

# Regional Youth Assist Local Business Owner with Online Marketing

The Regional Youth Help Desk is a program piloted July and August 2020 as a partnership between Create Bridges, local businesses and local high school students. CEDIK Extension Associate Mercedes Maness and FOCUS Inc. Chairperson April Renner led the program. Utilizing online resources provided by partner Southeast Kentucky Economic Development (SKED), and by partnering with a locally owned business to provide real world experience and application, youth were trained to help small business owners with online presence and social media.

The youth participating in the help desk gained valuable skills as well as real world experience working with

local businesses and entrepreneurs. Student participants learned about a variety of topics related to online marketing and social media. Participants applied their knowledge throughout the program by creating weekly deliverables that demonstrated the skills learned that week, as well as assisting a local business owner with her online marketing/social media needs. By participating in all trainings, both student participants received certificates of completion in *Be Boss Online*, a 12-hour course on digital marketing training for small business.

When asked what they had learned from participating in the program, students reported, "Presenting in front of people. I feel like I've gotten better at it because I have to do it every

week. I'm not as nervous anymore," and "Definitely design skills. I didn't ever think I would be able to make those ads or anything. I feel better about it, and more confident."

After participating in the Regional Youth Help Desk, a local business owner noted the student she was paired with was instrumental in starting a new phase of marketing for her business. The business owner was then connected to more online resources through another Create Bridges Kentucky partner.

Contact Mercedes Maness [Mercedes.Maness@uky.edu](mailto:Mercedes.Maness@uky.edu) with any questions about Create Bridges in Kentucky.

**Regional Youth Help Desk Curriculum**

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<p>Community Engagement through Social Media</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b> Community specific engagement posts for social media (Community Bingo Card, This or That board, Top 5)</p>	<p>How to Assist Businesses with their Online Presence</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b> How To guide for business owners to get their business listing on Google Business</p> <p>A social media post for consumers on the importance of leaving reviews for local businesses</p>	<p>Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Measuring Success with Facebook ads, and How to Retarget Ads to Consumers</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b> User guide on how to access/use one of the many online tools for local business owners concerning SEO as shown by SKED</p> <p>A social media post about SEO and online advertising</p>	<p>Create Bridges and FOCUS (Five Original Counties United for Success)</p> <p><b>Deliverables:</b> An unpublished Facebook page for FOCUS to highlight the group's efforts</p> <p>20 advertisements for local businesses in the five county (Jackson, Lee, Owsley, Clay &amp; Leslie) to be highlighted on the FOCUS Facebook page during the Shop Local campaign</p>



Pictured above are examples of participant work. Pictured at left is the curriculum youth completed.



Create Bridges Kentucky is a partnership between CEDIK at the University of Kentucky and Eastern KY regional partners. For more information on the Kentucky effort, visit [cedik.ca.uky.edu/createbridges](http://cedik.ca.uky.edu/createbridges)

The Create Bridges project is a national program coordinated by the Southern Rural Development Center. Two additional pilot teams are led by Oklahoma State Extension and University of Arkansas Extension & Research.