



## CHEETA Project 2024

As Cheeta interns, our goal is to address community problems. This year we are focusing on a problem that's directly affecting us: "Nothing for teens to do in the community." We came up with many other potential projects that we would want to work on. However, most of them were out of our control like power shortages, playground construction, and snow removal. Our project for CHEETA 2024 is a Sports Equipment Library. Because we as teens identified the problem, focused on a solution, and then implemented the solution, it was more meaningful to us than if adults had done it for us. Having youth lead this project makes a significant impact in the teen community.

In addressing this issue, we thought other organizations like the Study Center and Boys and Girls Club were supposed to provide teens activities and help reduce boredom for teens. After researching the mission statements and purpose of those organizations, we found out that the programs served everybody, not just teens. We also found that teens wanted more than those programs could offer. As a result, we conducted surveys for both teenagers and adults.



Throughout research we found out that programs in our community targeted a wide range of individuals and some only focused on young children. Teens have school-based clubs and sports as well as homework to do. This prevents them from using other programs in the community as much as younger children. After we collected data, we found out that the majority of teens in our community knew there were spaces in our community to go if they needed to, they just weren't focused on what teens wanted. The things they most enjoyed here was the diversity of people and the pickup games at the basketball court. A lot of them said they would make time to come to activities, but they did want access to sports equipment for their own enjoyment. They all said the things they most enjoyed or wanted were sports so that led us to our project. If we gave them the opportunity to access sports equipment, teens in our neighborhood might feel more supported and empowered.

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## CHEETA Project 2024 continued

We feel that the sports equipment library will be good for the community. Teens will have access to the equipment, and it will offer some solutions for Riverton Park teens who feel like there is nothing to do. We feel that the structure that we created will help teens both have access to the equipment and have the equipment last a long time. The rules that we created will be meant to benefit the community by ensuring longevity of the project and fairness for all users. As teens ourselves, we hope to have fun, have something to look forward to, and opportunities for developing mentorship and leadership skills.

In the beginning of our project, we assumed that if we stated the problem adults would do all the work for us. That assumption was part of the problem. The sports equipment library is a way to express our gratitude for the community and to help teens feel empowered through access to sports equipment. Having engaged teens in the community helps them become better mentors to the young children in the neighborhood and promotes a sense of empowerment among teens that can ripple throughout the community. It will help teens and adults alike by keeping the teens active by giving them the resources to do it themselves. The benefits that it will give the community are extraordinary due to the fact teenagers will be outside much more. The parents won't have to deal with teens inside, bored always and this will also give them time to themselves. With teens and kids outside and the babies asleep, it would give the parents breathing room and the kids will have someone to talk to and play with. Overall, the impact will benefit everyone and make Riverton Park a better place. The Sports Equipment Library gives the teens a purpose and creates an even better sense of community.



### ***Regarding the Sports Equipment Launch Event on August 13:***

- 23 youths (young children and teens) attended the event.
- Out of those, 20 said that they enjoyed themselves.
- Asanti said, "I enjoyed making the flyers (for the event). I love the colors and they look super fun!"
- Eslam said, "I enjoyed setting up the tennis net with my friends and playing it. I enjoyed the collaborative teamwork."
- Zakareia said, "It was the game about soccer that was my favorite for fun."
- Anfa said, "I like that people came to the event and enjoyed it. I got to play with my friends (I liked that.)"

**The Sports Equipment Library is in the Riverton Park Study Center. Stop by for information on how to join.**