



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for Community-Led and Community-Operated Informal Mental Health Supports

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Unity 133 LLC (D/B/A Uzima)

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Mayan Marshall, Owner

Address: Unity 133 LLC Address: [REDACTED]
Uzima Store Address: 3500 5th Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Telephone: Unity 133 LLC: [REDACTED]; Store: [REDACTED]

Email: oakland@uzima.live

Website: https://www.uzima.live/

Legal Status: For-Profit Corp. Nonprofit Corp. Sole Proprietor Partnership

Date Incorporated: 04/04/2019

Partners included in this Proposal: Peoples Oakland Inc.,

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Peoples Oakland

Does your organization have a telecommunications device to accommodate individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing? Yes No

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Mayan Marshall	[REDACTED]	oakland@uzima.live
Contract Processing Contact	Mayan Marshall	[REDACTED]	oakland@uzima.live
Chief Information Officer	Sheronica Marshal	[REDACTED]	oakland@uzima.live
Chief Financial Officer	Sheronica Marshall	[REDACTED]	oakland@uzima.live
MPER Contact*	Mayan Marshall	[REDACTED]	oakland@uzima.live

* **MPER** is DHS's provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

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BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Board Chairperson Name & Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Board Chairperson Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Board Chairperson Telephone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Board Chairperson Email: [Click here to enter text.](#)

REFERENCES

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. *Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.*

Tre Tipton
CEO of Victoriously Living Inc. (L.O.V.E.)

[Redacted]

Email: [Redacted]

Phone: [Redacted]

Nena Ansari
Co-Owner, Professional Barber Institute

[Redacted]

Email: [Redacted]

Phone: [Redacted]

Julie M. Gaul, MS, MBA
Director of Wellness and Fitness Services, Carlow University
Head Women's Volleyball Coach, Carlow University
Carlow University
3333 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
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Jessica Webster, Ed.D
Head of School, The Campus Laboratory School
Carlow University, Tiernan Hall
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: jwebster@carlow.edu

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 8/5/2022

Amount Requested: \$51,000

CERTIFICATION

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

OR

My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

ATTACHMENTS

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Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- Partner commitment letters, if applicable
- MWDBE and VOSB documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years
- W-9
- At least one letter of support from a community-based organization or community member

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 125 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 12 pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

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Experience and Leadership (25 points possible)

1. Describe your organization's experience providing services to/in communities that have been marginalized by mainstream systems.

In August 2021, Mayan and Sheronica Marshall opened "Uzima" juice bar in Oakland. After operating a "Salud Juicery" in that same location from 2019-2021, Mayan and Sheronica realized the impact and prevalence of Mental Illness (MI) in the Oakland community, particularly for college students. In an effort to combat MI they decided to launch "Uzima", a juice bar whose focus is to raise awareness and fight stigma around MI, as expressed by their slogan, "Defeating depression one smoothie at a time."

Mayan and Sheronica have extensive experience serving marginalized communities, as individuals, and through their leadership at Uzima. Sheronica served as a Title I Mathematics teacher in Houston Texas, teaching mathematics to students with academic and mental health disabilities. Sheronica's work with these students ensured they gained the academic support they needed, and any additional supports that the student felt necessary. Additionally, Mayan served as a volunteer with the HOPE aftercare program, where he mentored individuals incarcerated, or recently released from the Allegheny County Jail. Mayan met with his mentee's regularly, providing them support for their transition back into society. Mayan also served as the Scholarship Chairperson for American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) while in Houston, Texas where he enabled minority students pursuing degrees in STEM fields to obtain funding to attend a 4-year university towards a degree in an energy related field. These experiences furthered Sheronica and Mayan's insight to the realities that marginalized communities face, building on their own experience as members of the black community.

As a black male and a black female living with MI, Mayan and Sheronica know firsthand the stigmas that are associated with mental health treatment, and the lack of support that exists. "Black people don't go to counselors" was an established and accepted philosophy for Sheronica and Mayan during their upbringing. They have witnessed numerous family members and friends in the black community go without necessary support because they lacked the clinical vocabulary and awareness to recognize their experiences as mental health concerns. The results of this led to incarceration, drug and alcohol abuse, and continued difficulty with mental health symptoms. The aversion to formal mental health supports is not unfounded for the black community. Fear of rejection from their community, fear of being stigmatized by providers, fear of being dismissed, are all lived realities the Marshalls have faced in their own pursuit of mental health recovery. These experiences further their passion for creating informal mental health supports in their community.

