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Urban Appalachian Festival Proposal

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Urban Appalachian Festival

Proposal by the Coalition for Appalachian Lifestyles (COAL)

(Ian Buchanan, Sarah Holbrook, Cody Stanley, Courtney Johnston, and Alex Umble)

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Presented to the Franklinton Arts District, Franklinton Board of Trade, and the Greater
Columbus Arts Council

Executive Summary

We at COAL think that Appalachian culture has been marginalized by American urban centers and being an Appalachian American comes with many negative stereotypes. This is especially felt right here in the Franklinton neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. We want to make an impact in the community in a way that lessens stereotypes towards Appalachian Americans and help the city of Columbus be more inclusive towards Appalachian culture.

We propose to do this by organizing an Appalachian cultural festival that will both address the specific needs of Franklinton and celebrate its Appalachian roots. The specific issues we wish to address include socioeconomic instability and lack of cultural and community pride within the Franklinton and greater Columbus Area. This festival will feature local foods, music, vendors, adult beverages and education events that will promote Appalachian culture and lifestyles. This will help the residents of Columbus experience a taste of Appalachia and educate on the culture in ways that should help in reducing negative stereotypes and foster an environment of acceptance and inclusion.

Strongwater Food and Spirits, a venue located in Franklinton, has already agreed to host the festival. The materials we will need financial support to cover will be the purchase the permits and police detail for the closure of the section of Lucas Street between West Town Street and West Rich Street. We will also need financial support to cover other additional festival related expenses related the festival.

We need this financial support because we want this event to be as accessible as possible to the resident of Franklinton and will not be charging an entrance fee. We will only be making money on sales of beer that was donated by local breweries and vendor fees. We do not foresee these limited revenues being able to cover our numerous expenses but this festival would be absolutely beneficial in making Columbus a more inclusive community toward Appalachian Cultures and Lifestyles.

Description of Problem

Marginalization of Appalachian identity in American urban centers distanced people of Appalachian descent away from their culture. This cultural shift, along with economic pressures surrounding the Midwest and decentralized migration to other neighborhoods, obscured the shared heritage of people from Franklinton. This community was the port of entry into central Ohio during the migration out of the mountains last from the early 1900s to the 1960s. As time pressed on, members of the once vibrant community moved away thanks to economic opportunity and Appalachians lost the cultural touchstone that kept them linked together. All this contributed to the derecognition of Appalachians as a particular social group within the Columbus area. Like the situation in many other large cities in the United States, descendents of Appalachians now live as an “invisible” minority without strong support from the government and other organizations to retain their cultural norms.

For those living in Franklinton, the effect of these social and economic effects are readily apparent. Due to the deindustrialization of Columbus, many households that supported themselves through manufacturing and factory work lost their main source of income. These jobs were a predominant factor for moving out of Appalachia to the booming Midwestern industrial cities (“Franklinton, Columbus, OH Demographics”). Manufacturing flight constricted job choice in the area and the neighborhood has yet to transition smoothly into the primarily service based economy that now dominates Columbus. As a result, the median household income in Franklinton is only 40% of the average income for a household in Columbus. Lack of resources to deal with this drastic change in socioeconomic composition of the neighborhood also led to a massive increase in unemployment, an increase in crime, and ultimately outmigration of those with Appalachian heritage to safer and more economically viable neighborhoods in Columbus (“Franklinton Neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio”). As a general rule, many of these individuals suppressed the community identity they came from because of the negative connotations of “redneck” identity and disassociated their families from their cultural heritage. This has a deleterious effect on the social cohesion of the community as a whole allows for the continued stereotyping of those from the area.

In order to address the hard times that Franklinton finds itself in, it is COAL’s mission to revitalize the culture of Appalachians by putting in place an Urban Appalachian Festival. Many social and ethnic groups within Columbus already have annual events that bring in the wider populace to engage with the history, lifestyle, defining traits, artworks, and businesses that their particular community creates and provides. By using the example of the Asian Festival, the Italian Festival, the Central Ohio Folk Festival, the Dublin Irish Festival, and many others, we believe that instituting an annual Appalachian festival will promote the wonderful aspects of Appalachian culture, break the stereotypes that many take as truth about Appalachians, and instill pride in the Franklinton community about their place in Columbus. This festival will simultaneously provide exposure to the Appalachian lifestyle, advertise local businesses, generate interest for local artisans, bands, boutiques, and services provided by Franklinton, and hopefully change the unnecessarily harsh view that so many have of mountain-folk. In doing this, we will bring the multitude of people to Columbus to actively engage with Franklinton and build up the community as a dignified part of the city.

