

CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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

Contact Information

Organization Name: The Sparrow Fund
Address: 124 3rd Avenue, Phoenixville, PA 19460
Phone: 484.433.4676
Website: <http://sparrowfund.org/>
Year Incorporated: 2011
FEIN: 27-5053006

Date: 11/4/2021

Director's Name: Kelly Raudenbush
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Board Chair Name: Mark Raudenbush
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Abbey Leaman
PC E-mail: abbeyleaman@sparrowfund.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Education
 Health Human Services Religion

Mission:

Our mission is caring for caregivers, serving families in foster care and adoption as well as those who care for vulnerable children through individualized support, education, and specialized programs to encourage connection within families and to a larger community. We learn who we are and how the world works through relationships, and hurts experienced in the context of relationships are healed in the context of relationships. That's behind all we do—Sparrow Services, Sparrow Counseling, Together Called marriage retreats, and trainings for caregivers in our neighborhood. Motivated by our own experience of relationship, we seek to magnify good already there and invite others to more deeply experience connection and learn that they matter, that they are valuable, and that someone is for them. When we encourage, equip, and empower caregivers, we can transform relationships within families and communities.

Geographic Area Served *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):*

All of Chester County

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

We serve foster and adopted children who have experienced developmental trauma and the families who care for them. We currently have 49 families (203 children and adults) in our Sparrow Services and Sparrow Counseling programs, a growth of over 25% from last year. We have approximately 160 other family units who access our regular training events in a typical year. 100% of our community are classified as vulnerable as families with children who have experienced developmental trauma. 67.3% of our current families are transracial families.

Annual Budget \$148,665	2 Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
83.4% of budget for program expenses	1 Part-Time Paid Staff
12.7% of budget for administrative expenses	8 Board Volunteers
3.9% of budget for fundraising expenses	25 Active Nonboard Volunteers, 690 volunteer hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Individual donations (37% total funding), training revenue (29% total funding), grants/foundations (20% total funding), counseling income (13% total funding).

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$7,000

Proposal Summary:

We are seeking a grant to (1) subsidize Sparrow Counseling to allow for more equitable and affordable access to specialized support for families with children who have a history of developmental trauma and (2) sustain and increase the capacity and breadth of Project Puppy Love, the attachment-based, canine-assisted intervention program that we utilize in Sparrow Counseling.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

When Phoenixville residents Mark and Kelly Raudenbush adopted a child with special needs in 2010, they discovered and personally experienced a gap in support and services for families like theirs. As families grow by fostering and adopting children who have experienced hard things, those families are made more vulnerable and need support and community to help children, grownups, and the whole family best experience both short-term and long-term health. Mark and Kelly could not ignore the gap in care for families and stepped up to meet it with the launch of The Sparrow Fund in 2011.

In the beginning, The Sparrow Fund's specific purpose was to give grants to adopting families to receive preadoption support and counsel. Since then, The Sparrow Fund has grown both wider and deeper in services for the benefit of children and families. Families in [our grant program](#) receive financial support for the purpose of expert medical counsel as well as individualized support from our team throughout the adoption process until they are home for a full year so that they have ongoing support when they need it the most. We host **both informal and formal gathering events and training opportunities** including a marriage retreat every year with the distinct purpose of caring for couples so that they are best able to care for the children in their homes. We offer training to caregivers and professionals that not only helps them practice what it means to be "trauma-informed" in their contexts of influence but meets them where they are and builds them up to be the best human beings and professionals they can be. And, in 2019, we launched [Sparrow Counseling](#), offering specialized child and family counseling services and parent coaching for foster and adoptive families with a very unique attachment-based, animal-assisted intervention component.

2. Funding request

• Description of key initiatives

Your grant would help us build our programs to assist local vulnerable children and families. More specifically, a CCCF grant would (1) subsidize Sparrow Counseling to allow for more equitable and affordable access to specialized support for families with children who have a history of developmental trauma and (2) sustain and increase the capacity and breadth of Project Puppy Love, the attachment-based, canine-assisted intervention program that we utilize in Sparrow Counseling.

1. In 2018, the latest year for which data is available, more than 63,000 children were adopted from foster care, up nearly a quarter from 2014. That number was an all-time high, according to the U.S. Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. But, after adoptions are finalized, when families often experience challenges and feel a need for extra support, there is little available to them. We offer personalized, direct support for families. We charge a fee for these services—not simply to fund the program but because we see value in families making a personal financial investment as it increases personal commitment. We charge a base rate well below fair market value. Still, our desire is to make our family services financially accessible to families who need it; therefore, we offer a discounted fee scale for families who find the base rate a hardship and offer pro bono counseling/coaching as appropriate. We want to continue offering this, but we need additional funding to sustain it. With a significant waiting list of families wanting these services, we want to offer opportunities for waiting families so that they can experience community and receive some support as they wait for more intensive support. We are asking for \$3,500 grant funding to subsidize the cost of specialized counseling for families and defray the cost of additional programming for waiting families.

