

Annenberg Foundation – Letter of Inquiry

Description of the organization conducting the project:

Eternal Growth Outreach, Inc. (EGO)

Our organization was set up to address the growing numbers of children who are failing in school, having problems in their home setting and involved in the juvenile justice system. We plan to offer these children the opportunity to better themselves in an after-school setting that will allow them to enjoy being a child while learning about their community, developing a sense of respect for it and the people who live within it and how to develop positive behaviour for their continuing life.

Specific dollar amount requested:

\$238,250

Purpose of the project for which funds are being requested:

EGO will utilize funds to form an at-risk male (later female too) children and adolescent serving organization that will provide educational, social and therapeutic services and support to these individuals, and their parents/guardians/teachers/probation officers where appropriate, with the aim of re-integrating these individuals back into the community, encouraging a more positive attitude and behavior patterns and helping them to achieve academic and social success.

Problems your project will address:

EGO requests this grant in order to provide a solution to the ever-increasing numbers of male children and adolescents between the ages of nine and fifteen years old who are struggling in school due to problematic behavior, having problems at home and those who have become entangled in the juvenile justice system in the Fort Bend County, Texas area.

We would like to address the growing feeling of helplessness amongst families whose children have behavioral problems. These families are unable to cope with their child's behaviour but they don't qualify for any outside assistance because the behavior isn't 'bad' enough. Our aim is to deal with these families and the children who are exhibiting the following issues.

In 2000, 32% of the population of Fort Bend County, Texas, was under 18 years old, 8.5% of those were living below the poverty line¹. In 2004, the under-18 population decreased to 27.1%, with 11.3% of them living below the poverty line². These figures indicate two facts: one, that there are increasingly fewer under-18s in the Fort Bend County area, and two, that more of them are living below the poverty line.

Further, in 2003, 1805 juveniles (under-18s) were referred for probation and 383 juveniles (0.71% of total juvenile population) exhibited Alleged CINS* behavior³. In

comparison, these figures increased in 2005, with 1901 juveniles referred for probation and Alleged CINS behaviour increasing to 470 juveniles (0.82% of total juvenile population)⁴. These figures indicate increased negative behavior in the juvenile population in the Fort Bend County.

School statistics show a similar trend. In the academic school year of 2002/3, 739 students (1.2%) were referred for disciplinary placements. In 2003/4, this figure remained at 1.2% (770 students) with 37.2% of the school population classed as 'at-risk'. In 2004/5, figures increased to 1.4% disciplinary placements and 40.9% 'at-risk'. A further increase was seen in 2005/6, with 1.6% disciplinary placements and only a minor decrease in 'at-risk' students at 40.7%⁵. These figures indicate an increase in negative behavior within schools in the Fort Bend County area.

EGO would like to provide educational, social and therapeutic services and support for these at-risk individuals (once established we will also target females of the same age range), and their families, with the aim of re-integrating them back into society, encouraging more positive behavior and helping them to achieve academic success, thus helping to lower these shocking statistics.

¹Wikipedia – 2000 Census

²<http://www.txcip.org/tac/census/profile.php?FIPS=48157>

³Texas Juvenile Probation Commission Report 2003

⁴Texas Juvenile Probation Commission Report 2005

⁵<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/sas/broker>

*Alleged CINS behavior – Conduct Indicating a Need for Supervision: public intoxication, truancy, running away from home, fineable only offenses that have been transferred to a juvenile court from a municipal or justice court, inhalant abuse, expulsion for violating a school disciplinary code.

Overall project budget:

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| Start up costs | \$26,425 |
| Monthly recurring costs | \$7,800 |
| Monthly trips, activities, rewards program, etc. | \$12,937 |
| Executive Director Salary | \$62,000 |
| Program Administrator Salary | \$52,000 |
| Therapist Salary | \$50,000 |

Time period for which funds are requested:

1 year

Qualifications of key project personnel:

Board Members (Voluntary):

President - Roland Smith: Successful experienced board member, previous experience on many boards and within the oil industry

Treasurer – Brian Schmitt: Degree in finance, strengths in mathematics

Secretary – Karen Lancaster: Previous secretary of high school, formed and developed child-oriented anti drug and alcohol program

Paid Staff:

Founder/CEO/Executive Director – Todd Lancaster: Bachelors Degree in Rehabilitation with Minor in Psychology. Over eleven years experience in Acute Psychiatric Facility, Texas Youth Commission (juvenile prison) and over seven years working as a house supervisor in a Residential Treatment Facility with six or more ED kids residing with him.

Program Administrator – Chad Lancaster: Psychology Degree and three years experience in Residential Treatment Facility.

Therapist – Not yet chosen.

Contact information:

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