

Falcons United

Contributors:

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I. Explanation of Proposal:

For some, home is the place they come back to or simply something comforting. The notion of home implies an intangible place where one has a sense of stability and memories, including those of family, culture, and unity. Most people do not see their school as home because it is not enough to call it as such. Some people say that their high school years were some of the best years of their lives; others say differently. Although, why is it that high school was a good time for some and not everyone? A lot of the stories we hear are that they were in sports or part of the cheerleading squad; but what about the ones who could not be a part of that? The spotlight always seems to be on those that are athletes or have a high GPA. We wanted to come up with a plan that would accommodate everyone in Duarte High School since the stereotypes we see on television, we see them on campus as well.

At the start of the school year, students will be randomly put in a group that includes other students in all grades as well as a teacher. Students will get their schedule on the first day of school, but will also get a slip telling them what room to go to on what day. They will meet during lunch in the classrooms of the teachers that are assigned to them. Although, the teachers will not serve as team leaders; instead they will serve as active team members so that there is no favoritism from them. Each group will be able to come up with a team name so that the school can keep count of who is in the lead when the teams fundraise for a prize at the end of each semester.

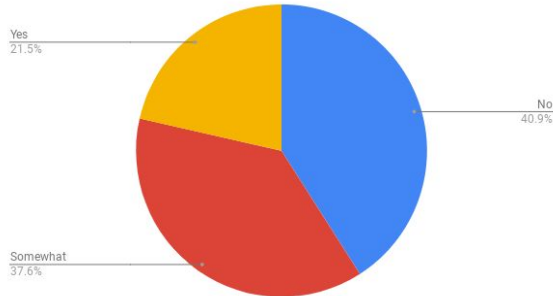
In order to keep the students engaged throughout the school year, the groups will fundraise by selling cookies, brownies, and cupcakes that they have made towards a goal of getting tickets to Six Flags as the first-semester prize. Whichever group has raised enough money, will go to Six Flags. In the second semester of school, students will continue to sell desserts to come up with the money to go to Raging Waters since it will be closer to Summer by then. The rest of the money that the other groups raise will go towards the school, extracurricular activities they would like to support, organizing their own event.

II. Statement of Purpose:

The student responses that came back to us seemed to be mixed in that several students were indifferent in terms of being involved in school. So the program we have to offer should assess the issues of Duarte High School such as favoritism, lack of unity and creation of memories, and

stability. Since there is no main issue to take care of at school, we thought it was best to attempt to tackle all challenges.

Chart for Column M

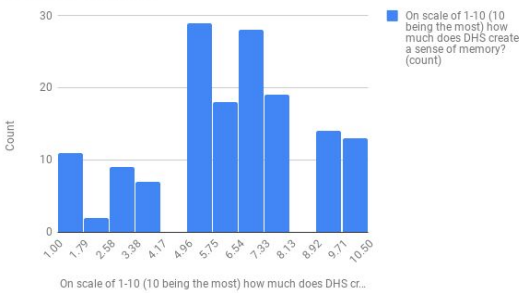


One of the main problems Duarte High deals with is favoritism, this chart exhibits the responses taken from 150 students regarding their opinion if they feel favoritism is existent at DHS. Most students came back with a response that they felt there was a sense of preference towards certain groups of students coming from teachers, such as those in sports, students with a high GPA, and overall teachers having their own favorites in class. The Falcons United program would bridge the gap between students and teachers since they would all

work together as a whole; although the teachers will still be able to supervise the team to keep things running smoothly. The teams will not have a leader to be exact since the whole point of this program is for everyone to have an equal part and get involved. Instead, they will discuss and make decisions as a whole so no one is excluded; yet each individual will have to do their part and contribute to activities. Working together would not only teach how to work with others, but also responsibility, discipline, and developing a good work ethic with the challenges they will face.

