale. This update focuses on six areas of implementation: San José Engage, San José Aspires, Career Online High School, Working Scholars, San José Works and SJPL Works.

### **San José Engage**

San José Engage (SJ Engage), a San José Public Library (SJPL) initiative sponsored by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, seeks to inspire social action and local civic engagement in young people within their communities. SJ Engage empowers local youth to connect with their local government leaders and community partners, inspires deeper learning on civic issues, and provides them with the tools to put their ideas into action.

Throughout history, youth have played a critical role in change. Youth, locally and nationally, are advocating for the issues they care about through campaigns like March for Our Lives and Black Lives Matter. Recognizing the need to support the development of local youth as fully participating citizens, SJ Engage provides space, resources and opportunity to use tools to connect and collaborate. In Fiscal Year 2018-2019, SJPL partnered with the company LRNG to create a resource rich environment that combines digital and local learning experiences that affect youth and their communities and results in unlocking real-world opportunities such as internships and a chance to connect with government leaders.

Outreach has been a core component for the SJ Engage program. SJ Engage staff has completed 63 outreach events such as class visits to local schools, tabling at community events and



connecting with 2,858 people. Staff has partnered with over 20 local non-profit organizations, community and government leaders, including SIREN, HomeFirst, LGBTQ Youth Space, and Donor Network West to provide real-world opportunities for SJ Engage participants.

- SJ Engage was able to secure local and state internships for teens at the Office of District 3 City Councilmember Raul Peralez, Office of Mayor Sam Liccardo, and Office of State Assemblymember Evan Low.
- SJ Engage staff was embedded with a class at Andrew Hill High School for a week during March 2019. As part of Andrew Hill's Social Justice Academy, SJ Engage staff worked with students through the SJ Engage curriculum. Future plans include connecting students with guest speakers from non-profits and leading a more in depth classroom-based discussion on local civic issues and planning social action projects.
- On April 19, 2019, Teens Reach (branch library teen advisory, leadership, and volunteer group) hosted a community circle discussion with District 10 City Councilmember Johnny Khamis on local civic issues inspired by SJ Engage curriculum and participation.

SJ Engage was granted continued funding from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation for 2019-2020. Throughout the 2018-2019 year, teens expressed a desire for deeper learning on civic issues, a need to connect with others, and a way to put their ideas into action. The next iteration of SJ Engage responds to these demands in a way that creates a foundation for lifelong civic participation.

In 2019-2020, SJ Engage focuses on discussion and reflection in Learning Circle format. The learning circle facilitation was developed using Harwood Institute community conversations, Bonner Network and Highlander Folk school group learning models, and restorative justice practices to deepen learning about the issues and strengthen soft skills to emphasize social and emotional learning through reflective discussion. The learning circles use the SJ Engage curriculum that has been updated with additional resources and now is hosted on the Articulate360 training platform that SJPL uses for online training. The curriculum will support learning circles and has an online toolkit/discussion guide for educators and other librarians to use for their programs.

Teens are the largest group of volunteers at the library, making up 62% of total volunteers, but only make up 37% of total service hours. Most of those hours are earned through participating in Teens Reach. In SJ Engage 2.0, the Teens Reach groups will have a chance to take a deeper dive into issues, discuss them in learning circles and then take action. SJ Engage seeks to empower teens by allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and then make changes in their own community.

Inspired by the Teens Leading Change initiative at Los Angeles Public Library, the second phase of SJ Engage seeks to motivate and support Teens Reach groups who want to create and implement a social action project in their community, inspired by the issues and reflections through participating in SJ Engage. SJ Engage will provide mini-grants to complete a project and connect the teens reach groups to Library partners and other non-profits that might align with their social action project goals.

