

# I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

**One page only.** This page will be shared electronically with Grant Committee Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network of Greater Philadelphia's Common Grant Application is used, the Community Foundation's Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit [www.chescocf.org](http://www.chescocf.org)

Date

**Contact Information**

Organization Name: DMAX Foundation;	Executive Director Name: Laurie Burstein-Maxwell
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Phone: 610-527-8895	Board of Directors Chair Name: Leland Maxwell
Website: <a href="http://www.dmaxfoundation.org">www.dmaxfoundation.org</a>	Primary Contact Name: Laurie Burstein-Maxwell
Year Incorporated: 201	Primary Contact E-mail: <a href="mailto:laurie@dmxfoundation.org">laurie@dmxfoundation.org</a>
Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation?	Yes ___ No <u>x</u> Not Sure ___
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation?	Yes ___ No <u>x</u> Not Sure ___

**Field/s of Interest:**   x   Health

**Organization Information:**

**Geographic Area Served** Chester County, Delaware Valley and College Park, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina. Current colleges served include Penn State University Main Campus, Temple University, Drexel University and Elon University. Target colleges include those located in Chester, Delaware, Philadelphia, Montgomery and Bucks Counties, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC and Florida. In addition to colleges that we are targeting in Chester County, DMAX Clubs serve Chester County students because approximately 20-25% of Chester County high school students attend colleges where DMAX Clubs are currently (PSU, Drexel, Temple) and our upcoming college clubs. In addition, DMAX Foundation hosts an annual spring educational event in Bryn Mawr, PA for adults and high school and college students. Approximately 15% of attendees have come from Chester County and we are continually marketing to attract new participants from Chester County.

**Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:**

DMAX Clubs serve college students seeking a safe and caring setting to discuss mental health, emotional and stress-related issues. DMAX Foundation also hosts annual spring educational events at the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr. In 2018 nearly 300 people attended including adults and high school and college students.  
Population served: 2000 people annually

**Mission:** To eliminate stigma and encourage safe and caring conversations about mental and emotional issues in our youth. We accomplish this by establishing trusting and caring DMAX Clubs on college campuses for students to have honest everyday conversations about mental health so they can understand and help each other.

**Proposal Summary:** DMAX Foundation is at a pivotal point in our growth. We have proven that DMAX Clubs are responding effectively to the mental health crisis on college campuses where the numbers of students suffering from mental health concerns are increasing at an alarming rate and the college resources to deal with these problems are insufficient. DMAX is requesting \$7500 general operating grant to help continue our mission and grow and establish and support DMAX Clubs in the Philadelphia and surrounding area for the 2018/19 academic year..

**If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

   Mission, Vision & Strategy       Governance & Leadership       Strategic Relationships  
   Fundraising & Development    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Annual Budget</b> \$ <u>250,000</u>	<u>  2  </u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>  75  </u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>  11  </u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>  16  </u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>  20  </u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>  9  </u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u> 1000  </u> # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Janssen R&D, Booz Allen Hamilton, Jacobs

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$   7,500



Thank you for the opportunity to request a \$7,500 general operating grant from Chester County Community Foundation to help further our vital mental health related support clubs on local college campuses.

### **Background**

DMAX Foundation is a developing non-profit organization in the Philadelphia, PA region founded by Laurie and Lee Maxwell after they lost their beloved 18-year old son Dan to suicide. During Dan's 18-month struggle with depression, while the Maxwells tried to help Dan in every possible way, they were not able to speak out and confide in friends and relatives about what was happening inside their family. Named after Dan, a 3-sport athlete whose teammates called "DMAX," the Foundation's mission is to eliminate stigma and encourage safe and caring conversations about mental and emotional issues in our youth.

Following a successful pilot DMAX Club at Elon University in North Carolina, DMAX Foundation established DMAX Clubs at two universities where, according to local Chester County school district officials, the greatest percentage (approximately 20-25%) of Chester County high school graduates attend, i.e. Penn State University and Temple University. In addition, a club was recently established at Drexel University. For academic year 2018/19 and as funding allows, DMAX is focusing on establishing 4-6 DMAX Clubs in the Delaware Valley region, and will target clubs to serve college students in the five county area including in Chester County. We have plans to seek partnerships with Lincoln University and Immaculata University. The current clubs and those to be established are open to all students, many of whom reside in Chester County. In fact, at least 20-25% of high school students from Chester County attend Penn State University and Temple University, where DMAX Foundation has existing DMAX Clubs.

### **The Need**

DMAX Foundation's major program is focuses on helping alleviate the mental health crisis that exists on college campuses today. DMAX Clubs address a significant unmet need on college campuses where those suffering from mental health issues often can't or don't seek counseling services because of stigma, overcrowding and lack of resources—often leading to tragic results. Research shows 34.2%-50% of college students with a mental health condition don't talk about it or don't use college mental health services.

