

## AT THE 3RD ANNUAL O2 CONFERENCE, THREE HILLIARD STUDENTS GOT TO PRESENT THEIR IDEA TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT AROUND THEM.

May 21, 2020 | Margaret Lee | [Leave a comment](#)



On March 1st, Two Darby sophomores and a Bradley senior presented their idea of creating Life Skills Classes at the 3rd O2 conference. At the conference, there were five ideas presented by middle school to high school students from all over Central Ohio. Sophomores Sammy Robinson, Valeria Ortiz and senior Manar Alrjub met through the Serving Our Neighbors (SON) Ministries Youth Board and they decided to tackle this project after noticing many younger people didn't have the necessary skills once they became an adult.

"The idea started because I asked my parents about what needs or struggles were in the community and the first thing that they said was, that people are not prepared to live independently due to lack of knowledge. So then I thought of doing some classes to educate young adults about living independently," Ortiz said.

In order to present their idea they had to apply to the O2 conference. Once they got selected, they started on the logistics of the idea to present.

"As for prep work, we had contacted schools counselors/diversity inclusion coordinators in UA, Grove City and Hilliard along with Tolles Technical School. We did online research to obtain statistics to prove the need," Robinson said.

Manar says her experience presenting at the conference was one of a kind.

"It was such a unique experience. Being given a platform to speak your mind and receive feedback on your personal idea was amazing. It was not as scary as you'd expect and as I expected. Everyone's minds were open and everyone simply wanted to hear what you had to say. It's a blessing to have an opportunity like this in our community," said Arjub.

As a result of the conference, their group was awarded 1,500 dollars and a professional mentor to help assist each group for the next six months. They are currently working with Elaine Pierce, who has worked for various companies including Nationwide Children's Hospital and Ohio State Wexner Center. Pierce says she decided to agree to be a mentor for the O2 conference to help further ideas presented at the conference.

"I have always enjoyed mentoring young people throughout my career as a fundraiser, and this was another great opportunity to be a part of helping others," Pierce said.

They have been working with her to figure out how to move forward on their project. Pierce says that she is unsure how their project will turn out.

"It's hard to say. I would love to say that they will offer many classes, both in person and online, but it is too early to say," Pierce said. "I admire their vision, their enthusiasm, and their hard work, and I have no doubt that they will be successful – I'm just not sure what form it will take."

Currently their project is delayed and needs to be adjusted due to the shut down of schools. They are using this time to research the best way to present the classes.

"We are currently creating a survey to get an idea of what the young adults in our community would find most useful to learn and if they would prefer online classes, or in-person classes, or a mix of both," Robinson said. "We are also thinking of companies and professionals we could contact to teach these young adults."

As they hope to find the best way to deliver the life skills classes during this uncertain time, next year Manar will attend The Ohio State University to study Education and Public Service Exploration while Sammi and Valeria continue to pursue the idea. To learn more about the O2 conference, visit <https://www.o2conference.org/>.

