



Making a Difference for You Inc. Strategic Plan 2016-2020

MISSION

To strengthen the Greater Richmond community by providing computer literacy, study skills and life enrichment support to underserved and under-resourced youth, adults and active senior citizens, resulting in: increased job readiness, reduced dropout rates, reduced homelessness and independence

VISION

To help individuals – no matter their status in life – gain equal opportunity to win and reach their highest potential through educational and holistic life skills support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Making A Difference For You, Inc. (MAD4YU) is a grass-root, Virginia-based, 501 (c) (3) organization providing life enrichment services to under-resourced and ‘fringe’ populations. The name reflects its purpose: *Making A Difference* for you. That is – providing tools for success - using computer literacy and study skills as the catalyst - to those who otherwise might not have access. The acronym MAD4YU signifies the passion and unwavering commitment towards accomplishing that objective: MAD and motivated enough to provide life enrichment services and programs For You, utilizing ‘MAD-ly’ committed, talented change agents.

Since 2013, MAD4YU has provided FREE tutoring, life enhancement and computer training to more than 100 under-resourced Richmond families (youth K-12, adults and seniors) with collaborations, donations, contributions and assistance of 150+ dedicated, talented volunteers.

According Gail Crawford, MAD4YU founder and president, “We exist to inspire with courage, spirit and hope; and promote strength and unity. That is accomplished by providing individuals with an equal opportunity to win and reach their highest potential through knowledge and training – no matter their zip code or status in life.”

When MAD4YU was founded, its primary services were teaching computer literacy to children and seniors, and tutoring for students having difficulty learning. It acquired a multi-room facility with donated computers, in-kind contributions and volunteers. It evolved by responding to other client needs that surfaced. Services currently provided, but are not limited to: FREE tutoring, homework help, communication technologies, PC training, college and job readiness preparation including resume writing and online submission, personal and professional development, adult literacy, health

and housing resources and social advocacy.

MAD4YU's service users include non-mainstream Richmond Virginians who are struggling with job readiness, faltering grades, and aging - with limited access to tools needed to live fulfilling and productive lives. These citizens come from diverse backgrounds: elderly, youth, homeless, Veterans, immigrants, single-parent family, economically disadvantaged, learners who process differently.

Highly skilled volunteers who share MAD4YU's mission and core values service the clients. The volunteers are skilled in: early-childhood and adult education, technology/IT, administration, Marketing/PR and HR, to name a few.

MAD4YU has grown at such a rapid pace - due to its excellent reputation, word of mouth and expanded Richmond school referrals - that it is literally 'bursting at the seams.' The increased flow of populations served (including ESL) has caused urgent, immediate need for increased donor and support partnerships, capacity building, and full-time program oversight staff.

Funds will be used to accommodate the phenomenal growth surge and demand for services.

MAD4YU After identifying problems that need to be addressed, staff, along with other community stakeholders, determines outcomes they want to achieve. Strategies are then developed to reach those outcomes.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Did You Know?

▯ *Richmond VA has an unemployment rate*, from a post peak low of 5.2% in February 2014; the unemployment rate has now grown by 0.3 percentage points.

▯ *The poverty rate in Richmond VA is* Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Richmond 26.30%

Virginia's capital city continued to have the highest poverty rate in the state, with one in four residents living at or below the poverty line, according to new data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Among the 814 localities included in the survey, Richmond ranked 31st for the highest poverty rate in the United States in 2012

Poverty in Richmond is exacerbated by unemployment, poor education, inadequate job-skill training and limited transportation.

Results from the MAD4YU's 2018 community needs assessment and community dialogues indicate that there are many challenges to ending poverty in Richmond VA

Invest in the workforce by improving job-skill training (teach skills that reflect the needs of the employer).

Work with students in the Richmond Public School system to better prepare them for college or the workforce.

Recruit major employers to city and increase partnerships between businesses and universities.

Create a rapid transit system of buses that connect residents to jobs outside of the city.

Redevelop neighborhoods without displacing residents.

The top three challenges to getting out of poverty identified were:

EMPLOYMENT

With recent budget cuts, residents are finding themselves without jobs and un-employment benefits, fewer work hours, and fewer to no job training and placement opportunities.

EDUCATION

Past challenges have centered on affordability of post-secondary education. Today, people are concerned that they are being “locked out” of school by the decrease in entry slots and class offerings. Getting a degree is taking much longer for many people, especially the poor who rely on public higher education.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Budget cuts have reduced or eliminated many community services. People are frustrated with not having up-to-date community resource information. “Newly poor” residents do not know where to go to obtain information.