From this passion they created "Uzima C.A.R.E.S.", a variety of programs aimed at increasing peer support, promoting mental wellness, and increasing advocacy for mental health. Uzima is located within walking distance of South Oakland, West Oakland, and the Upper Hill, three districts identified as areas where there is high need in the 2018 community need index. Mayan

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and Sheronica have established peer relationships with many of their customers and employees that live with MI. 100% of Uzima staff identify as living with MI. Mayan and Sheronica have used their lived experience to offer empathy, support, and compassion, to foster a community support network for individuals with mental health concerns, both for customers and employees. While not all Uzima's customers are part of marginalized communities, many of those individuals who have participated in Uzima C.A.R.E.S are part of the black and LGBTQAI communities. The initiatives they have implemented facilitate access for everyone to engage in conversations around mental health and obtain desired mental health treatment.

2. Describe your organization's experience building trust with the communities within which you work and provide at least one specific example to illustrate that experience. Attach at least one letter of support from a community-based organization or community member.

Uzima launched in August 2021. The core mission has been to raise awareness and fight stigma around MI. The Uzima store is designed to facilitate conversations around mental health. Mental wellness and mental health advocacy quotes are scattered throughout the store, and the walls are covered with interactive activities all aimed at starting discussions about mental health. Given this, shortly after Uzima opened, several students with mental health concerns began to frequent Uzima and engage the Marshalls in conversations about how to reduce stigma, and encourage people to be open about their mental health journeys. One way the store fosters conversations about mental health is through their "Wall of Fame". Various actors, musicians, athletes, scholars and artists from around the world who have been diagnosed with a MI are posted on the walls throughout Uzima. QR codes link to the individual's story, so customers can learn about these different celebrities, past and present, who have battled MI and read about their journeys. At the student's suggestion, the Wall of Fame has been expanded to include local student portraits, containing QR codes linking their portraits to their mental health recovery testimonies, encouraging other students to share their testimonies. This project became known as the "Student Stories Project" and it was the first initiative of Uzima C.A.R.E.S. The first six students to provide testimonies and have their portraits installed are known as the Strong Six. Their portraits were revealed during an Open Mic event held with a local nonprofit, Peoples Oakland, Inc (PO), who serve individuals with severe MI. To date, 30% of student participants from the Student Stories Project are from marginalized communities.

Over the past year Uzima has partnered with PO in several ways. PO expressed the difficulty individuals with SMI face in obtaining competitive community employment. Uzima developed a part time position for a PO member, tailoring the job description to onboard the individual at a pace that worked for them. This member is now one of Uzima's lead staff and continues to work on gaining management skills. PO shared with Uzima some of their initiatives to foster peer support among their members. One program PO implemented, the Circle of Friends, inspired Uzima to partner with PO to replicate that program for a cohort of nursing students at Carlow University. The nursing student body Uzima encountered and learned from reports regular struggles with mental health due to the demanding nature of the program amongst many other factors.

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Another initiative of Uzima C.A.R.E.S. is the F.R.E.E. and Fearless (F.R.F.E.) program, which will provide mental health support programming for students between 3rd-8th grade. F.R.F.E. originated with an event hosted by Uzima in November 2021, where they invited students from Carlow Lab to attend Uzima for a tasting, brief education on the impacts of nutrition on mental health, and a tour of the store. During this event, a tenth-grade student spoke about their experience with anxiety. She began her battle with anxiety in 3rd grade and wanted to encourage students that it is safe to say and communicate when you have anxiety, suicidal ideation, and depression. This event was a catalyst in establishing trust with the students, who continue to visit the store and bring their families. Several parents have shared the impact this experience had on their family, helping them communicate with their kids about mental health. From this original event, approximately 25% of participating students were from marginalized communities.

3. Provide a concise statement of your organizational philosophy.

Uzima is helping people achieve wellness in all aspects of their life including their physical, mental and emotional health. Our slogan is, 'Defeating depression one smoothie at a time' and our goal as a company is to bring more awareness to MI while removing the stigmas associated with the disease. We want to make our store a refuge so customers can safely explore MI in all its wonder and diversity.

