



Healing Englewood



Healing Englewood is designed to spiritually rebuild Englewood one person and family at a time and decrease gang recruitment and participation among the neighborhood's teens and young adults. This program's goal is to offer an alternative path in life. The staff has a deep understanding of the challenges Englewood youth have to face and the resources needed to support them. Former gang members and pastors have participated in the program design and will be volunteers serving in the project. Individuals with specific health and vocational skills have also contributed to program development.

It is generally agreed that Englewood is one of Chicago's southside neighborhoods that is a food desert, especially for fresh food and its population of 27,000 people suffers disproportionately from obesity, diabetes and other nutrition-related health disorders. Closely correlated is the fact that this under-resourced and economically disadvantaged community lacks job opportunities in the neighborhood. Many also lack basic skills and experience in work environments.

Building Bridges: Every component of Healing Englewood is intended to develop relationships and promote healing with members of this community. Building Bridges is a key initial step in letting you know that we are here to help. Step I: As they go door-to-door, each outreach team will offer testimonials of their gang life experiences and how they contributed to the Englewood community's destruction. A Pastor will be present to offer prayer or spiritual guidance during these conversations. An invitation to The Center of Englewood, and all of the social services offered, will be extended to every individual/family we meet. Step II: Neighborhood outreach events with food, prayer and conversation to build relationships with our neighbors on their own turf.



Friday Night Life: These events will happen every Friday and are designed to create community among Englewood teenagers and young adults. Events will include uplifting movie nights, local entertainment, and guest speakers followed by Q and A sessions. Every 4th Friday local volunteers will tell their life stories also followed by an open mic Q and A opportunity. The goal is to create a safe space and engaging programs for youth to relate to one another and spark conversation about what social change looks like in Englewood.

Health thru Food: Hydroponic farming: Participants will learn to grow organic produce using hydroponic farming methods. This process will enable the individuals to become self-sustaining growers within their own community, providing fresh, healthy produce to for their families as well as the potential to start a business. Participants who complete the classes will receive the materials to create a home hydroponic farm. For the students to be successful, they need to know, understand, and believe the benefits of their products, especially in a community unfamiliar with their product. The culinary health training portion of this program will teach how to create healthy meals from the produce they grow and the items in the food pantry. “Culinary Health” classes taught at the Center will give participants hands-on training in creating healthy meals and learning more about living a healthy lifestyle.



Vocational Attributes: This program will teach teenagers and young adults how to make basic home repairs. Professionals in the construction industry will facilitate this phase. These young men and women will be offered hands-on training through the Healing Englewood program during which they will practice their skills as volunteers helping with needed projects for community residents. Those who complete the classes will receive a starter tool kit. They will also learn the value of being responsible to show up on time for training and work. This project intends to engage participants in a program that will teach them the skills needed to get and keep a job with the immediate additional benefit of learning life-long skills useful for their own families. This training/experience can also be used on a resume to help them get a job.

24 Hour Hot Line: This fifth component is the cornerstone piece of the initiative. We will use the Chicago 211 hotline and will provide 24 hour response to calls requesting help with food insecurity, mental health issues, and violence prevention. Professionals in each area of need will immediately meet with neighbors seeking assistance as well as follow up to prevent future recurrences.



For more information about Shepherd's Hope

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Contact Brian Anderson at briananderson1026@gmail.com

Phone: 773-756-3535

