

# Pro-Kids Creative Arts After School Program

Proposal Narrative to the Carolyn Foundation

Presented by  
Exodus Community Development Company



## Introduction

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Exodus requests a \$█████ grant from The Carolyn Foundation to help cover instructor costs for the Pro-Kids Arts After School Program, which responds to the Community Grantmaking priority. Carolyn's support will help Pro-Kids stay affordable for lower-income families seeking resources for their children.

## Mission

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To improve youths' capacity for leadership through self-discovery and the arts

## Vision

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By identifying their personal skills and creative talents, students will expand their vision of what they are able to achieve and as a result increase their personal capacity for leadership

## Program Snapshot

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Pro-Kids offers 12-18 year-olds a precious opportunity to develop their unique identities and build skills that benefit them a lifetime. It's a valuable resource during after school hours before parents return home from work, when few community resources for activities or supervision are available. Up to 16 youths receive instruction in four artistic disciplines on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:30-6:30 pm. Youths also receive messages about personal health and wellness, homework help, snacks, transportation, and insight from works of local artists during the biweekly Artist Spotlight Café.

## Organization Description

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### Exodus' Mission

To positively influence the outcomes of systems impacting the life cycles of African Americans and other economically marginalized communities

### Affordable Housing with A Purpose

Residents of the Lyndale Neighborhood in south Minneapolis established Exodus in 1991 when the shooting death of a cab driver underscored the need for community redevelopment. They founded Exodus to become a non-profit provider of affordable housing and culturally competent supportive services that reinforce bricks and mortar by sustaining family and community living environments. Pro-Kids is one such effort. Exodus targets African Americans and community members earning 80% or less of the Twin Cities average median income (AMI). Since 1991 Exodus has:

- Developed 130+ affordable housing units in African American and diverse-income communities
- Guided over 400 people to homeownership
- Provided supportive services sustaining the self-sufficiency of over 100 families
- Helped at-risk families find independence by linking them with community resources

## Partner: Community Action for Suburban Hennepin (CASH)

CASH is a state- and federally designated community action agency that provides services, education, and other assistance to 45 communities in suburban Hennepin County, including Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center. CASH is providing Pro-Kids with guidance for strategic planning and resource development. CASH has also pledged \$█████ towards program costs during the 2█████ school year.

## Need for More After School Teen Resources

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Pro-Kids responds to northwest Hennepin County's need for teen resources, especially in the Brooklyn Park-Brooklyn Center area. During after school hours, parents and other child guidance resources are often unavailable. The area needs an after school program for teens.

### National Trend

Nearly 35% of 12-year olds nation-wide are home alone after school, often due to the expensive cost of "latch key" and other after school programs.<sup>1</sup> Kids left home alone after school are far more likely to use alcohol, tobacco, and drugs and engage in criminal and high-risk behavior than kids who have adult supervision.<sup>2</sup> Communities across the nation are making large investments in teen after school programs, including L.A. and Chicago, but resources for such programs are still not meeting the need.

### Need for Teen Resources in the Brooklyn Park-Brooklyn Center Area

The Brooklyn Park-Brooklyn Center area is no exception to the national trend. A Maadii Institute study presented in spring 2004 at Willow Lane Elementary school<sup>3</sup> revealed that community members believe the area lacks resources for children's mental and emotional well being. Few local community service organizations—including the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, the YWCA and YMCA, and area churches—have teen after school programs available to the community at large.

### At-Risk Teens in the Program Area

Over 18,000 teens, of which one-third belong to single-parent families, live within a five-mile radius of Exodus, located near the intersection Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard.<sup>4</sup> In nearby homes over 50 cases of child maltreatment per square mile occurred in 2001.<sup>5</sup> "There are more teens needing outreach services than there are being served," said Wayne Thyron, director of Tree House, located near Village North on Zane Avenue, a provider of teen support resources that opens after dinner hours. "There is definitely a need for more after school programs focusing on the arts."

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<sup>1</sup> From "Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids" a June 1998 archived report on the U.S. Department of Education's web site

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Maadii Institute (2004). CATCH Study. Presented at the Willow Lane Elementary School in Brooklyn Park in March 2004 by the Northwest Hennepin Human Services Collaborative.