Another issue DHS has to attend to is the lack of unity and creation of memories. Without unity,

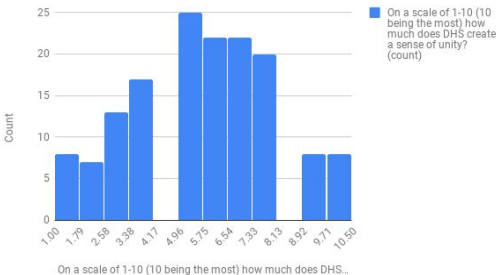
Chart for Column F



there is no ability to make memories with the ones around you. Students can make memories by being in sports and clubs like leadership and key club, but not everyone wants to get involved in those activities. With this program, students do not necessarily have a choice since it is a school-wide concept. They would be a part of something that could benefit them in making memories with new people while also learning and improving skills such as money management, business skills, social skills, and working with a team.

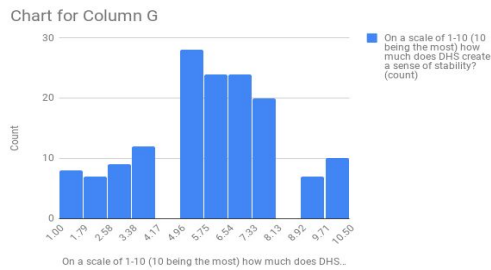
While other programs do teach the same abilities, everyone at Duarte High School would be able

Chart for Column H



to learn without being a specific class. Students will also get the chance to interact with others that are in different grade levels. This would also apply to Special Education students who do not get the same opportunities that others do. Students with disabilities want to be treated like everyone else and get a fair chance at life. At least one Special Education student will be on each team so there is a sense of diversity. Falcons United would allow them to participate in the

same activities as other students as well as help them develop stronger social skills and an insight into what the business world is like considering this program is heavily based on fundraising and would require a strong sense of business management. Learning these skills at an early stage would give everyone an advantage when it comes down to the real world. Also, given the fact that this is a group based project as well, all students and teachers would be able to come together and make a significant change in Duarte High School.



Not only will Falcons United bring people together, it will create a sense of stability. The money that the rest of the students raise will go towards the school and extracurricular activities that they would like to support. If they do not want to help out the school, then they have the options of either saving the money to go to the second-semester prize, Raging Waters, or creating an event of their own. The same options apply to the winning group and the money they may have

left over. With this group and fundraising based program, students will create a more stable environment due to their efforts of working together towards a goal that would educate them while making new memories.

The system makes students compete to make their school better which is displayed through fundraising and community service type of activities. These challenges will not only be benefiting the school as a whole, but also benefiting the connection the student feels to DHS. School spirit is one of the main focuses in this system as the challenges the teams compete in are not pointless, rather they are helping the school in any areas it requires. This system allows the students to feel as if their actions are aiding the school in which they will grow to love, providing for a strong bond between the school and its students.

Helping out Duarte High School would make students feel as if they are apart of something much bigger than just themselves since we have a built-in need to belong somewhere. They would have a bigger purpose than winning a trip to Six Flags or Raging Waters; that purpose would be making a difference. Around campus, you always hear students talking about their perspective and what they think would make the school better. With the teams meeting bi-weekly, they would be able to talk about those things and even come up with a plan to make the school better. They could all make something really special out of DHS if they all contributed.

Falcons United is not just about fundraising to go somewhere fun; it is about making a notable difference in a school that students should be able to call home since this is where they spend half their day. They need to feel secure and like Duarte High School does have something to offer them. They need to feel comfortable walking around campus without worrying about bumping into an upper-classman since that is a fear freshmen may have. Students should not feel as if they are going to have a stressful day when they come to school. Yes, everyone has bad days, but DHS should not contribute to that bad day. They should be able to walk through the gates and say “today is going to be a good day” because DHS is that special of a school that they

can make students feel that way. Falcons United could be that “something special” and the start of something wonderful that could make students feel as if this school is a place they can consider it as a second home.

III. Research:

To start off our research for this proposal, we first conducted a survey for students at Duarte High School to take so we could get their opinion on subjects that the school might need to work on. For the most part, all the students rated their sense of stability, unity, and creation of memories a 5 or below on our scale of 1 to 10. They also believed that there was favoritism among students who were in sports and had high GPAs by teachers. The research we did among the students at DHS led us to the conclusion that all aspects of the definition of home we created in class need to be worked on at Duarte High School. Students here need to feel more united with their fellow classmates while making more memories and creating more stability within the campus.