MAD4YU will address these challenges by strengthening and growing programs in the priority areas, expanding partnerships and collaborative and implementing continuous best practices.

GOALS

GOAL 1:

EDUCATION AND WEALTH BUILDING Increase education and wealth building opportunities for low-income people and individuals

1: Low-income people and individuals become self-sufficient.

2: Conditions in which Low-income people and individuals live are improved.

- ▣ Expand the availability of financial literacy education in all MAD4YU programs.
- ▣ Increase employment supports and training opportunities for the working poor, youth and veterans.

- ▣ Expand outreach to low-income people so they can access Earned Income Tax Credit benefits.
- ▣ Expand training opportunities for volunteers in all MAD4YU programs.

Goal 1.

EDUCATION AND WEALTH BUILDING

MAD4YU management staff will receive annual training in strategic planning, project management, quality assurance/compliance, advocacy, human resource management/best practices, budgeting, and fiscal management. Five staff will receive national certification in community action (CCAP), and fifty will participate in leadership activities in the community (non-profit boards, etc.).

MAD4YU programs work with customers to help them complete their GED, increase their increase their knowledge of computer technology, or otherwise improve their educational status

GOAL 2:

ADVOCACY Increase low-income citizen participation in local, state, and national efforts to end poverty.

3: Low-income people and individuals own a stake in their community.

- Maintain a diverse staff that is socio-economically and demographically representative of the communities they serve.
- Offer opportunities that empower *Low-income people and individuals* to provide testimonies at public hearings, local forums and community events.
- Engage low-income people in promoting justice-based social policies and serving on local boards and task forces.

Goal 2.

ADVOCACY

MAD4YU implements a new database to better track program performance and customer success. Customer satisfaction levels increase annually. Community partnerships promote the connection of customers to needed resources.

MAD4YU partners with community organizations, residents, and other stakeholders to pursue advocacy issues that improve the lives of low-income families and individuals.

GOAL 3:

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING Increase involvement of all community stakeholders to end poverty by working to improve the conditions in their communities.

4: Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.

5: Low-income people and individuals achieve their potential by strengthening family and other support systems.

- Develop a fund diversification plan that focuses on resources necessary to build and increase funding streams to support all MAD4YU programs and services.
- Fund delegate agencies with a proven track record to fill gaps in services as determined by the results of the community needs assessment.
- Expand partnerships with other community service providers who help low-income people improve their communities.
- Expand the pool of MAD4YU volunteers to end poverty in their communities.
- Expand access of education and services that benefit all residents.

Goal 3. COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

MAD4YU will facilitate issue forums and educational sessions concerning anti-poverty best practices with community participants. MAD4YU's research committee produces and circulates positions papers. All MAD4YU staff receives regular updates on pertinent policy issues.

MAD4YU will provide opportunities for youth to increase their community involvement and develop their leadership skills, and to participate in other positive youth skills development activities.

MAD4YU will facilitate projects throughout the community that increase the quality of life, commercial resources, and/or public safety resources in low-income neighborhoods.

GOAL 4:

MAD4YU CAPACITY BUILDING Increase the MAD4YU's ability to provide services and support to low-income people.

MAD4YU increase their capacity to achieve results.

- ▯ Develop a marketing plan designed to effectively communicate the nature and value of MAD4YU services.
- ▯ Commit to reaching the unreachable, especially those in rural isolated areas of the county.
- ▯ Expand technology and research to identify those communities with the greatest needs.
- ▯ Expand the use of volunteers to support the services of the MAD4YU.
- ▯ Expand partnerships among service providers and supporters to ensure broad range of referral resources.
- ▯ Expand MAD4YU presence on local policy councils and decision-making boards.
- ▯ Ensure staff has the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to provide efficient and quality services through ongoing professional development.

Goal 4

MAD4YU CAPACITY BUILDING

Programs and services offering support to increase the capacity of MAD4YU and its partners to sustain programs, services and initiatives.

MAD4YU increases fee-for-service revenue, and reduces the proportion of its revenues that come from government grants.

Community Newsletter, Annual Report and Impact Stories

- ▯ *Branding, Marketing and Outreach*
- ▯ *Community Action Academy / Technical Assistance*
- ▯ *Community Needs Assessments*
- ▯ *Delegate Agency Program*
- ▯ *Fund and Resource Development*
- ▯ *Partnerships / Coalition Building*
- ▯ *Professional Development*