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## Our Mission

The Grassroot Project advances health equity in cities by using sports to re-imagine health education in middle schools and mobilizing NCAA athletes as health educators and role models for youth.
Dear TGP Supporters,

We entered 2020 at an exciting point—we had finished a major phase of curriculum development that began in 2017, and in December 2019, we had wrapped up the pilot of our final new curriculum, a mental health program for 8th-grade students. With a model that we realized had the potential to be scaled and impact youth outside of Washington, we were excited to build a new strategic plan for growth.

Several months into 2020, instead of asking ourselves about where we would grow, we turned our attention to enormous new challenges. COVID-19 changed the world overnight, and the entire model that we had built was impossible to implement in the context of an airborne virus. On top of the pandemic, our country reckoned with violent events that laid bare the long and persistent problem of racial injustice in our society.

In confronting the new normal of 2020, we considered whether we should scale down our programs or pause our operations until we had more clarity about P.E. classes and were more certain about our programs’ funding. But we ultimately recognized that this was a critical time for public health. That even if we did not have all of the tools necessary to continue our programs, our students and our communities deserved our best efforts to adapt. I am really proud of the work our staff and athletes have done to adapt and grow our programs over the course of the year.

COVID has shown America that we still have a long way to go in changing the way we approach health promotion, disease prevention, and personal responsibility. And the social justice crises of 2020 call on us to recognize that disease prevention is not just about medical intervention, but also about addressing the larger forces that unjustly put people at a higher risk of disease for factors completely outside of their control.

We came out of 2020 with an even stronger commitment to changing the culture of health in our schools. We certainly cannot do it alone, but we are excited to see what our team and athletes can do as we expand our footprint in the coming years. We are also incredibly grateful to have the continued (and increased!) support of so many donors, small and large. We look forward to working with you as we all push for better days to come—thank you for continuing to follow and engage in our work!

Tyler Spencer, PhD
Founder and Executive Director

Jane Wallis, MPH
Director of Programs

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HEALTH SNAPSHOT

A 2016 report on the state of school health in DC showed that fewer than 5% of DC schools met the city’s required standards for health education and physical activity. In a follow up report, school officials cited major constraints including: lack of resources, insufficient time to teach academic subjects, as well as health/PE, and challenges with finding adequate space. The gap in access to health education and physical activity, paired with health statistics that are trending downward, show the need for more health education programs, specifically those addressing nutritional, sexual, and mental health in our DC community.

Solving this problem in our communities is going to take innovative solutions.

1/2 of chronic mental health conditions begin by the age of 14

In the US, 1 in 5 children are considered obese.

Poor nutrition and inadequate physical activity are significant risk factors for obesity and other chronic disease. They also impact students’ academic outcomes and mental health.

Schools are the best, and possibly only, means to ensure that all children obtain the health knowledge and skills they need for long and productive lives.

-Duncan Van Dusen

We have built a model that engages hundreds of NCAA athletes each year in more than 10 of our city’s highest-priority schools, and we are working to replicate this model on a national level.

In 2018, 62% of all reported cases of chlamydia infections were among persons 15-24 years old.
The Grassroot Project partners with schools and PE teachers to provide innovative health promotion programs that enable middle school students to be physically active at the same time as learning and discussing mental health, physical health, and sexual health. While focusing on advancing health-equity for young people in these programs, TGP has also mobilized thousands of NCAA student-athlete leaders to invest in their communities by using their status as an athlete to improve adolescent health.
TIMELINE OF 2020

JANUARY - FEBRUARY
TGP completes the process of expanding its curriculum into a three-year comprehensive adolescent health program. More than 200 DC athletes are implementing mental, nutritional, and sexual health curricula for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in TGP’s 12 DC partner schools.

MARCH - MAY
As the COVID pandemic hits, TGP reaches out to schools to support the rapid response to the pandemic. Athletes offer Instagram Live workouts, targeted social media messages to reinforce TGP’s health lessons, and games-based education programs on Zoom. TGP also develops a COVID-19 prevention curriculum to keep students updated on emerging COVID-19 information.

JUNE - AUGUST
The country is rattled by violent reminders of the persistent and unjust challenges presented by racism and racial inequity in America. TGP athletes organize “Athletes United for Social Justice” as an internal group to create space for TGP’s student-athletes and staff to analyze TGP’s work on racial and social equity, as well as to explore avenues for student-athletes to create greater impact on their communities.

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER
As schools announce the likelihood of longer-term plans for online learning, TGP works with teachers, staff, and athletes to ensure that all of TGP’s modules can be delivered via Zoom and Nearpod. TGP trains athletes to begin implementing online health promotion programs in schools across Washington, DC.
REFLECTIONS

The Grassroot Project was founded by student-athletes that had a desire to use their platform as Division 1 athletes to create social change, and although TGP has transformed into a more established community-based organization, these roots hold strong and true and were demonstrated throughout 2020.

Hundreds of student-athletes are already advancing health equity in DC by facilitating TGP programs. For their impact in TGP, Niah Woods (Howard Track) and Elijah Murphy (American Wrestling), were awarded the Billie Jean King Youth Leadership Award.

Student-athletes capitalized on this momentum during the summer and teamed up with TGP Program Manager, Mackenzie Jones, and Board Member, Christine Campbell, to conduct listening sessions for TGP athletes to reflect on the history of racial injustice in this country, responses to George Floyd and the #BLM protests, and create a safe space where athletes of all races and from different campuses could come together to reflect and find place for action.