In order to get ideas to fulfill the needs of our students, we researched what other schools have done to develop a sense of school spirit so students feel at home. Kennedy High School has an RSVP Club where they aim to represent the student voice to see what can be improved on campus and produce positive growth throughout the district. The club meets every Thursday to discuss their ideas. This club would not only allow student voices to be heard, but they would be able to play an active role in their academic community and make an effective difference since they know what students would like and/or need. Kennedy High School also offers the Do Your Part Club; a club in which students meet every Wednesday to support a different cause each month throughout the year by volunteering to work. This club not only allows the students to help make a difference, but it makes them work together as a team while making memories.

Other clubs several schools offer are Key Club, Interact Club, and Best Buddies International Club. Key Club is an organization led by students who volunteer to do community services such as cleaning up parks and organize food and clothing drives. Over 38 countries have more than 270,000 active students involved in Key Club trying to make their community a better place. Interact Club is another self-sufficient group that participates in two yearly projects that involve community service and developing an understanding of other cultures and nationalities. There are about 200,000 students involved in the Interact Clubs of 100 different countries that implement the same values Falcons United would advocate.

With equality being one of the main focuses of this program, Best Buddies International Club strives to break down the typical social barriers between students with and without disabilities while producing lifelong friendships during a delicate stage in life. Their program also works for students who do not have a disability and just want to meet new people. Best Buddies International would be a great way to unify students and make new memories.

While the clubs previously mentioned provided us some insight on what other schools do to unify students and make their experience more memorable, we wanted to know how working as a group and fundraising unified people. Research done by the Sacramento City Unified School District resulted in that working in small groups made students feel involved rather than

“perceiving themselves as someone who is often overlooked.” To gain these results, the district divided their 2000 students among 100 teachers and created “eight small learning communities” as a reform. Boarding School Review also says that working in small groups allow students to really interact and get to know each other better which develops a “closeness and a cooperative spirit” that might not have been there before. Edutopia has also proven that in order for a more stable environment, there needs to be a trusting relationship between students and teachers which would not be achieved if favoritism were to be shown; students would feel inadequate instead thus creating tension. Teaching Center has also discussed that students working in groups have shown “heightened individual achievement” rather than those who work alone. Small group Work also allows students to further develop their communication and social skills, acquire new information, and establish relationships within the group.

With understanding how working in small groups merge people, we wanted to understand the psychology of teamwork for fundraising. As humans, we have a primitive need for involvement to feel as if we have a purpose. When the whole team is included in any activity, it is easier for them to find a common ground “which effective social and working relationships are built” on. Understanding the “principle of shared contribution” would result in teams earning notable success and positive relationships, thus fulfilling our need for inclusion. Therefore Falcons United would not only unify students and create memories for them, but it will create a positively active environment for them to embrace their different talents that would support team efforts.

IV. Management Plan:

Although Falcons United involves fundraising to get Six Flags or Raging Waters tickets, the program would still require funds to buy products students would need to bake the sweets they would sell. The ingredients would be bought from Walmart since they would have the lowest prices. The ingredients would have to be bought every month given that about 35 groups would have to bake and sell desserts monthly. The monthly cost we have calculated would be about \$21.12 for baking ingredients. The total cost would be about \$210 if ingredients were to be bought throughout the school which consists of 10 months. Since only the group(s) who raise enough money will get to go to the prize amusement parks, the profit of this fundraising would be the money the other groups collect and will be used to their choice of the options available to them.

In order to be able to go to Six Flags and Raging Waters, enough money will have to be collected within the five months of each semester. Tickets for both Six Flags and Raging Waters are about \$45 with group discounts. If there were to be 25 students per team, the cost of tickets would equal to \$1,125 to go to either place. Students would have to raise close to \$225 a month in order to reach that goal. To gain the necessary money, students would have to sell a minimum of 76 brownies, cookies, and cupcakes which would total 228 desserts. If a group has managed to sell enough desserts to collect \$1,125 dollars, they would be able to go to Six Flags or Raging Waters.