- Teens Reach groups have hosted 10 SJ Engage circles discussing issues of immigration, housing, gun violence, mental health, and climate change, and there have been over 65 interactions with the online SJ Engage courses.
- The 85 teens attending SJ Engage circles or using the online courses have noted a 75% increase in knowledge confidence after participation.
- SJ Engage is providing mini-grant funding for six branch Teens Reach groups to implement civic engagement social action projects in their communities, ranging from button making and letter writing campaigns, teen mental health programming, a community garden, and documenting community diversity through video.

### **San José Aspires**

San José Aspires (SJ Aspires) is an online college and career readiness platform designed to support students as they transition out of high school with the goal of supporting students as they pursue a post-secondary education. Students who participate in SJ Aspires complete online modules which address a range of post-secondary options, including community colleges, four-year colleges, financial aid, and job documents such as résumés and cover letters. As students complete each module, they are given a financial award of \$75. Students who complete all six modules receive an additional \$50 bonus, and students can earn a maximum of \$500 through the program.

Students are awarded their educational funds when they provide proof of enrollment at a post-secondary institution, including community colleges, technical and trade schools, and four-year colleges and universities. To claim their award, students submit either their enrollment confirmation or schedule of classes to a designated Library staff member. Understanding that students may not graduate from high school and immediately enroll in a post-secondary institution, students will have up to three years from the time they graduate to claim their award. Additionally, to provide more flexibility, the post-secondary institution does not have to be in California in order for students to claim their award. Currently, the funds are being distributed directly to the student; however, the Library is working to develop a partnership with a financial institution which will allow the funds to be held in an account in the student's name and then released to the student when post-secondary enrollment is verified.

SJ Aspires recently completed its initial pilot. The pilot consisted of students from Overfelt High School, teens involved in the Library's Teens Reach volunteer programming, participants in JUMA, and students supported by the National Center for Youth Law. The pilot was approximately five months in length (April 2019 to August 2019), and a quick summary of results is below:

- 58 students enrolled in SJ Aspires
- 91% of the students who enrolled earned an award of at least \$75 (53 of 58 students)
- SJ Aspires students earned a total of \$18,225 in financial support
- 18 students earned the full \$500



- 21 students have verified enrollment in a post-secondary institution and claimed their award:
  - 14 are enrolled at a Community College
    - 3 at De Anza College
    - 9 at Evergreen Valley College
    - 2 at San José City College
  - 7 are enrolled at a four-year college or university
    - 3 at a California State University campus
    - 2 at a University of California campus
    - 1 at a private school
    - 1 at an out-of-state school

For the 2019-2020, SJ Aspires is building out its network of partners. In addition to its continuing relationships with pilot partners, SJ Aspires has held outreach events for pregnant and parenting teens through a partnership with Teen Success; the plan is to enroll older teens and young adults who attend the San José Conservation Corp charter school. Also in 2019-2020, SJ Aspires plans to bring the program back to Overfelt High School and expand into Andrew Hill, James Lick, and Yerba Buena High Schools.

### **Career Online High School**

Partners in Reading (PAR) programs are well integrated in SJPL's programs and services. As part of SJPL's commitment to lifelong learning and educational opportunity for all members of the San José community, PAR offers programs from basic reading and writing skills to an accredited online high school program.

#### *Back to School*

Career Online High School (COHS) began as an SJPL and California State Library pilot program administered by PAR on February 1, 2016. Funded by SJPL and the California State Library, the pilot quickly gained popularity. COHS offers an opportunity for adults 19 and older who live in San José to complete a secondary education. SJPL has a 72% success rate for the program, about 10% higher than the average for California library programs.

COHS is a nationally accredited program that enables adults to earn a high school diploma and a career certificate in one of 10 high-demand career fields. Some of the most popular careers selected to date include: Child Care and Education, Office Management, General Career Preparation, and Home Care Professional.

The California State Library, SJPL and SJPL Foundation offer fully paid COHS scholarships to adults who qualify for the program. City council members have also contributed scholarships through the SJPL Foundation.

