

Summer Research Proposal Application Form

TITLE: Grace Marketplace Garden Project

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Dr. Karen Lin, Md FAAFP, Rutgers University department of CHFMM, worked collaboratively with Rutgers Department of Landscaping Development and Elijah's Promise Homeless Shelter to evaluate the effects of employing homeless shelter clients to work in a garden, enjoy the products of the garden, and to do expressive projects in a group setting related to their gardening experience. Dr. Lin found statistically significant improvement across measured health parameters (BP, HR, waist circumference, BMI, PHQ9) after clients participated in the project.

- Shenary Cotter, MD FAAFP, Dept of CHFMM at UF will expand Dr. Lin's project to Grace Marketplace, to replicate her study with more participants, and to further evaluate the psychological benefits of being employed while developing a long-term sustainable agribusiness that will not only support clients health through nutrition but provide support to Grace Marketplace to continue, and expand the garden project to a Grace Marketplace Farmer's Market. The Art and Psychology aspects, as well as the health parameter measurements, will be expanded in this multicenter interdisciplinary study involving a population experiencing severe health disparities.
- The Core Team currently includes Dr. James Griggs, who heads up the UF Mobile Clinic, Dr. Nancy Hardt, Jamie Pomeranz, PhD of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences, and James Ellis of UF's department of Entomology. Additional involvement is being sought from Arts in Medicine, IFAS, Nutrition & Food Sciences and psychology. Kia Rahmanian, MPH, is working on the R01 grant application as well as the IRB application.

HYPOTHESIS AND RATIONAL

- 1) Employment to work in the garden, access to healthy foods, and involvement in community and relationships as well as narrative and artistic expression will result in improved physical and psychological health in at-risk participants (homeless, minority, mentally ill, unemployed).
- 2) a sustainable garden will be achieved through initial seed money from the R01 grant, resulting in ability to expand produce to include sales to the public (garden produce, honey from bee hives, and eggs from chickens), which will provide financial support for Grace Marketplace.

ROLE OF MEDICAL STUDENT The 2017 MSRP student will work directly with myself, Dr. Griggs and the UF Mobile Outreach Clinic, and Dr. Lin (via distance communication) to prepare for the fall garden season. This will include site planning, procuring supplies, working with the volunteers and staff at Grace Marketplace and their current garden volunteers to get their existing garden beds ready for the season, and develop an initial plan for employing workers. The MSRP student will develop the protocol for measuring the health parameters, which will be completed by volunteers at the UF Mobile Clinic. The initial workers will be paid. The student will also develop an "ambassador" program. Initial volunteers may choose to become "garden ambassadors" or "health ambassadors." These shelter residents will receive education during their involvement which will allow them to recruit from the shelter (and surrounding) population for the Fall Garden.

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- The MSRP student will have multiple options for poster presentation material from this involvement, including Global Health Conferences here and nationwide, Health Disparities conferences, STFM, Homeless Coalition Conferences, and may choose his or her own angle from which he/she would like to present.

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