<sup>4</sup> From the 2000 U.S. Census

<sup>5</sup> From Hennepin County Children, Family and Adult Services

## Pro-Kids Program Description

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### Desired Outcomes

1. Students acquire and enhance artistic skills
2. Students produce a project that demonstrates their creative abilities
3. Students learn about and understand lifestyles that promote health and emotional wellness
4. Student gain more confidence and ability to focus
5. Students develop more receptivity to instruction and guidance

### Target and Location

The program targets youths ages 12-18 in northwest Hennepin County. Instruction occurs in a cycle of three, 12-week quarters that accommodate up to 16 students each. Up to 48 students will participate during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-<sup>3</sup><sup>rd</sup> school year. Students qualify for admission based on auditions at the beginning of each quarter and demonstrated financial need. The program is located at Exodus at 4801 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, within walking distance of 18,000 teenage youths living near Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Boulevard.

### Arts Instruction Activities

The curriculum targets beginners. However, small class sizes allow opportunities for one-on-one instruction that addresses students' individual proficiencies. Program hours are from 3:30-6:30 pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Experienced artists teach the basic skills of their discipline, provide its historical context, and help students develop final projects to be featured in a public display at the end of each quarter. Students can choose to study Music/Voice or Visual Arts.

#### *Music/Voice*

Students embark on a journey of self-discovery by exploring their own musical preferences and studying musical form and structure through a progressive set of activities. Their final project consists of a composition of their own musical pieces.

#### *Visual Arts*

Students discover the emotion and freedom of self-expression by developing their own artistic style. Individualized instruction allows students to learn skills at their own pace. Weekly lessons lead to a completed work of art for a final project that encapsulates students' learning.

### Artist Spotlight Cafés

Every other Friday, Pro-Kids stages an Artist Spotlight Café. The event provides insight into the lives of local artists and opportunities for kids, families, and community residents to intermingle. Both artistic disciplines will be the focus of at least one Café each quarter. Featured artists present a 30-60 minute interactive demonstration of their artwork and personal history. The event also provides opportunities for new students and supporters to become involved in the program. The last Artist Spotlight Café of each quarter displays students' final projects.

## Health and Wellness Instruction

Fifteen-30 minutes each day is reserved for health and wellness instruction from a certified nurse, who provides messages about:

- Physical fitness
- Nutrition
- Drug-alcohol avoidance
- Importance of post-secondary schooling
- Positive leisure activities

## Homework Help

Thirty minutes each day is reserved for homework. Volunteers from the surrounding community work personally with students on their current assignments. The program coordinator maintains communication with students' schools and ensures volunteers address students' personal needs.

## Additional Instruction and Program Benefits

- **Cultural Competence:** All instruction engages youths in a culturally appropriate manner.
- **Afternoon Snacks:** Students receive an afternoon snack that meets their nutritional needs.
- **Transportation:** A van provides transportation to and from selected drop-off points.

## Pilot Program: Basis for Pro-Kids

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Pro-Kids operated as a pilot program during the summer of 2011 and fall and winter quarters of the 2011-12 school year. The program served 24 youths ages 12-18 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and offered Artist Spotlight Cafés every other Friday. The pilot program's success encourages continuing the program in 2012-13 with more students. 2011-12 results included:

- Self-discovery projects that culminated in rousing public performances
- Self-designed goals through which students discovered their unique talents and abilities
- Demonstrated understanding of the concept of leadership
- Affordable after school resources that were educational and fun alternatives to street life

## Program Staffing

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### Program Coordinator

The pilot program coordinator, Makeba Giles, was an MSW with over eight years' experience working for Hennepin County as a social worker specializing in early childhood issues and 11 years' experience delivering social services to children and adults. As program coordinator, she was responsible for all personnel and activities, including: evaluation, communication with schools and parents, attendance, and enrollment. Giles has left to pursue further MSW social work. Exodus will be replacing her with a coordinator who has similar skills and experience by September 1.

## Music/Voice: Jack Yates

Jack Yates is a musician of international and local success. He has provided back-up vocals for Mariah Carey, participated in the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy, and led award-winning national and community music groups. Thirteen years of experience working with church choirs have provided a strong background for instructing teens.

## Visual Arts: Charles Caldwell

Charles Caldwell is a self-taught artist whose work shares the African American experience by reaching beyond visual images to share thoughts and feelings. His work in humanistic realism has been compared to Charles White and Norman Rockwell. He has worked with youths for eight years as an artist-in-residence at the Minneapolis Public Schools and several Montessori schools.