### *The Need*

More than 120,000 adults living in San José do not have a high school diploma, a significant barrier to getting a better job or advancing in a career or into higher education. To address the education gap, SJPL provides scholarships to adults who qualify for COHS. Students complete this online program within 18 months (SJPL completion average is one year) on their own schedule, in their own homes with family support, and anywhere that Internet access is available. Students receive the added benefit of mentoring and encouragement from PAR staff and coursework support from an academic coach. Students enter the program in cohorts.

The SJPL Works unit supports students and graduates individually and in workshops, providing guidance on job searches and applications, targeted resume writing, career building, small business entrepreneurship, and the latest in industry trends. Community college specialists also support graduates in making the transition to college

As of September 30, 2019, 62 adults have graduated with an accredited high school diploma and a career certificate in a high growth area (including Certified Protection Officer, Child Care and Education, Commercial Driving, Food and Hospitality, General Career Preparation, Home Care Professional, Homeland Security, Hospitality and Leisure, Office Management, and Retail Customer Service). Currently, there are 56 active students; of which 15 are on track to graduate in 2020.

### **Working Scholars**

Working Scholars is a new program being piloted in 2019-2020. As the non-profit arm of Study.com, Working Scholars (WS) partners with cities and other institutions to provide a low-cost, online college education to its students. Participants in the WS program can earn up to six units of college credit per month. Once a WS student accumulates 90 units, they can transfer those credits to a fully-accredited, non-profit university to finish their degree in either Liberal Studies or Business Administration. The first part of the program, offered through WS, has no cost to student participants as it is fully funded by the California State Library. The final part of the program, where students complete their degrees through one of several graduating universities, has a separate cost. SJPL and the WS program will seek to support the entire cost of the program, including the costs of the graduating university.

The first cohort of seven students will be graduates from the Library's COHS program. Any students not selected for the initial cohort will be added to a waitlist and they will have priority to take a spot as they become available.

SJPL anticipates that most students who enroll in the program will have few or no college credits. Because of this, it will likely take students four or more years to earn their degree. SJPL has designed the WS partnership with that length of time in mind.



## **San José Works**

In 2018-2019, the San José Works 4.0 Youth Jobs Initiative met its goal of providing subsidized and unsubsidized employment opportunities to 1,000 eligible youth. 375 youth were provided with subsidized employment opportunities and 625 youth were placed in unsubsidized employer-paid job opportunities. As of June 30, 2019, 93% of the youth successfully completed their subsidized internships and 625 others were placed in employer-paid opportunities. In addition to recruitment, placement, and onboarding services, youth also were also provided career counseling, job readiness training, supportive services (e.g. bus passes), and financial literacy education. In May 2019, staff began its outreach and recruitment for the San José Works 5.0, 19-20 program with a total goal of 1,000 youth broken down as: 375 subsidized and 625 unsubsidized.

The 5.0 program began with:

- Career Technical Education (CTE) Training Day @ Adobe HQ on May 31, 2019
- CTE Industry Day @ Microsoft June 5, 2019
- CTE Interview Day @ Yerba Buena High School June 7, 2019
- San Jose Works Launch @ Yerba Buena High School June 8, 2019
- PRNS Training Week @ Hank Lopez Community Center June 10-14, 2019

To date 322 youth have participated in the subsidized program, with a fall cohort expected to start mid-October and a winter cohort to close out the program with 375 subsidized participants served through SJ Works. Several employers such as Intrepid Electronics Systems, FAIM Marketing, Lehigh Hanson, HP Machine & Engineering Inc., Next Flex, and Achievement Engineering Group participated. Simultaneously, the unsubsidized program is underway to provide an additional 625 youth with employment opportunities, the unsubsidized program is expected to end in April 2020.

## **SJPL Works**

SJPL Works, located at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, provides free career and business development resources, including programs, print and e-book collections, work spaces, and technology. Over the course of the 2018-2019, SJPL Works offered a total of 275 programs, 116 of which were business related and 159 of which were career focused.

