

Youth Development

Mandela MarketPlace's youth programs explore food through the lens of social justice so that young people are informed and inspired to transform their nutritional health and the health of their communities.

Currently, we are re-visioning our youth program and are seeking funding to continue to engage community youth through food. Future programming will focus on creating opportunities for youth to explore the food landscape, learn to prepare healthy meals, and build peer-to-peer facilitation skills. This knowledge will then be shared by the youth with community members in the form of workshops, food demonstrations, and events.

In the meantime, please read on to learn more about the inspiring work carried out by our West Oakland Youth Standing Empowered team for the past 6 years.

West Oakland Youth Standing Empowered (WYSE)

2007 – 2013

The West Oakland Youth Standing Empowered (WYSE) team was founded in 2007 after a group of youth worked on a project exploring the conditions of West Oakland. Inspired to take action, they formed the WYSE Team - dedicated to spreading the knowledge of healthy living and creating positive community change through their voice, actions, and leadership.

Throughout their time together the WYSE team took on various projects that fostered community connections, developed their skills as peer educators and entrepreneurs, and increased residents' knowledge about diet and disease. Our last cohort graduated this Summer and has left behind a great legacy.



CX3

The group of youth that founded the WYSE team came together through The Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (CX3). Given tools to capture community data regarding food access and community health, the WYSE team decided to take further action through projects like WYSE Streets, McClymonds Park Project, Burbank Garden, and The Healthy Neighborhood Store Alliance.



WYSE Streets

The goal of WYSE Streets was for youth to be the voice of the community and respond to West Oakland residents' concerns. The youth team gathered 300 surveys from West Oakland residents which addressed concerns regarding public transportation and neighborhood walkability. In response to survey concerns, the WYSE team took action by gathering petitions at the West Oakland and MacArthur BART stations and neighborhood bus stops.

The results? They got more than 10 bus benches installed in West Oakland, sidewalks repaired along San Pablo Ave., crosswalks repaired and installed along 7th street, one public trashcan installed on San Pablo Ave., and one traffic light to be investigated on 34th and San Pablo. They also joined alliances with Urban Habitat advocating & passing measure VV to keep fair fares for AC Transit riders.



McClymonds Park Project

Before



After



Burbank Garden

The Burbank Elementary School Garden was developed by the East Bay Conservation Corps through 2003 Community Development Block Grant funds and was abandoned when Oakland Unified School District closed the school the following year. The WYSE Team was offered the opportunity to revitalize the garden and reconnect the school and community to the garden.



The Healthy Neighborhood Alliance

The WYSE team's capstone project, The Healthy Neighborhood Store Alliance (HNSA), is a produce delivery service that brings healthy fruits and vegetables into their neighborhood corner stores.

To learn more about HNSA [watch the WYSE team's Banking on Youth video!](#)



Nutrition Education at McClymonds

The WYSE team hosted a nutrition education program at McClymonds High School, the alma mater of 2 of our WYSE team leaders. Classes included an introduction to the basic food groups, how to make healthy food choices, and how to prepare a healthy meal. With 17 9th-grade girls, they also developed the curriculum for classes that addressed concerns that came up in their day-to-day lives.



Exploring Food

Mandela MarketPlace's Summer Youth Program engaged youth in an array of interactive field trips that promoted health and wellness, helping young people see that being healthy can be incredibly fun. Summer events included: Hiking at Joaquin Miller Park, Food What?! Youth Summit, Cook! culinary classes, and garden building.

