

### **Summary of project objectives and participating agency**

The major objective of receiving this grant opportunity was in effort to enhance and expand program offerings for the Washington Township Community, focusing on youth, teen, adults, and seniors. This has been achieved by purchasing kitchen tools and equipment, which has allowed us to offer a new programming section, in our kitchen. We have been able to utilize an existing serving kitchen as a teaching and socializing opportunity for adults and seniors thus far and looking for expansion within youth programming this summer.

### **Description of project activities and final timeline**

The youth class ideas for baking originally mentioned in the grant application were not able to ignite during the early stages of receiving the funds due the continued response of the COVID-19 pandemic. While a few cooking classes were offered, continued restrictions on youth in schools and programs did not allow us to offer the full scope of projected programming. The instructors were also uncomfortable in offering under the increased numbers and continued restrictions from COVID-19 this fall and winter.

For our adults and seniors we were able to start Baking Buddies; a unique, once-a-month group that gathers in the Enrichment Center kitchen to bake delicious goodies to be used for Enrichment Center programs and events (as well as tasty treats for participants!). This group comes together to connect people in the kitchen, promote socialization, and provide an opportunity for continued mental enrichment.

### **Evaluation of outcomes and impact**

Baking Buddies has been a very successful program, with 8 or more seniors taking part each month. The sessions are filled with laughter and enjoyment (and delicious treats!) and word-of-mouth spreads quickly in our 'open' kitchen style for all to see what is going on. It has provided an opportunity for expanded mental enrichment and socialization for our seniors as well. Patrons have continued to compliment the program and discuss the next recipe for weeks leading up to the next session. We have even had a patron step forward to lead a session so that he could share his love of making bagels with the rest of the participants.



### **Description of subsequent plans**

This summer, we have been able to offer three, weeklong specialty cooking camps that are at full enrollment and have our instructors back and ready to ‘roll out’ their programming. We anticipate having this continue through the remainder of the year with programming in our kitchen.

For future adult and senior programming, we are working on patron-inspired cooking. We have had multiple patrons’ express interest in teaching other members different kitchen-related skills they want to share. So far, we have people interested in teaching how to make Greek food as well as how to bake pretzels (taught by the owner of a local 100-year-old pretzel company). The OPRA grant has greatly expanded what we can do and how well we can serve our patrons.

As we have are gaining momentum and success, we are planning to grow all of the offerings and it is all because of this grant. Our budget is very tight during the COVID recovery and these funds not only allowed us to offer something new but also will now help us to sustain this new program for many years to come.

### **Summary of expenses incurred**

To maintain versatility of programming, it was decided to purchase and compile kitchen equipment for up to four workstations. Each station received what would be needed so that a group of four people could work together (a total of 16 people). This includes (prices reflect 1 station);

- Kitchen aid 5 Quart Mixer [\$359.98]
- Baking pans [\$17.38]
- Spatulas, spoons, peelers, and whisks [\$16.41]
- Baking sheets (perforated and non) [\$47.50]
- Knife set and large cutting boards [\$29.62]

- Silicone cookie/pastry sheets [\$6.44]
- Oven mitts [\$10.65]
- Rolling pin [\$14.97]
- Cooling racks [\$3.76]
- Mixing bowls (glass and plastic) [\$16.56]
- Storage containers [\$42.02]
- Consumable items (towels, expiration tags, griddle cleaning pads, etc.) [\$194.00]

This setup gives us the most versatile setting for continued program growth. By establishing stations and making sure they are equally provisioned, we have created a setting that is easier to supervise for all ages. It is possible to promote cooperation while having fun and learning new skills.