2020 COHORT

Community Design Apprenticeship Program

Redesigning Healthy Food Access in Normandy and Wellston, MO
Creative Reaction Lab dedicates this book to the six young leaders that challenged the status quo of racial inequities by showing up everyday as decision-makers and Redesigners for Justice™ for their communities. They are the architects of change that we need in our education and health systems, media and technology outlets, government agencies and public service institutions. We need to follow them in designing healthy and racially equitable communities. It truly was an honor learning and unlearning alongside them.
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About Creative Reaction Lab (CRXLAB)

Creative Reaction Lab’s mission is to educate, train, and challenge Black and Latinx youth to become leaders designing healthy and racially equitable communities. We’re challenging the belief that only adults with titles (e.g. mayors, CEOs, etc.) have the power and right to challenge racial and health inequities.

However, we are conscious that it’s not just the work of the people that have been historically underinvested to dismantle oppressive systems. Therefore, we are rallying an intergenerational movement of Redesigners for Justice™.
Creative Reaction Lab created the Community Design Apprenticeship Program (CDAP) to educate and train Black and Latinx youth — who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system — to become civic leaders addressing hyperlocal racial and health inequities (e.g. limited healthy food access, housing displacement, and mass incarceration).

From February to October 2020, six Community Design Apprentices addressed the challenge of food access in the Normandy and Wellston areas within the St. Louis Promise Zone. During this 9 month-long program, Apprentices were trained in Creative Reaction Lab’s Equity-Centered Community Design and Community Organizing frameworks, provided funding and a supportive community to design and implement a civic intervention in collaboration with community members.

Creative Reaction Lab’s Equity-Centered Community Design framework is a unique creative problem solving process based on equity, humility-building, integrating history and healing practices, addressing power dynamics, and co-creating with the community. This process focuses on a community’s culture and needs so that they can gain tools to dismantle systemic oppression and work towards a future of sustained community health, economic opportunities, and social and cultural solidarity for all.
Meet the 2020 CDAP Apprentices!
Deja Brown (She/hers)

Deja is a St. Louis native. Her drive to create change is based on the idea that avenues untraveled present themselves when you step out of your comfort zone. If you have any questions about accentuating your natural given beauty, look no further. Deja is a beauty expert and will ensure that you learn all the necessary tools to accentuate your natural given beauty. Ten years from now, Deja hopes to create meaningful change and give back to the youth in the community.
I WILL MAKE

ST. LOUIS

BETTER BY

I will make St. Louis better by working on myself more so I can better improve and empower young women.

I will also do the same for men also because it’s a bigger world than what’s seen!

SHARE YOUR PLEDGE AT WWW.CREATIVEREACTIONLAB.COM & #AIGHTOGETHER
I WILL MAKE St. Louis BETTER BY implementing programming that will offer life skills to institutionalized youth.
Hannah Price (She/hers)

What inspires Hannah? Acts of kindness are what gets her mind circulating. Florida native Hannah believes that everyone deserves to have their basic needs met. In her spare time, Hannah enjoys reading and dancing. In the future, you will find Hannah living without reservation, giving advice on her areas of expertise - nails and skincare.
Reina is inspired by the way in which her family maneuvers life. One day, she hopes to create change by serving her community. Originally from North St. Louis and currently living in Florissant (North County), as a chef and food lover, Reina understands the importance that healthy food access has on the overall wellbeing of bodies. When she’s not filling up stomachs with nutritious meals, Reina can be found listening to music and dancing. In the future, Reina hopes to be a powerhouse through the creation of her own business that manifest jobs and opportunities for others.
I WILL MAKE

St. Louis

BETTER BY

Creating a powerhouse of economic growth and healthy environments through creative concepts and restore equity design.

SHARE YOUR PLEDGE AT WWW.CREATIVEREACTIONLAB.COM & #MAKINGITBETTER.
I WILL MAKE

St. Louis, MO

BETTER BY

Staying involved as much as I can with the youth in historically underinvested communities.
It takes more than one person to make change. Ashley strives to create a more equitable world using this ideology as the starting blocks for the impact she hopes one day to achieve. A North County (St. Louis) native turned South City (St. Louis) community member, Ashley is the go to for anything hair related. Aside from her kids, she is passionate about styling hair and hopes to one day use her skills in the field to create a better community.
Robert Beckles (He/his)