College students are at risk for and vulnerable to mental health concerns and the difficult or tragic consequences that can result from isolation. Stigma keeps those with emotional pain from expressing to others how they are really doing. Students also fear discrimination by potential employers and insurance companies. DMAX Foundation is addressing a significant unmet need on college campuses where stress and its impact are on the rise. Research shows that over the past 12 months:

- Over one-third of all college students have been so depressed that it is difficult to function
- Approximately two-thirds of them have experienced overwhelming anxiety.
- 12% of the students have seriously contemplated suicide—the second leading cause of death among college and university students

What makes this even more worrisome is that these numbers are climbing year after year. On college campuses, 25% of college students are diagnosed/treated for a mental condition annually. Counseling centers are overwhelmed and understaffed. Nearly half of the students with mental health conditions don't even talk about

it with their friends. The results can be tragic, as indicated by the deluge of college student suicides recently and over the past several years.

Peer led organizations in the mental health arena have been shown to make a difference in college student mental health. In fact, a recent study in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry concludes that “student peer organizations’ activities can improve college student mental health attitudes and perceived knowledge and significantly increase helping behaviors”<sup>1</sup>. As student led organizations, DMAX Clubs work to provide an alternative resource and eliminate the stigma that keeps many students from sharing with others how they are really doing and feeling.

Our innovative clubs are advisor supported, student led, mental health related social clubs that provide a trusting environment for students to have honest everyday conversations about mental health so they can understand the issues and support each other. The Clubs are for all students to get together and talk about the difficult emotional issues they may be experiencing. The Clubs help reduce the sense of isolation and hopelessness for students who may be suffering with mental health issues and can’t or don’t seek the help they need. DMAX Clubs enhance the current mental health resources available to college students both on and off campus.

### **The DMAX Difference**

DMAX Clubs are unique as compared to other mental health organizations with college clubs that focus on education and advocacy rather than intimate settings for students to talk and help each other realize they don’t have to hide how they are really doing. Other groups provide peer “support” through talking to a group leader, or with a group of others with similar “problems” or “concerns”. In our model, talking is only one element. Some students may share how they’re doing in a group discussion setting; others feel more comfortable sharing themselves and helping others through activities or events. Thus, the DMAX Club model involves talking, fun and educational activities and event planning. DMAX Clubs are also different in that they involve all members sharing, talking with and helping each other. Student leaders are trained “hosts” of the meetings, who impart their learnings to the other members. Finally, DMAX Clubs are for all students, rather than only for those with a similar problem or concern.

In addition to Club gatherings, DMAX Foundation hosts community events annually that feature keynote speakers with personal or professional experience with mental health issues. Our local events attract approximately 15% of its attendees from Chester County, PA.

Surveys and testimonials from students at the current DMAX Clubs have revealed that the clubs have a measurable positive impact on the mental health and lives of its members. Surveys of the clubs’ effectiveness have revealed that over 85% of students would recommend the club to their friends and at least 80% of the respondents stated that the DMAX Club:

- Is a very important aspect of my well-being at school
- Helps me realize I am not the only one with emotional stresses or problems
- Helps me realize how important it is to talk about how I am really doing with another person
- Has increased my skill in active listening.
- Is a trusting environment and enables them to talk about what is on their minds

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<sup>1</sup> Lisa Sontag-Padilla, PhD, et al., “Strengthening College Students’ Mental Health Knowledge, Awareness, and Helping Behaviors: The Impact of Active Minds, a Peer Mental Health Organization”, Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, July 2018.

- Is made up of members that care and listen to each other

### **Financial Growth to Further our Mission**

DMAX Foundation has increased funding to meet our budget each year since inception with a compound annual revenue growth of 63% from 2014 to 2017 and current revenue of over \$250,000. The Foundation has established vital and long term relationships with several Fortune 500 companies that care about mental health in the workplace and for college students—, their next generation of employees. These include Foundation Partners Booz Allen Hamilton and Janssen Research and Development and event sponsor Jacobs. These companies provide the Foundation with funding as well as vital in kind support by employees and interns.

DMAX is at a tipping point in its organizational development and in our ability to continue to focus on establishing and supporting current and new DMAX Clubs as trusting environments for college students in the Philadelphia region and surrounding area, including Chester County. These environments will enable the students to have honest everyday conversations about mental health so they can understand and help each other through the difficult adolescent and young adult period of their lives.

The need for additional resources in order to accomplish the DMAX Foundation goals to help more students at more colleges is great. A \$7,500 General Operating grant will have considerable impact in that it will increase funding for the organization and at the same time allow the DMAX Foundation's Executive Director and Outreach Director to focus energy on building DMAX Clubs and directly impact the students it aims to serve. The success of our program and the impact of your funding will be measured by our ability to increase the number of DMAX clubs that we can help to form and support in Chester County, the Philadelphia region and surrounding area, as well as the number of students that we can reach within the clubs and special events.

Students are appealing to college administrators for a peer-related response to the worsening mental health statistics on college campuses and the limited and overburdened campus mental health resources. Colleges need alternative resources to assist in responding to this crisis. DMAX Clubs are a solution that is effective and desired by the students. In order to impact more students at more colleges in the Philadelphia area, so that Chester County students as well as other students can have the added mental health resources they need, DMAX Foundation needs new funding resources. It is our hope that Chester County Community Foundation will see the value in our mission. Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,



Laurie Burstein-Maxwell  
Executive Director

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