4. List demographic information about your organization's leadership and staff, as well as the population they serve.

Mayan Marshall - Owner
Sheronica Marshall – Co-Owner
Antonia Moore – Associate
Matteo Masini – Associate
Taylor Russell – Associate
Lisette Shields – Associate
Charlee Petrucci – Associate

Age Range: 20- 46
Race: +57% Black, 42% White
LGBTQAI: 28%
Identify as living with MI: 100%

Uzima is a Black owned small business, serving primarily college students from the surrounding universities. We do not keep demographic information on our customers, however a significant percentage of Uzima C.A.R.E.S participants to date have belonged to marginalized communities.

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Project Details (50 points possible)

5. Describe what Informal Mental Health Support services your proposed Project will provide, and the intended outcomes you hope to achieve. Include how the Project will meet one or more of the goals listed in RFP Section 2.1.

Uzima C.A.R.E.S encompasses the Uzima company initiatives to reduce stigma around MI, empower people to support one another, and further mental wellness. Uzima has collaborated with several community members and organizations to design programs which provide informal mental health supports. Currently, there are four projects in development: the Student Stories Project, Circle of Friends (COF), Uzima Peer Support Program, and F.R.E.E & Fearless.

The Student Stories Project offers college students the opportunity to share their testimony with MI. The purpose of the Student Stories Project is to bring more awareness to mental health within the college student community and to give college students a platform where they can openly share their journey with MI with others, without judgment. The Student Stories Project is a campaign that offers a chance for college students at one of the participating colleges to be interviewed by Uzima and to have their portraits drawn in anime and posted in the store, where other college students can view their art and read their interviews on Uzima's website. As these student's testimonies are seen and shared, it will encourage other college students to come forward, and empower the Oakland community to discuss mental health openly. It will also help other students who struggle with MI to feel like they are not alone when they read stories about students with similar struggles. The ultimate goal of the Student Stories Project is to have such a variety of universities, programs/majors, and diagnoses represented that any incoming college freshman patronizing the store will feel recognized and supported.

The Circle of Friends (COF) is a peer support program designed by Peoples Oakland. PO collaborated with Carlow Nursing students and Uzima leadership to adapt COF for students in their freshman - sophomore year of the nursing program. Carlow nursing students frequented Uzima over the past year, and were open about the challenges of the program, it's impact on mental health, and their desire to be a part of something that would encourage students to support each other. COF provides students the opportunity to build resiliency and improve their overall mental health and wellness as they pursue their degree in nursing. The program facilitates discussion around identity, coping skills, resiliency as well as providing some psychoeducation on vicarious trauma, and CBT interventions. Students who participate will walk away with a strong community support system including their peers and additional community resources.

The Uzima Peer Support Program is intended to increase the provision of peer support to local college students who are struggling with mental health. Since it's opening in August 2021, Uzima customers have expressed struggles with loneliness, addiction, anxiety, depression, and emotional trauma. In response to this, Uzima has designed a peer support program, which enlists other community members to get involved and help support their customers. These peer support volunteers are NOT therapists or counselors, and they don't need any specific skills. This is a

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person Uzima customers can confide in, use as a sounding board, or maybe just a listening ear as customers discuss and try to understand their internal struggles. Although these volunteers are not counselors, Uzima will structure this to ensure the volunteers have resources to draw from and can point the customers to if additional support is needed over and above what the volunteer can offer.

F.R.E.E and Fearless is the most recent initiative of Uzima C.A.R.E.S. and is still in development. The program will offer art, music, dance, and nature therapy for minors (8-17 yrs.) as an avenue for addressing and healing from trauma. The program will build on partnerships with Carlow Lab as detailed in question 2 of this form. Uzima is collaborating with community leaders and educators to identify students for the 5-week program. Each week, participants will get to try different therapeutic approaches- Art Therapy, Music and Dance Therapy, Gardening, Guided Meditation- offered by various community partners.

All Uzima C.A.R.E.S initiatives offer an avenue for program participants to gain access to informal helpers, learn about mental health, and as they desire, be connected to formal mental health supports. By creating communities in which mental health is openly discussed, we reduce the stigma surrounding MI, and empower people to access the supports they need.

