

Sweet Dream Makers, Inc.

Strategic Plan

January 2021

Introduction

In 2011, Sweet Dream Makers (SDM) started as a social action project run by The Giving Tree of Temple Beth El in Boca Raton, Florida with the mission of providing beds and associated bedding to children sleeping on the floor. In addition to beds, gently used essential furniture and housewares were collected from the Boca Raton area and distributed out of a storage unit in Delray Beach. In 2012, SDM received the first grant of \$10,000 to help fill this immediate need in our community. With support from three foundations and individual donors, SDM expanded modestly in 4 years. The biggest obstacle to funding the need was the affiliation to a religious entity and lack of SDM 990 tax returns.

In August of 2016, SDM incorporated as a Florida not for profit with 501(c)(3) status obtained in December of 2016.

Encouraged by the direct and immediate impact a bed and essential furniture has on a child and their family, the Board of Directors is actively engaged in accelerating the growth of SDM to serve more children and their families.

Executive summary

- Sweet Dream Makers is the only non profit specifically dedicated to filling the immediate need of new beds, bedding and essential furniture at no cost to children and their families sleeping on the floor, sharing a bed or sleeping in unsafe or unsanitary conditions in Palm Beach County.
- Currently, SDM provides an average of 175-300 beds per month throughout Palm Beach County. In addition, SDM collects and distributes gently used furniture and household items to families in order to improve their living conditions. Families served are referred from 50+ Palm Beach County social service agencies.
- Word of SDM as a resource continues to spread throughout the county and into neighboring counties, therefore increasing the request for beds and bedding. The projected urgent need for beds and bedding in this geographic area will likely exceed 175 units per month in 2021. SDM has the infrastructure including a suitable warehouse to store and distribute gently used furniture and housewares. An

independent contractor picks up donated furniture items in the south county area every Saturday and delivers to the SDM warehouse in Delray Beach.

- Volunteers are engaged at all levels in the organization. Warehouse volunteers pick up small donations of housewares and bedding. They meet case managers and families weekly at the SDM warehouse to distribute these items and other essential furniture. Office volunteers dedicate their time to data entry and fundraising projects. Professionals volunteer their time with bookkeeping and accounting services.

- The Board of Directors will help Sweet Dream Makers develop:
 - A short, medium and long term vision for growth
 - A clear and concise plan for sustainability
 - A plan for systematic evaluation of the program
 - A streamlined procedure for analyzing the needs in the community
 - A three-year regional growth plan to *Expand into Broward County*
 - Outreach to families not involved with social services called *Direct Connect*
 - Work with social services to reach *Adult Only households and Veterans*
- Sweet Dream Makers goal is to fill the needs for new beds, bedding and essential furniture and housewares of children and adults who are living in poverty.

Sweet Dream Makers history

2010

Quiet Giving program starts through The Giving Tree of Temple Beth El donating gently used clothing at a soup kitchen in Boca Raton

2011

Quiet Giving partners with a community police officer to help struggling families in Boca Raton with gently used furniture. Beds are the most requested items.

2012

Sweet Dreams is founded as a program of The Giving Tree with a \$10,000 grant from The Boca West Children's Foundation

2013-2015

Sweet Dreams cannot keep up with the request for beds.

2016

Sweet Dream Makers, Inc. is formed to operate the combined Sweet Dreams and Quiet Giving program independent of Temple Beth El. Sweet Dream Makers can now pursue more grant opportunities as a public charity without any affiliation with a religious entity.

In the 5 years prior to the incorporation of SDM, 579 beds had been purchased and hundreds of homes have been furnished.

Sweet Dreams has a strong track record for filling the immediate needs for new beds and bedding to families in Palm Beach County

• Targeted Case Manager Referrals –

Over 50 social service agencies request assistance each year.
37% average yearly growth in service since becoming a public charity
7361 beds with bedding provided in first 4 years
3370 families served in first 4 years

- Post surveys has been implemented to evaluate the direct benefit sleeping in a bed has on the child
 - 85% have reported improved quality of sleep
 - 85% have overcome challenges including insomnia and inability to sleep through the night
 - 80% have reported better behavior, grades, and homework habits

A large need exists for Sweet Dream Makers services as no other organization is filling the immediate need for new beds, bedding and essential furniture.

Reasons families are furniture poor:

- Upfront costs of moving into a rental apartment
- Homeless families unable to afford temporary storage
- Families flee domestic violence with nothing but their clothing
- Extended family members moving into the home
- Children with special needs damage beds and furniture
- Bedwetting, a result of trauma, abuse or neglect, causes unsanitary conditions
- Grandparents taking in grandchildren ie. relative care
- Bed bug infestations in low-income housing causes families to discard mattresses

Sleeping arrangements for the furniture poor

- the floor or deflated air mattress
- co-sleeping with other children or adults
- newborns in bed with parent
- broken bed and/or mattress
- bed is too small
- mattress is unsanitary due to a lack of diapers or bedwetting
- a sofa

Sweet Dream Makers services help families live in a home environment that promotes health, wellness and dignity

How children benefit from a good bed

- sleep for a longer period of time
- comfortable nights sleep
- improved grades school
- likely to stay awake in class
- improved behavior in school and at home
- personal space in an over-crowded environment
- dignity and self respect

How parents benefit from a good bed

- sleep better for a longer period of time
- well rested
- perform better at work
- patience with their children
- privacy
- dignity and self respect

