

SIFF (Sharing Interests Forming Friendships)

Breaking the social barrier between high school and special needs students

September '09-present

Needs

- Closing the social gap in social situations in high school.
- Everyone deserves equal opportunities for acceptance in the community.
- Developing invaluable skills such as empathy, compassion, communication, and patience.

Solution

- Match high school students with special needs students (2:1) based on similar interests
- Create opportunities for social interactions outside of class (movies, park, pool, bowling, zoo, etc.)
- Alleviate the social barrier between these two parties so friendships can be formed.

Goals

1. Become a 501(c)(3) non profit by the end of the 2012-13 school year.
2. Start one more high school chapter and create a college chapter by the end of the 2012-13 school year.
3. Keep the current SIFF chapters (Redmond, Bellevue, and Issaquah) sustainable.
4. Collaborating with all three chapters for a large fundraising event to make connections with others solving the same problem.

Implementation Plan

- Utilizing social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Website to promote, recruit, and advertise, and spread the message of SIFF.
- Passionate teens who see the same problem and have the drive to solve it for potential chapters.
- Creating a SIFF handbook and starter kit for those who want to create a new chapter featuring detailed business plans, budgets, timelines, etc.
- Partner with organizations such as Best Buddies, Aspiring Youth working to form friendships and alleviate a social barrier between high school and special needs students.

Team & Partners

SIFF Founder and Creator: Michelle Solomon, started the Redmond High chapter two years ago with a \$1,000 seed grant from Youth Venture; trained a team to take it over and keep sustainable; and is working with Bellevue and Issaquah to launch two new chapters this fall.

SIFF Vice President of Affairs: Laci Casto, helped start up the initial SIFF club and is working with Michelle to brainstorm ideas for SIFF's global impact

Redmond High Current President: Rachel Horne, leading SIFF for 2011-12 school year.

Bellevue High School Chapter Creator: Memie Huang, presented to receive a \$500 seed grant from Youth Venture to fund their club for 2011-12.

Issaquah High School Chapter Creator: Wooyang Son, presented to receive a \$400 seed grant from Youth Venture to fund their club for 2011-12. This focuses on community services with the buddies.

Traction & Year-1 Success Metrics

1. Currently SIFF is in its 3rd year at Redmond High School and starting its first year at both Bellevue and Issaquah High so there will be quarterly follow-ups with all locations to make sure they are on track with SIFF's mission.
2. Keeping the budget reasonable and finishing the school year with more money than started with.

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