6. Describe where and to whom you will provide your Project, and why that community needs the proposed Project.

Uzima C.A.R.E.S. initiatives will be facilitated in the Uzima storefront, and primarily target college students in the Oakland community. While college students as a demographic do not constitute a marginalized community, many participants of these programs belong to marginalized communities. All the initiatives were designed, in part if not entirely, by individuals who are part of the Black and/or LGBTQAI communities. And all these initiatives have been created at the bequest of students who belong to Gen Z., a generation reporting higher rates of depression and other mental illnesses than any other generation before them. Uzima has also been made aware by college students attending Pitt, Carlow and CMU that it is sometimes challenging finding availability with the on-campus counselors at their respective universities due to the fact the universities are not able to meet the student demand with the existing counseling staff onsite. Students have shared they were put on waitlists for counseling services after seeking needed help, because they did not express a desire to hurt themselves or others. As a consequence, many students end up at the E.R. for panic attacks or issues with drug and alcohol abuse. Students from marginalized communities are much less likely to pursue formal mental health services due to stigma, and fear of their families' reactions. Uzima C.A.R.E.S initiatives bring mental health to the forefront of conversation, create a space where students are comfortable talking about their mental health, and equip them to support each other as peers. By creating these environments, students are more likely to access formal mental health supports as needed, less likely to end up in crisis without support, and are empowered to advocate for mental health.

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The only Uzima initiative offered off site will be F.R.E.E. & Fearless. This program will be offered after school for a selected student cohort, between the ages of 8-17. Data shows this population is already experiencing mental health concerns. Participants for these programs will be recruited from neighborhoods that are in high need. Engaging youth in conversations about mental health equips them to identify and address these concerns as they emerge later in life.

7. Describe any formal or informal partnerships your Project will require and your plan to develop those. Include a description of how you envision DHS supporting you. (Consider describing how you prefer to communicate with DHS about any system or other barriers your Project encounters, and about any opportunities for system improvements you may identify.)

Uzima has formed several partnerships in their development of the Uzima C.A.R.E.S initiatives. For all initiatives Uzima is the lead agency.

For the Circle of Friends program Uzima has partnered with Peoples Oakland. PO and Uzima have a well-established partnership, as detailed in questions 2 of this form. PO will co facilitate the first pilot groups of COF along with Mayan Marshall. PO has consulted on program design, and financial support opportunities.

For the Peer Support Program, Uzima has partnered with the Christian Counselor Collaborative (CCC) and Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS). CCC is a Christian non-profit organization aiming to provide competent, professional therapy for Christians and non-Christians. The partnership between CCC and Uzima is informal. Uzima and CCC will have an arrangement in place so that students who participate in the peer support program will be eligible for up to so many hours of therapy at no cost to the student. FOCUS is a Catholic collegiate outreach program. Its CMU chapter has expressed interest in participating in the Peer Support program. Their missionaries and student volunteers will be designated as Uzima Peer Volunteers. Uzima has also reached out to the Pitt Dorm Resident Director about hosting "Tour, Taste, Talk" events during the first semester. This will allow freshman to learn about the programs available to them.

The Student Stories Project only necessitated partnerships with students. Uzima continues to market this opportunity to their student customers and community partners.

F.R.E.E. and Fearless is working to identify several community partners. They are seeking out local organizations and individuals who have experience providing different types of therapy-based activities to marginalized communities. Existing planning committee members include Sheronica Marshall; Kiahana Horne, community leader, family and student advocate in Quaker Valley HAS (Home and School Association) with skills in building community relations and student programming; Tiffany Ward, educator and curriculum writer.

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At the formation of Uzima C.A.R.E.S, Uzima sought out partnerships with individuals who have expertise in research, knowing the importance of obtaining feedback on program outcomes, and using that feedback to revise and enhance programming. Uzima has been working with Marlene Strege, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh, who has volunteered her time to offer insight on data collection tools and strategy. Marlene will serve as the Outcomes Consultant for all initiatives.

While many partners have donated their time and expertise, Uzima is seeking financial support from DHS, to sustain the work they are doing, and to compensate their community partners for the work they have done and continue to do. Uzima welcomes any insights from DHS regarding collaboration with other community organizations, and additional funding strategies.

8. Provide a concise project timeline listing when certain activities (e.g., planning, hiring, implementation) and milestones will begin and end.

Project timelines are listed below for each project individually.

Student Stories: Implemented in April 2022. Ongoing.