Growth Strategy & Vision

A 5-year vision for Sweet Dream Makers

2020-2021-2022-2023-2024

- Sweet Dreams Makers collaborates with additional referral sources as word of our programs spreads
- Begins expansion into Broward and Martin Counties.
- Begins Direct Connect to families not working with social services
- Begins Adult Only and Veterans outreach through social services
- Increase office staff to include 2 full time staff members
- Increase warehouse project manager hours
- Offers families delivery of warehouse items on a sliding fee scale

Sweet Dream Makers vision in more detail

Short Term (next 2 years)

- Increase bed and furniture distribution by 20% per year
- Educate families on the proper care of mattresses

- Educate families through on the prevention and treatment of bed bugs
- Increase diversify of the advisory board to fill vacant board positions
- Increase post evaluations of the effects a good bed has on a child's health and performance in school.
- Work with a professional sleep expert to devise a comprehensive study on the effects of poor sleep
- Continue a controlled expansion program into Broward County
- Create a vetting process to help struggling families who contact us directly

Long Term (3-5 years)

- Expand reach into Broward Cty through social service agencies
- Start a controlled expansion into Martin Counties
- Increase bed and furniture distribution to meet the requested need
- Increase the referral base to include more public schools, PBSO, employers, hospitals, soup kitchens and religious institutions
- Open warehouse 6 days per week in Palm Beach County
- Staff warehouse with a part time truck driver/manager

Sweet Dream Makers plan to achieve this vision

- Produce a pamphlet on the proper care of mattresses and mitigating the problem of bed bugs
- Produce a brochure on proper sleep hygiene and its effects
- Implement a standardized vetting procedure specifically for families who contact SMD directly
- Conduct a survey to determine the need for beds and bedding in Palm Beach, Broward and Martin counties.
- Conduct a quantitative analysis followed by a qualitative examination of factors leading to a families immediate need for beds and furniture
- Continue to conduct and analyze data from post surveys on the effects a proper bed has on children and their families
- Engage with community leaders in business and social services to promote and better serve children and their families living without beds and essential furniture.

Financial and fundraising plan to increase the budget

- Continue the required financial commitment for board member
- Work with a professional development company to identify and introduce SDM to local funders and write grants
- Partner with local and national businesses, specifically mattress and furniture companies, to donate mattresses, bedding, essential furniture and housewares
- Market SDM as a vehicle for businesses to promote themselves as a social enterprise by selecting SDM as their chosen charity
- Increase grant applications to include corporate foundation funding
- Collaborate with the non-profits we already serve to include SDM in their grant proposals
- Board members to introduce prospective supporters to SDM
- Parlor Parties to encourage local philanthropists to support SDM
- Promote SDM presence throughout the region via social media
- Create social media events such as Crowdfunding and Tribute fundraisers
- Friendraiser events with local businesses during the off-season
- Participate in workshops and networking events sponsored by community foundations that fund non-profits in human services
- Annual fundraising campaign
 - Utilize Boca West Foundation fundraising events
 - Annual EOY Appeal Letter
 - Back to School Appeal
 - Matching Grants
 - Annual Events
 - Pajama Game Night
 - Play Fore Beds Golf Outing
 - Bingo for Beds
 - Be a Sweet Dream Maker Celebration

Budget by category

Our 2021 budget is a sustainability budget meaning funds are allocated for positions in programing, tech and accounting which presently are handled by volunteers.

Alternate scenarios if circumstances vary from plan

UPSIDE
Cause

- individual donations increase at a faster pace
- additional grants are funded
- collaboration with other non-profit is successful
- new corporate partnerships
- increased in-kind donations of new mattresses and essential furniture
- service more children and their families in Palm Beach County and expand into Broward County
- purchase additional beds
- increase warehouse hours
- purchase essential furniture and housewares to stock warehouse
- purchase a warehouse building
- one part time warehouse manager
- one full time office support staff
- Executive Director compensation commensurate with the budget
- hire a full time development person and grant writer

CONSERVATIVE

Cause

- individual donations are stagnant
- fewer grants are approved
- no corporate partnership

Effect

- limited increase in bed distribution
- warehouse open by appointment
- support staff is all volunteer
- hire a truck driver as needed
- volunteers staff the warehouse as needed
- continue to rent small warehouse
- rely on in-kind donations for professional services

LOWER THAN EXPECTED

Cause

- individual donations have decreased
- less than expected grants are approved
- no corporate partnership
- in-kind donations of new beds end and cost of beds increases

Effect

- limit new bed purchases to serve only children
- end lease on warehouse
- find donated warehouse to continue gently used furniture distribution
- warehouse open by appointment only
- warehouse staff is 100% volunteer
- truck driver is 100% volunteer
- decrease pick ups of gently used essential furniture

Strategic fundraising plan

In order to raise the necessary dollars, Sweet Dream Makers needs to:

- Strengthen grant and letter of intent writing capabilities
- Look for additional grant opportunities
- Collaborate with existing non-profits that use our program
- Investigate government funding opportunities and limitations
- Build on capacity to attract individual donors
- Build on capacity to attract corporate partnerships
- Build a social enterprise
- Become a chosen charity
- Expand Matching Grant appeals
- Conduct a compelling annual appeal
- Expand fundraising events throughout South Florida
- Strengthen and diversify the Advisory Board
- Continue to motivate the Board of Directors to promote SDM
- Participate in networking events
- Continue education on non-profit development