SJPL Works career programs are designed to assist customers with many aspects of the job seeking process, including creating a resume, acquiring a quality professional headshot, participating in mock interviews, updating a LinkedIn profile, career exploration, and networking. Career programs are led by SJPL Works business and career librarians or by community partners. Popular regularly offered programs include: Creating a Strong Resume; Resume Review; Professional Headshots; Learn LinkedIn; Take the "Work" Out of Networking; How To Market Yourself to Employers; Get Ahead With Community College. SJPL Works business programs, typically provided by expert partners, cover aspects of starting and/or

developing a business including business planning, business ownership, finance/funding, marketing/branding, sales, and business legal advice. The range of offerings includes: Entrepreneurs' Legal Advising Clinic; San Jose Basic Entrepreneurship Program (offered in both English and Spanish); Teen Entrepreneur Club; Basic Venture Capital Finance; Design and Marketing Advice; Sales Strategies: Introduction to Selling; Healthy Employees, Healthy Bottom Line Workshop.

The capacity to offer quality programs is greatly enhanced by partnerships with career and business experts, nonprofits, and other community stakeholders. During the 2018-2019, SJPL Works leveraged 28 partnerships in order to offer programs of depth and breadth addressing a wide range of business and career development needs. Partners include: AnewAmerica; ASIAN, Inc.; ASPIRA; Business Owner Space; CENTRO Community Partners; FRANNET; MFG: SJ; Minority Business Development Agency; San Jose-Evergreen Community College District; San Jose State University Career Center; Santa Clara University Law School; SCORE; Small Business Majority; Smart Selling Guru; State of California Employment Development Department; U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; and work2Future.

A total of 2,431 participants attended SJPL Works career and business programs during the 2018-2019. Additionally, 975 customers received direct career or business related reference assistance and 86 customers benefited from one-on-one, hour long career or business consultations. Customers report a high degree of satisfaction with these programs and services. 96% of all surveyed participants stated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the statement "I learned something new that is helpful to establish a business/advance my career." 82% of all surveyed participants stated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the statement "I feel more confident about starting a new business/seeking employment." 97% of all surveyed participants stated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the statement "I intend to start using what I learned." 87% of all surveyed participants stated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the statement "I have access to relevant resources and services provided by the library."

New goals for the 2019-2020 include piloting networking programs for a variety of library customers, including those employed in the technology sector who work remotely and women seeking re-entry into the work force. Over the past decade, the number of people working from home for tech companies has increased dramatically. While many enjoy the flexibility of this type of employment, the drawbacks include loneliness and fewer opportunities for networking and professional development. Regular networking programs at SJPL Works will counter isolation and offer introductions to both colleagues and professional development resources available through SJPL Works. SJPL Works has teamed up with a new partner, Women Back to Work, to offer career programs tailored to women seeking employment after a gap or a career change. A "soft roll-out" at both the Almaden Library and West Valley Library in September 2019 was very successful. Both locations hosted two hour workshops focused on creating an elevator pitch which were well attended (23 participants at Almaden and 19 at West Valley). A larger rollout at the King Library is planned in the near future, including a session of this elevator



pitch workshop but also introducing regular networking programs co-sponsored by Women Back to Work and SJPL Works to boost networking and support opportunities for customers.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

As the lead for the Education and Digital Literacy Strategy, SJPL will track the progress, implementation, and expansion of SJ Engage, SJ Aspires, Career Online High School, Working Scholars, SJ Works and SJPL Works initiatives and will report back to the Library and Early Education Commission and the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee on an annual basis.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Neighborhood Services and Education Committee agenda website for the November 14, 2019 meeting.

### **COORDINATION**

This report has been coordinated with San Jose Works.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT**

The Library and Early Education Commission has reviewed updates to various pilots as part of the Education and Digital Literacy Strategy Initiative. The Commission recommends their approval to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee and City Council.

### **CEQA**

Not a Project: PP17-009 -Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action.

/s/

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