Circle of Friends

Spring 2022: Identified nursing students willing to participate in program design

Summer 2022: Biweekly meeting held with PO, Uzima Leadership, Nursing Students, and Research Expert, to form program design

August 2022: Identify 6-8 students to participate in pilot group

September 12th – November 14th 2022 : Run Pilot Group 1

November – December 2022 : Compile and analyze data

January 2023: Meet with and offer training for Student facilitator for pilot group 2, identify additional 6 students to participate in pilot group 2

February – March 2023: Run pilot group 2

April 2023: Analyze data

Peer Support Program

Aug 2022 – FOCUS and Uzima agree to collaborate to establish Uzima Peer Support Program

Aug 2022 – Kickoff meeting held between Uzima and FOCUS peer support volunteers (3-4 people) to review objective of program, expectations of volunteers, resources available to volunteers and training.

Aug -Sep 2022 – Solicit other university student organizations regarding interest in Uzima Peer Support Program. Receive commitment from another 2-3 organizations. Will also conduct solicitations at Uzima in store to recruit additional volunteers. Uzima's goal is to have a minimum of 10 volunteers, but ideally Uzima would like to generate more interest in case they receive a higher demand of recipients than expected. Uzima does not want to turn down students request for support because of a lack of volunteers.

Sep 2022 – College recruiting events

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- Host a series of tour, taste talk events at Uzima and on-campus events targeting newly arriving college freshman.
- Host a series of tour, taste talk events at Uzima specifically for college counselors informing them of the program
- Host a series of tour, taste talk events at Uzima specifically for college professors who teach classes for freshman students informing them of the program

Sept 2022 – Print informational material about Peer Support Program and make it available at the store so customers are aware of the program and can inquire about it with Uzima staff.

Sept – Oct 2022 Uzima anticipates an increase in student traffic into the store because of the abovementioned campus events, counselor referrals and professor referrals. It is expected that when patronizing students read the Peer Support Material a percentage of them will inquire about the program and a number of them will eventually register to be a participant.

Oct – Nov 2022 Uzima will monitor the program

Dec 2022 – Conduct surveys

Jan 2023 – Provide report out regarding outcomes*

F.R.E.E. and Fearless

August – October 2022: Work to identify community partners and student participants. Weekly planning meetings began in July and will continue to meet until program is fully formed.

Planning Committee includes Sheronica, an educator, and community leader and student family advocate.

November 2022: Target Offer F&F program to 10 students.

December: Analyze data

9. Describe your proposed staffing plan, role descriptions and any training requirements. Include whether or not staff will have or obtain certification as peer specialists, and why.

All Uzima C.A.R.E.S. initiatives are overseen by Sheronica and Mayan Marshall. The Circle of Friends Program is co-operated by Allison Haley, Peoples Oakland's program supervisor, who is a LCSW with experience in program development. COF and the Peer Support Program require brief, basic training to peers who will facilitate groups or serve as peer volunteers. This training will inform the peer of available resources, and how to make any necessary referrals for peer recipients. We will not require formal peer specialist training as the peer positions are all voluntary. Mayan will build off his experience as a HOPE mentor to prepare students for their mentoring role. The F.R.E.E and Fearless program will work with a variety of qualified and licensed individuals for each type of therapy that is introduced. Sheronica and Mayan will work with the Outcomes Consultant to develop outcome measures for each initiative and develop a strategy for analysis.

Community Involvement and Trust (30 points possible)

10. Describe how you included community members in planning and designing your Project.

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Each initiative included community members in the planning and design process. The process for each initiative is included below.

Circle of Friends: Nursing students who frequented Uzima began discussing the need for a more open atmosphere in the nursing program to address mental health concerns. Many of their nursing peers were struggling with mental health and felt a lack of support. Uzima organized a meeting with several nursing students and Peoples Oakland to discuss what a COF adaptation for nursing students might look like. Over the next two months, the group met and designed the program. The first week, the nursing students shared the most common concerns that nursing students face. All the topics listed were used to develop the 8-week curriculum. Once the curriculum was designed, the group met again to review it. Nursing students gave their feedback, explaining where there was not enough information or what content would be more helpful. The curriculum was revised and presented at the third meetings. At this meeting the curriculum was approved, and nursing students provided insight on what subtopics might arise. Their insights were compiled into facilitator notes.

Student Stories Project: Students who frequented Uzima met regularly with the Marshalls to discuss ways to encourage other students to talk openly about Mental Health. The idea was suggested to include students on the Wall of Fame. Students then met with Mayan and completed an interview about their mental health journey, which was transcribed and uploaded to Uzima's website and blog page. The students' photos and accompanying QR codes for their stories can now be found in the Uzima store.