If your interests involve social justice concepts or sexual health topics, then sitting down with Robert might be the best avenue to expand your knowledge. Eager to combine his interest with his profession, Robert envisions himself working as a social worker within the legal field – public interest sector. Originally from Ferguson and now a resident of The Grove, Robert believes that there is knowledge everywhere that is just waiting to be absorbed.
I WILL MAKE
St. Louis, MO
BETTER BY
continuously working with my fellow community members to create equitable access to the things that support our health and wellbeing.
I WILL MAKE

St. Louis

BETTER BY

working to creatively address systemic
issues such as gun violence, food inequity,
and mass incarceration through redesigning.
Kristin Brown (She/hers)

Born and raised in St. Louis County, nothing inspires Kristin more than making her community better by shining light on injustices. Ten years from now, she hopes to have made her mark in the journalism world as a reporter bringing forth change. The one word that drives Kristin on her journey of manifesting a better world is her son.
Racial Consciousness Building and Self Identity Reflection

During the first part of CDAP, the Apprentices focused on building an awareness of self, including exploring social identities, leadership styles, and values. To help define their role in creating equity, the Apprentices take a look at the various ways in which they hold power and build humility by identifying their unseen areas for growth.
Throughout CDAP, the Apprentices created working definitions based on their lived experiences to guide their equity- and community-centered creative problem solving process.
FOOD JUSTICE
Mobilizing historically underinvested communities with the tools to increase their ability to produce and consume healthy food*, advocate for food reform, create culturally responsive food policies, and restore balance between healthy food* literacy and agriculture.

FOOD APARTHEID
Places characterized by the inability of local community to access affordable, healthy foods* because of the historic and systemic undervaluing and underinvestment in the people living in these communities.

HEALTHY FOODS
Responsibly produced foods – with little to no preservatives – that make you feel energized, replenished, and restored.
Liberation Is...

Defined by the 2020 Community Design Apprenticeship Program

"Doing something on your own terms and excelling at it."

"Overcoming mental imprisonment."

"Liberation Is..."
Breaking the cycle of generational trauma.

Not having to diminish any part of yourself to be respected and represented.

Becoming who you want to be while being yourself through the process.
Community Research

Researching and Ideating Approaches with Diverse Co-Creators

Prior to prototyping, the Apprentices spent time working with diverse co-creators to conduct community research, define community needs and assets, and ideate possible approaches to addressing the issue. Apprentices gathered information about local healthy food access using several research methods, including secondary research, photo survey, direct engagement with community on-the-ground and via social media, and meeting with local activists and field experts.
Who do we need to reach?
BEVERLY, A SITUATIONALLY APATHETIC RESIDENT, NEEDS TO FEEL PERSONALLY MOTIVATED WHEN ACCESSING HEALTHY FOOD BECAUSE HISTORICALLY, THEIR OPINIONS HAVE NOT MATTERED & THEREFORE, THEY ACCEPT WHAT’S AVAILABLE TO THEM.

KATRINA, A BUSY, LOCAL-ORIENTED OLDER WOMAN WITH A LIMITED BUDGET NEEDS TO FEEL THAT HER TIME AND MONEY IS WELL SPENT BECAUSE SHE’S SEEKING QUICK, AFFORDABLE HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS TO MEET HER FAMILY’S NEEDS WITHIN HER HISTORICALLY UNDERINVESTED COMMUNITY.

AUDIENCE PERSONA >> Beverly

- Named: Beverly
- Age: 80
- Gender: Female
- Occupation: Retired
- Income: Limited
- Education: High School
- Ethnicity: African American
- Children: Yes
- Partner: Yes
- Pets: No
- Health: Good
- Lifestyle: Active
- Transportation: Limited
- Income: Limited
- Food Access: Limited

AUDIENCE PERSONA >> Katrina

- Named: Katrina
- Age: 55
- Gender: Female
- Occupation: Working Class
- Income: Limited
- Education: High School
- Ethnicity: African American
- Children: Yes
- Partner: Yes
- Pets: Yes
- Health: Good
- Lifestyle: Active
- Transportation: Accessible
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Prototyping and Intervention Development

Blessed and Highly Flavored Healthy Food Boxes

Over the course of 7 months, the Apprentices continued to ideate interventions for healthy food access and settled on the idea of food box distribution. They used an iterative design process that called on residents’ input to determine the direction of their prototype, including the box style and distribution route. With support from St. Louis Metro Market, they sourced original recipes from Normandy and Wellston residents and used the recipes to determine the box ingredients. Ultimately, the intervention that came about was the Blessed and Highly Flavored Healthy Food Boxes.
Exploring Food Justice with Residents