Born from these sessions was a new iteration of TGP’s original name: Athlete’s United for Social Justice (AUSJ). This student-led initiative created the opportunity for athletes to lead, under the umbrella of TGP, community-grounded initiatives and continue to speak out and amplify voices beyond the time and scope of summer protests.

Within AUSJ, student athletes are working to push for inclusivity on their college campuses, community, and tackling TGP related initiatives.

LOOKING AHEAD

After a successful implementation of TGP’s 2017 strategic plan, The Grassroot Project spent 9 months of 2020 working with Laura Noonan Consulting and TGP’s Strategic Planning Committee to build out a new three-year strategic plan. Below is a consolidated plan focused on 3 main strategy areas: 1) Incremental Growth in DC, 2) Organization Infrastructural Development, and 3) Expanding Programming to a New City.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1
Build on established momentum in DC to meet growing demand for TGP’s programs

GOALS
- Implement a more robust program staff model to support the implementation of programs in DC
- Add additional middle school partnerships each academic year
- Create standard operating procedures for TGP’s main programmatic and administrative work
- Streamline TGP’s partnership model to sustainably maximize synergies with community stakeholders
- Elevate and advance issues of social justice

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2
Increase organizational impact by building infrastructure for scale

GOALS
- Refresh TGP’s brand to capture its now broader focus on health equity, comprehensive adolescent health, and social justice
- Create a formal communications strategy to proactively promote TGP’s work, growth, and its ambitions in the coming years
- Digitize all programmatic, data collection, management, and reporting
- Create a donor CRM that manages TGP’s donation, events, and grants in one location
- Develop and implement comprehensive development strategy, including hiring a Director of Development
- Prepare and submit manuscripts, abstracts, and expert commentary for publication and presentations of TGP’s work in conferences and in relevant public health and education focused journals
- Review and adjust board composition, activities, and responsibilities

STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3
Replicate model in one new city

GOALS
- Research options and select best city for TGP expansion
- Hire new city staff using 3 year build out plan
- Formalize partnerships with programmatic stakeholders, universities, middle schools, health departments, and community members
- Recruit and train 60 student-athletes from 3 universities in year one, with the goal of 200 recruits in year three
- Pilot program in 10-12 classrooms to reach a total of 200 students in year one, with the goal of 1,000 students in year three
STAFF & LEADERSHIP

OUR STAFF

TYLER SPENCER
Founder and Executive Director

JANE WALLIS
Director of Programs

MACKENZIE JONES
Program Manager

ALEXANDRA MCAULIFFE
Program Manager

ROMMEL WHITE
Finance Manager

DYLAN WOLFE
Digital Communications Manager

ELIJAH MURPHY
Curriculum Development Intern

JUSTIN PARKER
Community Intern

NIAMBI WHITE
Community Intern

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TYLER SPENCER
Founder and Executive Director

PATRICK NERO
Experienced Collegiate Athlete Leader

RICHARD LIVINGSTONE
Public Servant in the DC Department of Housing and Community Development

CHRISTINE CAMPBELL
Sole Proprietor at CM Consulting

UGWECHI AMADI
Senior Director, Strategy at NIKE, Inc.

CRAIG LEJEUNE
Director, Finance & Administration for the Economic Club of Washington DC

DEIDRA SUBER
Regional Director at Amazon

RICHARD FIGUEROA
Research Assistant for Race and Ethnicity Policy at the Center for American Progress

NICK TURK
Howard University Men’s Soccer

ROBBIE HABEN
MBA Student at Harvard Business School

MASTER TRAINERS

ASIA HORNE
American University Women’s Soccer

AUBREY BENZING-PLOURDE
Georgetown University Rowing

CARLECA REYNOLDS
Howard University Lacrosse

DASHAWN SIMON
Howard University Football

JULIANA SALING
American University Women’s Soccer

MADDIE DORING
American University Women’s Basketball

NICK TURK
Howard University Men’s Soccer

CALLIE FAUNTLEROY
George Washington University Volleyball

JON MABIE
George Washington University Rowing
The Grassroot Project is committed to scaling our work to reach more youth in DC and nationally. In 2020, we strengthened existing funding partnerships and brought on donors who are committed to helping us grow.

Revenue by Source

Spending by Program Area

Spending by Health Topic

As of September 30, 2020

**ASSETS**

- **Current Assets**
  - Bank Accounts (Cash): $152,364.68
  - Accounts Receivable: $7,500
  - Other Current Assets: $4,842.34
  - **Total Current Assets**: $164,707.02

- **Fixed Assets**
  - Fixed Operating Assets: $5,564.41
  - Accumulated Depreciation: $3,891.94
  - **Total Fixed Assets**: $167,247

- **Total Assets**: $166,379.49

**LIABILITIES AND EQUITY**

- **Liabilities**
  - Accounts Payable: $0
  - Credit Cards: $1,001.18
  - PPP Loan: $62,700.00
  - **Total Liabilities**: $63,701.18

- **Equity**
  - Unrestricted Net Assets: $167,808.02
  - Temporarily Restricted Net Assets: $149,999.72
  - Opening Balance Equity: $0
  - Net Income: -$215,129.43
  - **Total Equity**: $102,678.31

- **Total Liabilities and Equity**: $166,379.49

The Grassroot Project has been vetted by The Catalogue for Philanthropy and has received a Platinum Seal of Transparency by Guidestar.org.