Methods and Results

According to Crespi-Vallbona and Richards, cultural festivals and events have become increasingly important in addressing the cultural and social problems of given communities and promoting sustenance and acceptance of cultural groups by “generating local pride, identity, and income” (Crespi-Vallbona and Richards 2007). Furthermore, Popescu and Corboş addressed the importance of cultural festivals and events in urban development, detailing how such events function to address specific needs of a community while at the same time entertaining and engaging attendees from within and outside the community (Popescu and Corboş 2012).

With these findings in mind, we would like to organize a cultural festival that will both address the specific needs of Franklinton and celebrate its Appalachian roots. The specific issues we wish to address include socioeconomic instability and lack of cultural and community pride within the area. By encouraging Columbus residents from outside Franklinton to participate in the event, we hope to promote long-term economic success of local businesses and artists and dispel negative stereotypes associated with Franklinton and Appalachian culture. We will also encourage active involvement from local residents, which we hope will cultivate community and cultural pride within Franklinton. Through an Appalachian festival, we strongly believe that we can achieve our goals of building awareness for urban Appalachian culture, eliminating Appalachian stereotypes, and helping to cultivate the Franklinton community.

Logistics

We have already signed an agreement Strongwater Food and Spirits, in which they will provide the venue for our event. Strongwater is located on Franklinton’s east side and has an event space of over 3,500 square feet and is wheelchair accessible. It also includes an outdoor courtyard/parking lot area that will be utilized for food trucks and other events. Strongwater also provides employees who will assist with the setting up, operation and teardown/cleanup of the event. They also have all of the alcohol and food permits would need for the event. They will also provide restrooms and first aid kits/equipment. We propose to purchase the permits and police detail for the closure of the section of Lucas Street between West Town Street and West Rich Street. This will allow for participants of the festival to traverse easily between the outdoor activities and indoor activities without having to worry about any traffic hazards of having to cross the street while consuming alcohol.

Even with all of the positives of our venue, Strongwater does not have the parking capacity to handle several hundred cars. We have addressed this by contacting nearby COSI they have agreed to allow us to use their parking lot but they will charge a parking fee and keep the profits of said fees. We will also be able to provide shuttling for Franklinton residents interested in

attending our festival thanks to the contributions of the Gladden Community House and Lower Lights Ministries.

As for our budget, we will start by looking at revenues. We only have two real sources of revenue, which are beer sales of \$5 a ticket per cup of beer and vendor's fee \$75 a booth. We debated charging a small entrance fee to the event but did not want to scare off any potential attendees. This led us to decide against charging an entrance fee as we wanted the event to be as accessible as possible. We are estimating that about 1,500 to 3,000 people will be able to make it to the festival and we will have about 20 paying vendors in attendance. This means that we will make \$1,500 in vendor's fees and a projected \$11,200 in beer sales. Our beer sales number estimates are assuming an average of two beers per visitor of the festival.

In order to make money on our beer sales we need to know how we will spread the word to potential festival participants. We plan on social media being a huge part of advertisement campaign. With Facebook and Twitter we plan on creating pages and groups for the festival and sharing the date and description of the festival with as many people as possible. The Franklinton News has also agreed to run an advertisement for our festival for free during the month leading up to the festival. The only advertisement we will need to spend money on is an advertisement online and in print through the Columbus Dispatch.