## Objectives

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Seven objectives quantify desired outcomes for evaluation purposes:

1. All students (100%) will attend and participate in weekly classes
2. All students (100%) will complete a final project
3. The self-assessments of all students (100%) will report that their final project allowed them to discover and demonstrate their artistic skills and abilities
4. Instructor evaluations will report that at least 75% of students' final projects demonstrated improved artistic skills and creative abilities
- At least 75% of all survey responses will report that students:
  5. Understand lifestyles that promote health and emotional wellness
  6. Have more confidence and ability to focus
  7. Have more receptivity to instruction and guidance

## Evaluation

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Each quarter, objectives are measured through the following measurement tools: attendance records; student self-assessments; instructor evaluations; and surveys of students, instructors, parents, and school representatives. At each quarter's end the program coordinator analyzes information collected from the measurement tools and constructs an evaluation report that assesses whether the program is achieving its objectives and desired outcomes. The program coordinator and staff members meet to discuss the report and determine whether adjustments to program content, instruction, and activities are needed and the implementation of such adjustments.

## Connection to the Carolyn Foundation

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Pro-Kids responds to Carolyn's Community Grantmaking focus, serving economically disadvantaged youths and providing community and cultural vitality. The program meets the following focus areas:

- Provide access to resources to promote a healthy lifestyle for children and families
- Assist children/youth to develop positive relationships with adults, life skills, and positive decision making
- Provide direct access to quality arts and creative expression
- Build the capacity of the communities to deal with the major problems they confront
- Build the capacity of the arts and cultural community to deliver quality programs

Pro-Kids operates in a neighborhood that has a high concentration of African American, immigrant, and economically disadvantaged families who are underserved by current community child guidance resources. US Census reports indicate 25% of Minnesota's African American population is located in a narrow corridor of low-income communities nearby, stretching along I-94 and Highway 55 through north Minneapolis into Brooklyn Park. Over 50 cases of child maltreatment per square mile occurred in the area during 2001. The program provides constructive, artistic skill building activities and life skills for youths during unsupervised after school hours, when parents and other child guidance resources are unavailable. The program will serve up to 48 teens this year.

## Other Similar Programs

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The area offers few programs similar to Pro-Kids. Tree House, located near Village North on Zane Avenue, holds weekly support and educational groups for teens, but the groups start at 7:00 pm., hours after teens return home from school. The Minneapolis Urban League, the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, and the YWCA and YMCA do not have teen after school programs in the area, aside from a crisis-runaway program located in New Hope. Programs through churches are not meeting the need, either. Lutheran Social Services, the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, and area Roman Catholic churches do not have teen after school programs open to non-church members in Brooklyn Park or Brooklyn Center.<sup>6</sup>

## Support

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Exodus will provide \$ [REDACTED] for the first half of the 2 [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] school year. A \$ [REDACTED] grant pledge from CASH and a \$ [REDACTED] grant pledge from the Northwest Hennepin Family Services Collaborative will also support Pro-Kids 2 [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] operations. There is a fee of \$ [REDACTED] per student (which can be waived for parents with financial need). Pro-Kids is approaching local charitable and corporate organizations, including the Minneapolis Foundation and Medtronic.

### Artist Spotlight Cafes

Further support will be developed through the Artist Spotlight Cafés. Through event sponsorship and volunteers, Artists Spotlight Café can grow into large social gatherings that attract donations from community members, students, and supporters from across the Twin Cities.

### Grant Request from Carolyn

Carolyn's grant would help support instructor costs of Pro-Kids' operation. Maintaining qualified personnel is vital to the program. Instructors must be good artists AND have experience working with youths. The costs of their salaries will amount to \$ [REDACTED] in 2 [REDACTED]-[REDACTED]. Exodus will fund instructor costs during the first quarter. This proposal requests a \$ [REDACTED] grant towards the remaining costs.

## Conclusion

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Exodus appreciates Carolyn's review of this proposal. During the 2 [REDACTED]-[REDACTED] school year, Carolyn's support can help up to 48 youths in northwest Hennepin County build arts and living skills that produce new opportunities for self-discovery and leadership. Thank you.

<sup>6</sup> From the Greater Twin Cities United Way; Jonette Zuercher, the Alliance for Families and Children in Hennepin County; and Joe Cassidy, Brooklyn Park Park Board and phone conversations with local church organizations