The Apprentices held a pop-up event on October 5, 2020 where they engaged with people in the Wellston and Normandy areas and distributed the **Blessed and Highly Flavored Healthy Food Boxes**. During the pop-up, the Apprentices engaged 24 community members between 1:45 PM - 4:45 PM CST. Twelve community members were from the 63121 area zip code, which includes a large majority of the Normandy neighborhood and directly adjacent to the Wellston area. Of the 24 healthy food boxes distributed, 12 were delivered through walk-ups and 12 through drive through.
Celebrating the accomplishments of the Apprentices as they transitioned into Redesigners for Justice™, Creative Reaction Lab held the program graduation from October 9th to October 12th. Apprentices created a video and letter to the residents of Normandy and Wellston to recap the goals and outcomes of their work. In addition to activities around personal branding and leadership, the cohort defined their own Equity Manifesto.
To the Residents of Normandy and Wellston

A Letter from the 2020 Community Design Apprentices
To the residents of Normandy, MO and Wellston, MO:

Back in February 2020, Creative Reaction Lab chose six Black young leaders from various parts of St. Louis to address the topic of limited healthy food access in the Normandy and Wellston communities under the Community Design Apprenticeship Program (CDAP).

Our cohort spent the past nine months engaging with you — the community members — to learn about what barriers and opportunities existed to improve access to healthy food in Normandy and Wellston. We canvassed your neighborhoods, stores, and other resources, learned about the unwillingness to invest in typically Black neighborhoods, and implement prototypes in various locations in the Normandy and Wellston areas. Engaging with you led us to receive feedback on recipe and design ideas, history of grocery stores in the area, what interventions you would like to see within your own neighborhoods, how many resident access various food sources, how people transport themselves to obtain food and your opinions on the quality of food that is readily available to you.

Our cohort learned about the framework of Equity-Centered Community Design, which is how community stakeholders work together to formulate approaches to community issues with equity and community voices centered. We challenged existing definitions of food deserts, healthy food, liberation and food justice. We also heard from food justice leaders like Quinton Ward (St. Louis Metro Market), Jeremy Goss (Link Market) and Tosha Phonix, food justice organizer with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment. While all of them pushed us, Tosha challenged our foundation by informing us that “It’s not food deserts because deserts are a natural process. These are food apartheids. These were designed and designated to be of a certain type of
area and to impact certain people.” With all of your thoughts, wants, and feedback in mind, we designed the Blessed and Highly Flavored Food Boxes. On October 5, 2020, we presented our Blessed and Highly Flavored Food Boxes to Normandy residents at the Beverly Hills Supermarket. Within four hours, all 23 of our original prototype food boxes were dispersed.

The 2020 Community Design Apprenticeship Program cohort would like to offer a sincere thank you to everyone who provided feedback of any kind, for allowing us into your communities and for working with us throughout this entire process. We could not have done this work without your hospitality, insight and partnership.

With love,

Deja Brown, Ashley Coleman, Reina Stovall, Hannah Price, Robert Beckles and Kristin Brown
Equity Manifesto
Developed by the 2020 Community Design Apprentices
We are powerful, unstoppable, young Black leaders, advocates, and redesigners for racial equity within the St. Louis Promise Zone.
We strive to create equitable communities where Black and Brown people can connect and be themselves.
As Equity Designers, we will break generational curses by challenging the status quo. We will work together to invest in historically underinvested communities, create equity-centered designs and push for change.
As Design Allies, we will challenge the status quo and advocate for equitable education and resources for young people. Additionally, we will push for safe places for ALL non-white, low-income St. Louis residents seeking support.
Special thanks to everyone who made CDAP possible!

**SPONSORS**
- Deaconess Foundation
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- Herman Miller Cares
- Roddenberry Foundation
- St. Louis Promise Zone

**PHOTOGRAPHY**
- **Primary Photographer:** Deanna Cheeks
- **Additional Photography:** Isabelle Yisak, Meredith Seigfried, Antionette Carroll

**SUPPORT**
- **Co-Lead Facilitators:** Isabelle Yisak, Antionette Carroll
- **Additional Staff Support:** Amarachi Onyema, Meredith Seigfried, Nora Garcia, Autumn McMillan, AJ Foster
- **Mental Health Support:** Kacie Smart, MA, LPC

**VIDEOGRAPHY**
- **Videographer:** Mike Pagano

We would also like to thank the national and local speakers that supported the Community Design Apprentices through their equity-centered and creative journey.