



June 8, 2017

City of San Pablo
Office of the City Manager
13831 San Pablo Avenue, Building #1
San Pablo, CA 94806

Re: SPCF Community Grant Committee – Appeal



Dear City of San Pablo SPCF Community Grant Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written appeal regarding Close Up's grant application status. While we respect the committee's initial decision to deny funding to our application, we hope you will reconsider. Understanding the city must make difficult decisions on how to allocate its finite dollars, we believe supporting San Pablo students participating in Close Up's civic education program is worth reconsideration.

The city's current focus on healthy living includes a component entitled "multi-cultural awareness and appreciation". Close Up's teaching methodology and program structure speak specifically to this goal. When San Pablo youth arrive in Washington, DC to participate in Close Up's program, they are placed into small groups with students from across the country. Throughout the week on this academically driven schedule, as the group discusses the varying issues facing the nation, diverse perspectives are presented by students from around the country and San Pablo students are able to personalize the opposing argument being presented. Returning home, these students have a better capacity to empathize with individuals coming from a different background from their own. Given the diversity of the Bay Area, expanding an individual's ability to think beyond themselves is a key part of inspiring and maintaining a strong community-minded citizen. Close Up fosters this mindset through each of its programmatic components.

Furthermore, ensuring young people understand the policymaking process and how to affect positive change within their community will be integral to San Pablo's ongoing healthy living initiative. Teaching individuals at a young age about the importance of making healthy decisions requires buy-in from various stakeholders – including parents, teachers, policymakers, and community organizations. As young people move into adulthood, they will be the ones determining the needs of the community and how to best address any challenges. Ensuring they both understand the process for making changes and the necessity to engage individuals across varying groups will be a key component to their success. By participating in Close Up's program, San Pablo youth learn about the intricacies of policymaking, while also learning to respect those with differing opinions. These skills will go a long way in helping them address future issues in the most comprehensive and balanced approach possible.

An essential part of fulfilling our mission is to increase the number of disadvantaged youth who otherwise would not have access to our hands-on programming. While we are able to provide a nominal amount of aid to students who qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program, unfortunately, our resources do not allow us to cover all the expressed need. Despite this, we still seek varying ways to provide more students with funding support, and thus are hoping to partner with the City of San Pablo to help local youth. The City of San Pablo has a chance to affect the long-term sustainability of effective leadership in the region. Preparing young people to be problem solvers within their own communities will be increasingly vital in addressing the current and future challenges. Students who otherwise would not have exposure to this life-changing experience would directly benefit from your support.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appeal your initial decision. Understanding and respecting the tough decisions you need to make regarding how to best leverage your resources, we appreciate your reconsideration.

Feel free to call (703.400.9267) or email (evogelsang@closeup.org) should you have any further questions.

Best regards,



Eleanor Vogelsang
Community Relations Manager