2. When we launched Project Puppy Love in 2018, we hoped that our innovative idea to incorporate animals into our work with families would remarkably enhance services and help families to experience therapeutic interventions entirely differently. We were right. Incorporating Louie, a golden retriever certified facility dog trained by Paws & Affection, has created opportunities we would not have had otherwise for connection, mutual enjoyment, identification and expression of feelings, and practice in choice making and giving and receiving affection. While Louie was trained as a service dog and placed with us healthy and ready for this job,

he had two seizures in 2019 for which he takes medication daily. His health is stable, and we have found his condition to be an asset as we work with children with their own health differences. With a desire for long-term stability of the Project Puppy Love program, we have had conversations with Paws & Affection about placing a second service dog at our facility. They are in favor. But, we need to secure grant funding to meet current costs (\$2,175 annually) and build funding needed for the initial placement fee (\$5,000) and ongoing expenses that come with growing the program with a second animal. We are asking for \$3,500 grant funding for the purpose of sustaining and growing Project Puppy Love.

- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

The initiatives we are hoping to fund through this grant specifically address the needs of local, vulnerable foster and adopted children who have experienced developmental trauma and the families who care for them. Of the \$7,000 requested, \$3,500 would be applied to subsidize a discounted fee scale for families with financial need and pro bono counseling/coaching as appropriate. Additionally, \$3,500 would be applied to sustain and grow our animal-assisted intervention program for foster and adopted children and families.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

With histories of ACES, trauma, and secondary trauma, the families we serve were already vulnerable prior to COVID-19. With COVID-19, those children and their grownups were made even more fragile. In light of that, our mission and efforts to care for them through individualized support and events that empower and connect caregivers increased. For many of our families, the effects of COVID-19 will last long past this year and next. Many Sparrow Services grant families' adoptions are still on hold or moving very slowly, intensifying their personal needs and straining our resources as families remain in the program longer than we expected as it takes longer to complete adoptions. Despite the strain on our resources, we accepted 22 new families into our program since the start of the pandemic, meeting our pre-pandemic strategic growth goal.

Our counseling program has been growing throughout the season of COVID. With more inquiries and a longer waitlist than we have ever had, we have innovated to add additional support opportunities congruent with the content of our counseling program that can be offered more widely so that families who want services can experience some support as they wait. Our certified service-trained facility dog Louie has been back to work in our counseling program, helping children work on what they're working on and providing unique opportunities we would not have had otherwise for connection, mutual enjoyment, identification and expression of feelings, and practice in choice making and giving and receiving affection.

Along with so many other community helpers, we have innovated and continue to do so to meet the increasing needs of our families in the midst of COVID, an effort we consider our responsibility and privilege. We take very seriously the task we have to encourage, equip, and empower vulnerable parents of vulnerable children in every season but especially right now, and that will continue to be at the heart of our mission going forward.

- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

A grant from CCCF to support *our* support of local vulnerable children and families will help us increase the number of families we are able to serve. With \$3,500 to subsidize our Sparrow Counseling program, we would be able to provide more equitable and affordable access to specialized support for families, allowing families to receive care who would have been hindered financially. Furthermore, if we can secure the funding needed, we are hoping to be matched with a second service-trained animal for our program in 2022.

Metrics matter. Numbers of families in our programs, the number of children directly served, and total attendees at trainings do express impact. But, given what we do, impact for us is not entirely defined by numbers. We seek to provide depth of care rather than a wide breadth of care. We cannot throw out all metrics, but we do like to expand them. With a vision of caring for caregivers and magnifying good, we internally assess results by asking: (a) Are we growing? Not necessarily in numbers of people served or dollars donated, but are we growing individually? Are we growing as a team? Are the children and grownups we serve growing? (b) Are we doing what we are doing because it's how we have always done it, or are we considering new opportunities? And (c) Are we multiplying? Are we invitational proactively and reactively? Are the people we serve referring more people to us based on their experience with us?

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 & financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
5. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

- Use this form @ www.chescof.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to grants@chescof.org**
- Proposals are considered “complete” when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**.
- Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
- Per IRS Regulations, applicants must be charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & cannot be individuals.

Please contact Grants Administrator Kevin Baffa at
(610) 696-8211 grants@chescof.org with questions.