Expenses are where the issue becomes a little more complex. To start, Strongwater will charge us \$3,000 for the venue and all the help they will provide for the weekend. We will also need to rent a large, electric generator to help power outdoor lights and the food trucks. Luckily we have found a local rental equipment firm who were willing to let us rent a generator for the weekend for \$900. The permits to close Lucas Street from during the festival hours will be about \$500. The police detail for the festival will cost roughly \$800 for the weekend. According to our research, expenses related to the various workshops will be about \$1000. Our advertising with the Columbus Dispatch will cost about \$400 but could be more depending on how much we want to spend on online advertisements. Entertainment costs are where it gets tricky however. Based on Ian's research, each artist/band will cost anywhere from \$300-\$400 and we would need about 12 performers for the weekend. This means we will need about \$10,000 for the entertainers for the weekend. We are also setting aside \$500 dollars as an emergency materials fund in case anything goes wrong. (Appendix 1 & 2)

If our projections are accurate, we can pessimistically expect \$12,700 in revenues and \$17,100 in expenses. This means we could expect to lose \$4,400 dollars. (Appendix 1 & 2) With the help of sponsors, the festival could hope to achieve a profit, which would be reinvested back into the Franklinton community. However, this is only possible if we can sufficiently spread the word to get the people of Franklinton and Columbus to attend the event. That is why we need more than just funds from the Organizations that are making this event possible.

Food & Beverages

Food helps to bring people together, whether through a shared appreciation or through a sense of community. “What was once a source of fuel for everyone, and a source of solace and pleasure for many people, is now a vehicle for self-expression, a point of pride, a political statement, a declaration of identity” (Thorn, 2015). Food shapes who we are as a person and links us together. These values are a defining aspect of the Appalachian culture. They appreciate a sense of community and seek to bring people together, across age or income. One way in which these values can be achieved is through the support and appreciation of local businesses. By investing in the local economy and supporting local food producers and suppliers, the Franklinton community can continue to witness growth.

By achieving one of our goals to help stimulate the Franklinton economy, the food trucks and breweries supplying beverages at the Urban Appalachian Festival will largely come from the Franklinton community. Some of the local businesses include Phillips Original Coney Island, Land-Grant Brewery, Rehab Tavern, and Strongwater Food and Spirits. Some other businesses that are local to the Columbus community include Ray Ray’s Hog Pit, Por’Ketta, and Elevator Brewery.

The food being offered at the event will not create a revenue for the festival itself, but instead seeks to help bring awareness to the local businesses and to Franklinton itself. The festival will be providing the potential customers within the Franklinton community, as well as residents in the surrounding Columbus area. By providing and showcasing Franklinton food, the Urban Appalachian Festival can hope to bring an awareness to not only Appalachian culture, but also the Franklinton community.

The beer that is being offered is largely coming from local breweries and bars. Land-Grant Brewery located at 424 W Town St. and Rehab Tavern located at 456 W Town St. have both offered to supply beer. They have graciously donated the beer to the event, and the revenue generated from beer sales will go toward the expenses of the festival. Any additional sales will be donated back into the Franklinton community, in order to help further stimulate the local community. Any remaining beer will be given back to the breweries and bars that donated it to the festival.

Vendors

In an effort to promote economic growth in Franklinton, our vendors will consist of local small businesses and artists from the Franklinton area. Our local art and product vendors will include Under Aurora, Hammered and Corked, and twenty artists and crafters from the studios of Ethical Arts Collective and 400 West Rich Street in East Franklinton. Festival attendees will

have the opportunity to purchase handmade jewelry, clothing, ceramics, home goods, and art while interacting directly with independent business owners and artists.

Education

Ultimately, we hope that each festival attendee will leave our festival with new knowledge regarding Franklinton's past and future. With the assistance of the Franklinton Historical Society, we intend to include several educational exhibits and programs in our event. Our tentative schedule includes exhibits on the founding of Franklinton by Lucas Sullivant and the industrialization of Franklinton, as well as a program detailing future development plans for the neighborhood. We also intend to hold several workshops in which festival attendees can learn Appalachian skills and practices, including weaving, woodworking, apple butter and ice cream making, food preservation, beekeeping, and urban gardening.

Through this festival, we also hope to increase awareness of the resources and opportunities available to the residents of Franklinton. At the suggestion of our Franklinton consultant Gale Gray, we hope to achieve this goal through the institution of Franklinton resource booths at the festival, which will offer information about several local organizations, including Mount Carmel's Healthy Living Center, Franklinton Gardens, Gladden Community House, and Lower Lights Ministries (Gray). These organizations offer free services in a variety of different areas, including nutrition and food security, child care, financial assistance and professional development, and management and prevention of chronic medical conditions. We believe that everyone should have access to education, health and wellness services, and we hope that through our festival we can encourage and facilitate healthy lifestyles for the Franklinton community.