Uzima Peer Support Program: Students have regularly expressed a lack of support for mental health and the desire to talk about their concerns with a trusted individual. Uzima is not able to meet the demand for informal mental health support that their customer base is looking for, so they are creating a formal peer support program, to ensure everyone has a trusted person they can share their struggles with. The formal process is still in design. As it develops, Uzima leadership regularly seeks feedback from their Uzima customers who have engaged them in conversations about mental health.

F.R.E.E. and Fearless – This program is still in development, and was inspired by an event held at Uzima with Carlow Lab. Participants of this event began returning to Uzima with their families, and discussing how it impacted their ability to talk as a family about mental health struggles. The need to address mental health with children became apparent, and the ability to form relationships with these students and their families was established. F.R.E.E. and Fearless will offer different types of therapeutic activities that appeal to children, such as art and dance.

11. Describe how you will include community members in the implementation/staffing/assessment of your Project.

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With the exception of F.R.E.E and Fearless, all the Uzima initiatives follow a peer support design, and so will inherently be comprised almost exclusively of community members. After the first pilot group for COF, peers will begin facilitating those groups. Uzima will have peer facilitators and volunteers obtain the qualitative and quantitative data designated for each project. After the data is analyzed, the overall findings will be presented to program participants. Any revision to programming will include peer input in the process.

12. Explain why you are the appropriate provider of this Project, specifically addressing why your community will trust you to provide this Project. (Consider describing the length of time in the community and years in operation, prior successful programs, the community's involvement in current programs, other examples of leadership in your community or other information you think would be helpful.)

Mayan and Sheronica Marshall have been working in the Oakland community since 2019. They have spent the past four years listening to student stories, forming trusting relationships with them, and responding to their needs. They have already begun several projects which only took form because students trusted them and engaged with them. The Student Stories Project has been a wonderful success and inspired other students to share their stories about mental health. All of their initiatives have been formed in response to student's stories about their unmet mental health needs, and all their initiatives have included students, and community partners, in their design and implementation.

Data Collection and Reporting (10 points possible)

13. Describe what data you currently collect on your programs.

To date, Uzima has not begun collecting formal data for their initiatives, given that they are mostly still in the planning/design stage, and have not been implemented. The Student Stories Project has received wonderful feedback from customers and other students, although this feedback had not been compiled in any formalized way. The ultimate measure of success for the student stories initiative, is having additional students come forward to have their portrait included in the Wall of Fame. Uzima will document the total number of student stories added to the wall following the initial Strong Six.

14. Describe how you will know if your Project is effective in achieving its goals and what data you will collect to track its effectiveness.

Uzima leadership feels strongly that the qualitative data obtained from programs will drive what quantitative measures should be implemented in the future. Program participants will provide regular feedback on their experiences, and the impact of the program they participate in. They will be asked to provide this in the form of a written review form, which will be provided to Mayan and Sheronica after they complete the program (or after the first two months of participating in the peer program). The Marshalls will use the response forms and collaborate

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with the Outcomes Consultant and Peoples Oakland to identify different standardized measures for the various programs to use moving forward. Each project will track when a participant gains access to a formal mental health support because of participating in an Uzima C.A.R.E.S project. The goal of all these initiatives is to increase the mental wellness of participants, which will be measure based off participant feedback, and to increase their utilization of formal mental health supports, which will be tracked for each program.

Budget (10 points possible)

15. Provide a detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with planning, implementing, and sustaining the Project. Please remember that Project staff must earn no less than \$15/hour and you may include language assistance services costs in the budget.

Uzima C.A.R.E.S Project Budget			
Expenses	Pilot 1	Pilot 2	Total Project Budget
	\$		
Personnel	9500	7600	17100
Professional Fees: Consulting	1750	1750	3500
General Operating	500	500	1000
Total			\$20,600
Circle of Friends	\$		
Meals refreshments	960	960	1920
Participant Stipend	6000	6000	12000
Professional Fees: Facilitator	1750	1750	3500
Total			\$17,420
Peer Support Program	\$		
Meals Refreshment	150	150	300
Counseling Fees	4000	4000	8000
Total			\$8,300
F.R.E.E. and Fearless	\$		
Meals Refreshment	500	500	1000
Professional Fees: Facilitator	1000	1000	2000
Total			\$3,000
Student Stories Project	\$		
Total	340	340	680
Grand Total	\$26,450	\$24,550	\$51,000

16. Provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget.

RFP for Community-Led and Community-Operated Informal Mental Health Supports

If Uzima C.A.R.E.S is awarded a contract, we will invoice the costs for the first round of pilot programs in the contract's first month. If reimbursement is not allowed, Uzima will cover or seek additional funding sources for the first pilot program and will invoice for reimbursement for the second round of pilot programs. The budget accounts for the total cost of the two pilot program rounds which is 50k.

