

**I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

Contact Information

Date: 8/1/19

Organization Name: Mighty Writers
Address: 1501 Christian St. Philadelphia, PA 19146
Website: www.mightywriters.org
FEIN:01-0920922

Phone: 267-239-0899
Year Incorporated: 2009

Executive Director Name: Tim Whitaker E-mail: twhitaker@mightywriters.org
Board of Directors Chair Name: Michael Epstein
Primary Contact Name: Naomi Levecchia, Development Director nlevecchia@mightywriters.org

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation?
Yes X

Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? No X
 X Donor Advised Fund(s) X Fund for Chester County Don't
know/Not sure

Field/s of Interest:

X Arts, Culture & Humanities X Education

Organization Information:

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): Kennett Square. Also, the Greater Philadelphia Area, including Camden, NJ.

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: MW Kennett Square is Mighty Writers' newest expansion location. We are currently running programming in conjunction with the Kennett Sq. public library and partnering with other youth and community serving organizations such as La Comunidad Hispana and The Garage.

Our programming begins in Sept. 2019 with writing workshops for elementary and middle school kids, as well as family together programming for kids and parents. Our target population is the Spanish-speaking community in Kennett Square. This is similar to the bilingual communities we work with in and around Philadelphia, especially at MW El Futuro, where our kids and families are all of Mexican origin/descent.

Each year, throughout the Greater Philadelphia Area, Mighty Writers works with 3,000 kids, thanks to the help of 600 volunteers. For our first year in Kennett Sq., we expect to work with 150 students. By the end of our second complete school year, we anticipate reaching over 400 kids each year. This is consistent with all our expansion efforts in Philadelphia and Camden, NJ.

Mission: Mighty Writers (MW) teaches kids ages three through 17 to think clearly and write with clarity so they can achieve success at school, at work and in life. At MW, we believe in the magical power of writing. Every day, we see writing transform the lives of kids who walk into our neighborhood writing centers. First, they learn to think clearly. Then, they express their thoughts clearly in writing. When this happens, self-esteem soars. Fuzzy futures become clear. With eyes keenly fixed on the prize, our Mighty kids graduate high school and go to college.

Proposal Summary:

Mighty Writers requests programming support for our new Kennett Sq. location. Starting in September 2019, we will be running Girl Power programs for girls ages 8-11 and 14-18.

Additionally, monthly Family Write Nights will be held. By early 2020, we will add more of our most popular programs, including Comic Books, Fake News, Migration Stories and other workshops for boys and girls ages 7-17.

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

___ Mission, Vision & Strategy ___ Governance & Leadership ___ Strategic Relationships
___ Fundraising & Development ___ Technology Other:

Annual Budget \$1,507,500
80 % of budget for program expenses
11__ % of budget for administrative expenses
Volunteers
9 % of budget for fundraising expenses
100 % total

16 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
___ 14 ___ # of Board Volunteers
___ 600 ___ # of Active Non-Board
thousands! # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- Pew Charitable Trust
- William Penn Foundation
- Townsend Foundation
- Lenfest Foundation
- Hamilton Family Foundatio

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$20,000



**II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**
Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

History: Mighty Writers (MW) teaches kids ages 3-17 to think clearly and write with clarity so they can achieve success at school, at work and in life. Every day we see kids transformed by the power of the pen. First, they learn to think clearly. Then, they express their thoughts clearly in writing. When this happens, self-esteem soars, fuzzy futures become clear. Our Mighty kids graduate high school and go to college.

MW opened its first writing studio in 2009. Today, we offer programs in 9 locations, teach 3,500 students, with the help of 600 volunteers, a staff of 18 and a \$1.5m budget. With an email list of over 25,000 names, thousands of social media followers and news articles in the Washington Post, New Yorker, NPR, WHYI, CBS, NBC News, and more, MW is a movement!

Goals; At Mighty Writers, we think literacy is kryptonite to poverty. The ability to think clearly, write with clarity. Express oneself. That leads to success.

We see it every day. Kids come to Mighty Writers and learn to express themselves. That's when the magic happens- self-esteem soars, grades improve, personalities uplift. With enthusiasm, intensity and hard work, futures loom into view.

Our striving, nurturing and kid-friendly writing studios emphasize critical thinking skills and foster each child's artistic and self-expression. Through our core values of resilience, respect and optimism kids develop their superpower -- the power of the pen.

Since opening our doors in 2009, Mighty Writers has mastered the art of expansion. In a short ten years, we've grown to 9 sites. Our three new 2018 sites quickly filled with neighborhood kids ages 5-15 and by the end of the year the director and cohorts at each of these sites will have taught 150 or more kids.

With each expansion, we look for several key ingredients. First, a community in need of out-of-school time resources and where families lack the capacity to pay for programming or after-school care. Next, we look to members of the community who have reached out to Mighty Writers and who personify a community ready to commit to MW and to enroll their children in our programming. Lastly, we look for designated space. When these components come together, we search for funding. When funding is secured, we hire a program director, arrange the space and start offering programs as quickly as possible. We've found all these factors in Kennett Square and we have our pencils ready!

What Makes Mighty Writers Unique: We work with every student who walks through our doors - for free. We don't just offer after school babysitting -- our kids write! And better yet, they learn to love writing, and want to come back. More than 65% of our students finish the school year literacy proficient for their grade level. And, they can articulate their own vision of what success could look like.

Mighty Writers offers a combination of factors that we don't see any other organization offering:

1. Free
2. high quality
3. culturally sensitive, bilingual
4. writing programs
5. to kids ages 7-17
6. right in the neighborhoods where they live and go to school.