Of course, there is also the cost of renting a school bus for the winning group. The district uses a company that charges them \$350 for the first five hours of the bus rental, and an additional \$50

for every extra hour. If the trip is outside of the Los Angeles County, the company charges \$1.25 per mile. Since both amusement parks are within the Los Angeles County and we assume that students would be there for about 12 hours; the total cost for bus rental would be \$700. If students work hard enough, they would also pay for the bus with the money they have fundraised. The total cost would end up being close to \$1,825 and students would need to sell 124 cupcakes, brownies, and cookies to earn about \$370 a month within a semester.

The ingredients are pretty limited when it comes to almost 35 groups baking, but it is supposed to be a challenge. It is almost like “first come, first serve”; the team to sell enough desserts will most likely be the ones who got to the ingredients first. They will have to learn how to manage their time and divide the work among their team. This fundraising challenge is almost like a real-life math problem where they have to calculate time, ingredients, and money if they want to go either of the amusement parks. However, they are not bound to sell to just the school since everyone will be competing; they are allowed to safely sell outside of school to their friends and family that would like to contribute.

The remaining groups who do not get to participate in the winning prizes will not be forgotten. They still have the options to contribute to the school budget, athletic extracurricular support, organizing their own event, or saving the money they have collected to earn a chance of going to the next prize. They could possibly even come up with their own idea and do a project like this one to better the school or even a simple club that would be open to everyone. Whatever they choose to do with their hard earned money, it should benefit the school in a positive way. Falcons United is a simple program that does not cost much and would help students at Duarte High School feel like this campus is their home.

V. Qualifications:

While we may be high school students, there are still various elements in our lives that we have to learn how to balance throughout our high school career. Some of us are in sports, in the performing arts, and in clubs. With these activities not only are we able to get out of our comfort zone and experience new things, but we are also able to learn how to handle everything and make it all fit into our schedules.

Anthony has been in football for 2 years while also being in the drama class. With drama and football, he was able to develop a good work ethic since he had to juggle school work, football practice, football games, drama practice, and play performances for drama along with other duties he may have at home. This allowed him multiple opportunities to work with a team and develop good sportsmanship. Despite having a busy schedule, he is also able to maintain good grades while developing confidence, good social skills, and a good work ethic.

Noah has also been in football for 2 years and has developed a reputation as a likable guy. Being in football allowed him to be able to work well with a team and develop a good work ethic as well for he has been able to maintain a good GPA. For him to do everything on his schedule, he had to learn how to handle school work, football practice, football games, and other responsibilities at home. He was unsure at first that he could handle it all, but he was able to do

everything and have a little extra time.

Katelyn is another great student who has also been able to maintain her grades while participating in link crew activities and taking a photography course. Being a part of these activities allows her to manage her time in order to get her school work done as well as make time for photography projects and link crew activities. Participating in link crew has also allowed Katelyn to learn what it is like working with others as a team.

Alejandra is another student who has learned how to manage a busy schedule with being in the high school's drumline and swim team, as well as school work. She also used to take art classes which would make her set time aside to be able to work on her projects to get them finished on time. In order for her to go to swim practice every day, drumline practice every other day, and do whatever homework had to be done, she had to learn how to manage her time and be a team player.

Cindy has also learned how to manage her time while participating in soccer and choir, along with maintaining her grades and doing chores at home. Cindy goes to practices, games, performances and has still found the time to do her homework and chores; all while learning Mandarin. Being in soccer and choir has also been a great opportunity for her to learn how to be team player and develop a good work ethic since she still has other responsibilities to take care of.

Along with everyone else, Maritza has managed her schedule pretty well. She takes care of her grades, does her graphic design projects, and learns Spanish. Foreign language classes are usually more demanding than others, as well as any form of art which are time-consuming. Being in these classes have allowed her to learn how to manage her time and develop a good work ethic with her demanding classes.

The skills we have gained over the duration of our high school experience have benefitted us in a positive way. Since we have learned how to manage our time and various tasks, we were able to organize the work amidst ourselves and work efficiently. We were also able to utilize our individual strengths and produce a concept everyone was enthusiastic about. Without the collaborative and passionate atmosphere that was forged among us, this program would not have been envisioned as it is.

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