Personnel: Compensation for project management for Uzima's CEO and CFO for hours spent developing, implementing, and managing all programs (First Pilot: 22 August to 22 December) (Pilot 2: January–April) at \$1900 per month for a nine-month period.

Consulting: 20 hours of consulting at a rate of \$125 per hour

General Operating: promotional items, program supplies and recruitment events

COF meals/refreshment – Provided to student participants at \$15 per person a week for 8 weeks.

COF Participant Stipend – Provided to group participants to compensate time for participation. This will incentivize participation and honor the student's time.

COF Facilitators: are paid a stipend of \$1750 for each pilot they lead.

PSP Meals/Refreshments: 20 peer participants received meals and refreshments during their first visit to Uzima @ of \$15 per meal.

PSP Counseling Fees: These funds will be used to pay for any counseling fees that students may incur if they choose to use official mental health resources.

F.R.E.E. and Fearless Meals/refreshments: provided to participants and their families at a cost of \$500 per pilot.

F.R.E.E. and Fearless Facilitator: A fee of \$1000 for each pilot facilitator.

SSP: Fee for creating anime portraits



August 2, 2022

To whom it may concern,

Peoples Oakland has read and agreed to the partnership with Uzima, as detailed in their proposal for "Community Led Informal Mental Health Supports". As per this proposal, Peoples Oakland has begun and will continue to partner with Uzima in the following ways.

- 1. Design and implement nursing student adaptation of the Circle of Friends Program
- 2. Assist in program design and data collection for Uzima C.A.R.E.S. initiatives
- 3. Provide assistance in seeking and applying for various funding opportunities

Peoples Oakland supports Uzima C.A.R.E.S. initiatives and will continue to provide assistance within the agency's capacity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lezetta L. Cox", is written over a horizontal line.

Lezetta L. Cox
Executive Director
Peoples Oakland
3433 Bates Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412.683.7140 x 240
www.peoplesoakland.org

Letter of Support for UZIMA

From: Tre Tipton
CEO of Victoriously Living Inc.
1313 Saw Mill Blvd,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15226
08/02/22

I am writing this letter to support the company Uzima. As a student-athlete for the University of Pittsburgh, I founded the organization called L.O.V.E. In creating the organization I realized how difficult the fight against Mental health can be. I came to the realization that it takes a village to make a change and good people to help break the stigma behind mental health. Uzima is an establishment that is a front runner in the fight against Mental Health. This establishment has geared their mission, their passion and the work ethic towards not only feeding the Universities in the area, but also educating and supporting the individual battles each student faces.

Uzima is founded by two incredible people that not only own the shop, but are also full time employees of the shop. It brightens my day to be able to build a relationship with the people who are passionate about mental health and are front runners in trying to change the stigma behind mental health. Not only are they a place of peace, Uzima also does a brilliant job in feeding the soul with positivity and food. I believe Uzima is on pace to become a staple for universities everywhere. Not only because of their amazing food but also their mission. I am thankful to have encountered such inspirational people.

Furthermore, as a proud ambassador of you Uzima I believe they are an establishment of integrity, peace, and mentorship. A lot of students around the world have been facing depression, and mental illnesses due to COVID and the current world events that have happened in the last three years. Uzima over the past year has become a beacon for students who have lost themselves in these difficult times. One of those students happened to be me. I am very thankful for the Uzima family and the help they have provided me over time.

Sincerely, Tre Tipton

Summary

Letter of support from a community member

Community Member Bio: Lisette, African-American Female, College Student

Document Type: Write a Blog - Writing Class Assignment

Meta-description: Start the journey of putting your mental health first by visiting the juice bar Uzima in Oakland. A blog about a small black-owned business that values community, connection, and conversation around mental illness. Mental illness is not a battle to fight alone and you don't have to with the help of others. It's time to shine light on the subject that many individuals face throughout their lives.