Key initiatives; Beginning in Sept. 2019, MW will be offering two different Girl Power workshops in Kennett Sq. The first group of about 15 girls, ages 8-11 years, will meet weekly for “Girl Power Poetry”. The focus will be on Latina pride; girls will be empowered to find their voice and write about it. The second group will also meet weekly. Teen girls enrolled in “Your Hired Girl!” will work on resume writing and job application assistance, as well as interviewing skills, all framed by our Girl Power curriculum that rouses self-confidence, pride and individual goals for the future of each participating young woman. Both workshops will continue for 6 weeks. Then, enrollment will open for a new group of girls and both workshops will be offered again.

Girl Power! writing workshops provide the opportunity, guidance, and support for girls to develop their individual language for addressing issues such as gender inequality, stereotyping and other tribulations affecting young girls today. With each workshop – and one girl at a time – we can change the conversation to affect fundamental social change.

By the end of 12 weeks, Mighty Writers will have worked with 60 or more girls. Additionally, parents and siblings will be encouraged to attend our monthly Family Write Night. Kids and parents will enjoy time together while working on writing projects in either Spanish or English- or both.

As we write our way through the fall and winter months, MW Kennett Square will grow our community and add additional workshops for boys and girls ages 7-17. Some of our other most popular programs include: Comic Books, Migration Stories, Fake News, Mindfulness and more! All our workshops inspire creativity, practice clear thinking and stimulate clear writing. And, all our programs are always free and bilingual.

MW actively partners with public and private organizations across the region. In Kennett Square, we’ve already forged partnerships and collaborations with various organizations including the Public Library, Chester Co Chamber of Commerce, Historic Kennett Sq., The Garage Community & Youth Center, After the Bell, LCH, and several area writers and artists.

By this time next year, we expect to establish our own home base. Then, we will begin to expand so as to offer all of our five core programs:

- Afterschool Academy; elementary and middle school kids attend daily from Mon-Thurs. After one-on-one homework help, snack and some play time, we get to work on any one of our 25 specially developed writing units that teach poetry, narrative, informative and persuasive writing styles in a way that’s not just fun and interesting but also culturally relevant.
- College and Career Prep programs focus on critical thinking and persuasive writing skills to prepare teens for life with a high school diploma. These include learning fundamental skills such as financial literacy, interviewing, job application writing, and other competencies. To help teens focus on college, we offer a weekly Teen Scholars group, 6-8 annual college campus tours, and workshops for college applications, essays and financial aid.
- Evening and weekend workshops that inspire creativity, practice clear thinking and stimulate clear writing. Workshops range broadly in themes.
- One-on-one mentorships pair students with an adult volunteer for four hours monthly for a minimum of six months. Together, mentor-mentee pairs establish and complete three goals (i.e. write a book of poetry, get more organized, get into a good high school or college).
- Mighty Toddlers is for our earliest learners. It’s a creative, family engagement program with art, music, read aloud, play acting and so much more. Parents are provided with additional resources to continue their tot’s learning all week long, including free books.

By the end of the 2020-21 school year, we anticipate MW Kennett Square will have taught 400 or more youth.

Specific needs and issues to be addressed; Kennett Square, located in Chester County, Pennsylvania, is home to the largest population of Mexican immigrants in the state. In Kennett Square, the average household income is \$22,000 annually with 10,250 students living in poverty nearly half of them live in what's considered "deep poverty" - a family of four subsisting on an annual household income of \$11,775.

"Race for Results" the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2017 report showed that Pennsylvania ranked 48th out of the 50 states in the well-being of its young Latino population. The report highlighted these glaring statistics:

- Only 18% of Latino fourth graders scored at or above proficiency in reading.
- While 90% of all Pennsylvania children live in a household where at least one adult member has a high school diploma, for Latino children, only 1 in 4 live in such a household.
- "The threat of deportation is causing high levels of anxiety in children that is described as 'toxic stress,' the report said, "impeding the ability to learn and develop social skills while posing long-term health consequences."

We stand with and for all kids. Our mission is urgent. MW seeks to expand rapidly-to help even more kids to think and write with clarity. At MW El Futuro, our writing programs have brought self-esteem, hope and literacy to these struggling young people MW Kennett Sq. will have the same outcomes.

How impact and results will be demonstrated; MW measures the quantitative outcomes of student writing proficiency using an online tool called MY Access. Testing with MY Access is done for all Academy and Teen Scholar students multiple times throughout the school year. School report cards are also collected.

Qualitative results are assessed through surveys of parents and youth. Surveys measure each students' interest and motivation for writing, along with parental satisfaction.

Last school year, MW offered just over 100 Writing Workshops across all locations, teaching more than 2,700 kids ages 7-17. We create communities that persist over time, and youth frequently return for multiple workshops. Overall results showed that Workshops increased participant motivation across the board, with respondents revealing increased love of writing and increased time spent writing:

- 89% of students felt "enthusiastic" or "very enthusiastic" about writing at the end of the school year, up from 49%,
- 64% of students wrote on their own a few times per week or more, up from 37%,
- 100% of parents saw their child's relationship with writing improve in one or more ways
- 77% of students stated, "I enjoy writing more."
- 92% of workshop participants stated they'd re-enroll.

Since all of our programs are free, Mighty Writers would not be possible without our financial supporters. These relationships are sacred to us and we work to engage all our supporters by regularly inviting them to visit programs and attend special celebrations. We hope to create this community in Chester County, as we've done in Camden and Philadelphia.

III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

