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Reflection #3

During our site visit yesterday, I had an incredibly informative talk with our community partners. The meeting gave us a better understanding of both the needs of JJKFaN and the local community, as well as the scope of the project itself. I felt heard by the community partners and that my ideas were well received; that we were able to create a roadmap of success that benefited both their organization and the CODES program. Through this mutualistic relationship, we open the door to further collaboration with the organization, creating equity in the community. With the different educational backgrounds and experiences of my fellow CODES members, I believe that we are able to address problems that may arise in a wholistic and beneficial manner. Our divide-and-conquer approach to group work has proven to be successful as we have open and constructive workplace dynamics. Another aspect of our group's success is our understanding of how we work; creating a positive and judgement-free space where ideas are valued.

With respect to my personal experience, I believe that I conducted myself in a professional and respectful manner. I was able to share my thoughts and communicate my ideas both in and out of the group. Often, I can speak too much and overwhelm a conversation, but in this case, I feel that I avoided this. I feel that the conversation we held was productive and effective in reaching the goals that we set for the meeting and that it could be built upon in the future. Having the flexibility to change plans in accordance with the goals of Jackie Joyner is paramount to the success of the project. Not only do we need to formulate a game plan, but also a backup plan if the current state of affairs were to change. With the current state of affairs in politics, money is not gaurenteed by any means, so we must create and be able to execute a plan which can be orchestrated on a shoestring budget.

The timeline for the project has been created and is currently in effect. Under the current plan, my team and I will explore and document the site; observing and inventorying both plant and animal species. After this data is collected and submitted to our partners, we will be given a list of species that we must reintroduce into the site. Once this has been completed, we will work with the youth education subgroup to formulate an interactive learning center within the campus, submitting the plan to Jackie Joyner for approval.

Although the project has faced numerous setbacks, it is my belief that we are contributing to a productive and beautiful system that will benefit the people of East Saint Louis for years to come. With our collective brainpower, we will watch our project grow and change to best fit the needs of our partners and the community they serve. Not only is this an amazing opportunity to work with multiple different stakeholders but also work in and amongst the numerous disciplines that we have within the CODES program.