Uzima, My Light At The End Of The Tunnel

By Lisette Shields

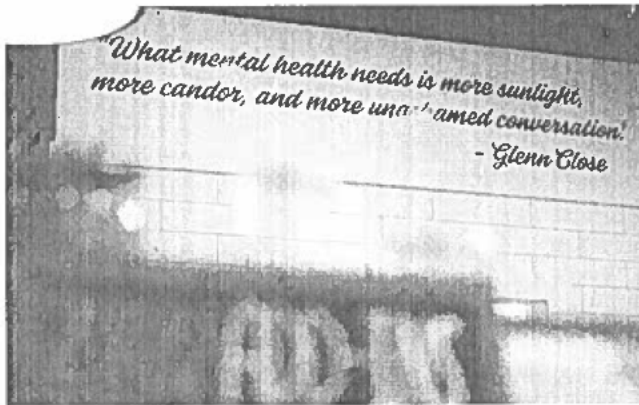
The Space Between Myself and The World

For a moment I thought, this is it. My experience on this Earth would be unremarkable. I would wake up only to toss and turn and wonder how I ended up here. How was it that I did everything that everyone said was right, yet still felt this void within me. Despite feeling paralyzed by these emotions, the rest of the world called to me again. Get up, get dressed, brush your teeth, go to class back to back until your head starts to spin because you forgot to eat breakfast. Somehow I built up more strength to ignore it, smile and socialize because that's what's normal. No one can know that you are on the brink of falling apart. The world calls again. Keep your grades up, focus, I know it's hard right now but that's not important. You need to get it together or you don't stand a chance and if you dare crack under pressure it'll most certainly be the end of your journey towards happiness. Somewhere along the way perseverance was all I knew. I thought once I obtain my dream job and become financially stable all of this will be worth it because that's what the world said. Little did I know, a juice bar hidden on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Halket Street in Oakland would drown out the expectations of the world and put my needs into focus.

This Is Not A Juice Bar

Is Uzima a juice bar? Well, yes and no. It's actually quite similar (in my opinion) to René Magritte's painting of a pipe that says "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*" below it which translates from French to English as "*This is not a pipe*". Of course one would look at this painting and say it's a pipe, just as one would look outside Uzima and say it's a juice bar. Yet the truth is that it's really a painting of a pipe, just like Uzima is really a place that sheds light on mental illness. Uzima comes from the phrase "Mti Wa Uzima" in Swahili which translates to Tree of Life. Upon entering the store not only will you be welcomed with open arms, but you'll also find quotes about mental health around the store, a

depression cloud where the community can post what has gotten them through hard times, books that relate to mental health in some form, and so much more.



Quote in Uzima store: "What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation." -Glenn Close. Photo from @pghcitypaper Instagram.

In addition to these beautiful parts of the store, I got the honor to meet and truly connect with the wonderful owners of the small black-owned business; Sheronica and Mayan Marshall.



Uzima owners Sheronica Marshall (left) and Mayan Marshall (right). Photo from @pghcitypaper Instagram.

Mayan and Sheronica have both had their own battles with mental health, and their stories were not only eye opening but also motivating. I heard firsthand about how they made it through one step at a time and it sparked something in me that I thought I lost; self-love. It wasn't necessarily a sudden admiration for myself, but it was something much deeper than that. I stopped ignoring my needs and started thinking "me first". Everyday I stepped into Uzima was a day I thought "me first" because I stopped myself from pretending that I wasn't struggling. It didn't matter if I was simply going in to get a smoothie, or getting something off my chest, or even just reading the quotes to change my perspective.



One of Uzima's popular smoothies, Grace. Photo taken from @uzima.live Instagram.

What mattered was that I chose to acknowledge and accept that struggle and that I needed help. Uzima was the help.

Your Turn To Say "Me First"

Mental illness is not an easy battle by any means and no two journeys are exactly alike. There's trauma, hardships, expectations from society and family, genetics, etc. Yet regardless of the root, it's not a battle anyone needs to or should fight alone. Now, there's a safe space to share that story, to get advice, and to even start the healing when you're ready. A place that emphasizes the importance of community, to develop connections with others, and to begin a conversation that hopefully ends with you thinking "me first". If you want to learn more you can check out the site at uzima.live, check out the Instagram [@uzima.live](https://www.instagram.com/uzima.live) or come by at 3400 Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh from Tuesday to Saturday anytime between 10AM and 6PM, grab a smoothie and stay a while. We'd love to get to know you.