Entertainment

An integral part of in raising awareness of Appalachian culture through our Urban Appalachian festival will be bringing in musical talent for all to hear. This music encapsulates the history, hardship, and dogged optimism that defines the lifestyle of Appalachians ("Appalachian Folk Music"). Given its importance to the community, its wide appeal, and its capacity to bring in people from Franklinton and the broader Columbus area to support local talent, it is imperative to local bands and solo artists to play throughout the duration of the festival. Whether they be bluegrass, folk, country, or southern rock bands, these acts will simultaneously entertain the crowd and empower them to connect to the experiences of these acts performing in an Appalachian style. It is our desire to facilitate this cultural exchange among members of the community and to bring celebrate the rich musical heritage of Appalachians.

The importance of these musical acts cannot be understated and neither can the price for musicians. In order to keep prices manageable, COAL has elicited the help of CD102.5 to drive down the cost of gig rate for the artists. Even so, our organization still requires monetary support

in order to pay these musicians fairly for all of their time, talent, and effort. Providing these groups with good pay will develop positive relations among our organization and musicians to secure their support in the future and help spread awareness of the acts found with Franklinton. Providing for their well-being helps COAL, Franklinton, and Columbus as a whole.

After managing potential money issues to pay the bands for their services, the music will not only entertain the festival-goers, but also address the stereotypes that many hold onto uncritically. Because of its ability to bring people together and to share in a common emotional experience, music can ease the general population into the worldview of Appalachians. Giving people this experience will actively engage them in the traditions of mountain-folk and address the continual issue of judging the community unfairly. As such, music serves the greater purpose of breaking stereotypes surrounding the Appalachian community and actively engaging all of Columbus with the musical talent from Franklinton and the surrounding city.

Conclusion

We are asking for your monetary support in the form of business donations and sponsorships, in order to help fund the Urban Appalachian Festival. Our goals for this festival include building awareness for urban appalachian culture, to eliminate stereotypes formed for appalachians, and to help cultivate the Franklinton community. The Coalition of Appalachian Lifestyles (COAL) seeks to bring these goals together in the form of a festival and with the help of donations and sponsorships, COAL will be able to successfully bring the festival to life.

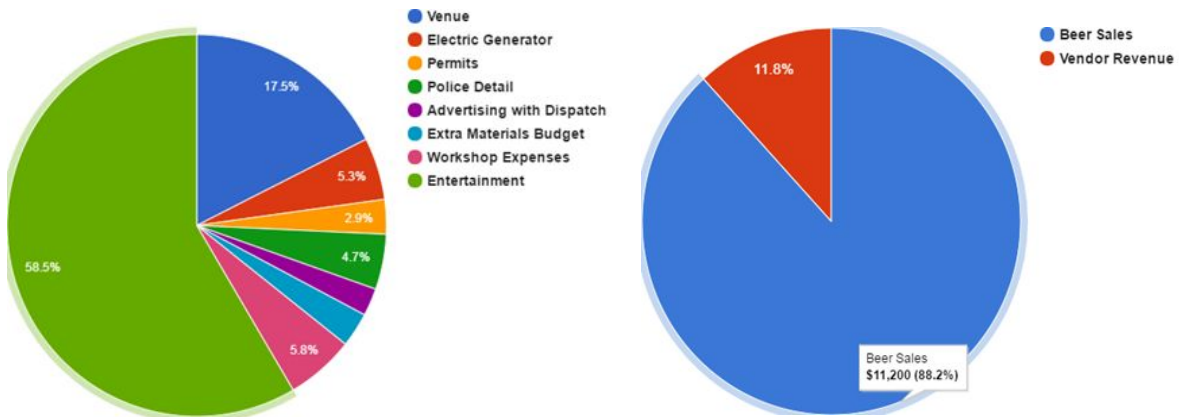
Appendix 1

Budget

Expenses	
Venue	\$3,000
Electric Generator	\$900
Permits	\$500
Police Detail	\$800
Advertising with Dispatch	\$400
Extra Materials Budget	\$500
Workshop Expenses	\$1,000
Entertainment	\$10,000
Total	\$17,100
Projected Revenue	
Projected Attendees	3,000
Beer Sales	\$11,200
Vendor Revenue	\$1,500
Total	\$12,700
Projected Profit	(\$4,400)

Appendix 2

Expenses and Revenue



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