Summary of Garrett’s Space Governance and Initiatives to Reach Underserved Populations

Organizational Governance (Board, Staff, Advisory Council Members)

- Between all levels of our governance structure, we have representation from various multicultural backgrounds including race/ethnicity, age, sexuality, educational backgrounds, disability status.

- While we have a range of experiences, we are also working to diversify the internal representation (board and staff) of our organization. We are in an active effort to continuously identify and recruit diverse board and staff to ensure that such perspectives are better reflected in what we create and how we holistically care for our residents.

Since the inception of Garrett’s Space in 2019, we’ve taken strong measures to serve the BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and disabled communities in different ways, including:

Wellness Programming

- In a recent assessment of our active participant demographics, we had approximately 4 participants (16% of the current participants) that openly identified as queer and/or trans* and we also have 4 participants (16%) that were BIPOC. At least one openly identified as a QTPOC.

- We recognize that mental health and well-being work has historically and, in some cases, currently harm and disenfranchise minority communities, so to combat this we are:
  
  - Pursuing a non-medical model, which means our primary focus is not to take the clinical approach of diagnosing, providing medication, and treating disorders. Instead, we are focused on a human-first and intentional community-centered approach, which aims to meet participants where they’re at, enhance positive coping-skills, recognize systemic influences on their lives, and promote the expression of their full selves (not just their mental health status).

- Currently our services are free of charge to young adults in the community as we know resources like this are financially difficult to access for many populations. Once we open the center, we intend to continue to offer either free services or sliding scale fee for services that will allow participation of young adults who can’t afford to pay.

- The programming is completely voluntary to promote participant’s agency and sense of control.

- We actively share resources and opportunities to enhance our capacity to engage in anti-discriminatory practices such as having our facilitation team complete implicit bias training.

- Knowing that some cultures are family-oriented or have a collectivist nature, we are hoping to provide support and health education to the family and/or loved one’s of our participants to increase their support system once they conclude their stay. Additionally, the health education component is helpful for overall stigma reduction.

- Some future hopes we have for programming include developing a mentorship program to continue connections beyond people’s participation and to increase sense of
belongingness. Additionally, we hope to offer nutritious cooking classes that will represent a range of dishes from various cultures.

- Whenever possible we use the technology we have to make the space as accommodating as possible, such as closed-captions.

**Residential Center Development**

- We made the strategic decision to locate our residential center close to Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti to make it more accessible to underserved communities.

- The architecture firm we’ve hired for the design of the center is MASS Design. Its mission is to research, build and advocate for architecture that promotes justice and human dignity – leaders in designing for trauma and social justice. Projects include the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL (which is the first national memorial to lynching victims in the US) and the MLK Embrace statue in Boston, MA.

- We have an intentional focus on creating an inviting, welcoming, inclusive and healing space for young adults who face greater challenges and trauma due to societal structures, discrimination and/or inequality based on race, gender or sexual orientation.

- During our first workshop with MASS we developed a range of personas to envision what their reception, stay, and departure at the center could and should look like. Persona characteristics included aspects of race, ability status, language ability, age, gender, sexuality, economic status, and more.

- We are working to develop safety protocols that would prevent the need for police intervention as we know that police engagement specifically for the QTPOC+ population is more triggering and only adds to the stress and opportunity of harm for our participants. Onsite, we will 24/7 staff, licensed clinicians at the center during the day and on-call at night.

- We are dedicated to creating gender-inclusive restrooms in the building whenever possible.

- Transportation can be a huge barrier to accessing support, so we have developing ideas to support those that may encounter restrictions due to mobility/transportation.

**Community Outreach & Support**

- We’ve conducted presentations and established partnerships with the following organizations who assist with under-resourced populations:
  - Barrier Busters
  - Washtenaw Alive
  - Washtenaw County Community Mental Health
  - Corner Health
  - Ozone House
  - Commuter colleges – EMU and WCC
• We’re hoping to have community advisory board to help inform our needs and opportunities to improve how we can support the diverse needs of our community members.

• Intentionally hosting a Town Hall at a local Black church to ensure they are aware of GS and intensely welcome to participate in our programming and community.

• To amplify the BIPOC experience with mental health we ensure that there’s representation of several youth adults of color on a panel for our annual fundraiser.

• We have bipartisan support from state and local officials as well as many local organizations. (Photo and names attached below)

**Areas for Growth**
As a young organization, we realize we have work to do to continue to improve our DEI policies and efforts. Our focus in the near to mid-term will be on the following:

**Organizational Governance and Policies**

• Increased and/or required DEI training/discussions for our board members

• Create a [Board Diversity Matrix](#) to help identify perspectives missing from the conversation

• Host focus groups and interviews with BIPOC community leaders and youth to incorporate their insight into GS development and sustainability

• Encourage job crafting for staff to increase job satisfaction, recruitment, and retention

• Intentional disseminate recruitment information to QTPOC+ and disability organizations and associations such as the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)

• Consider how we can integrate aspects of language and literacy accessibility into our work

• Creating methods and policies to ensure all staff have an adequate baseline for DEI topics and practices

• Setting DEI evaluation success metrics

• Have a 24/7 feedback form

**Built Environment, Accessibility, and Programming**

• Have imagery of an array of people (e.g., trans*, hijab, BIPOC, disabilities)

• Have culturally tailored/appropriate events, therapeutic practices, and food; intercultural exchanges

• Consider additional factors residents may need (e.g., pop-up barbershop)

• Providing information and materials in a physical and digital format -> important for people experiencing the digital divide

• Navigating generational trauma

• Dream/goal vision boards

**Marketing & Outreach**
• Tabling and networking with QTPOC+ serving organizations
• Ambassador program
• Word of mouth from BIPOC community leaders