

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Contact Information

Date: December 10, 2021

Organization Name: Gemma Services (dba name; corporate name: Silver Springs – Martin Luther School)

Address: 512 W. Township Line Rd.

Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

Phone: (610) 825-4440, ext. 3206

Website: www.gemmaservices.org

Year Incorporated: Silver Springs – Martin Luther School (legal corporate name) was originally incorporated in 1984. After the merger of Silver Springs – Martin Luther School and theVillage in 2019, the Articles of Incorporation were updated in 2021.

FEIN: 23-2300184

ED/CEO Name: Kristen E.M. Gay, Ph.D.

ED/CEO E-mail: kgay@gemmaservices.org

Board Chair Name: Joseph C. Ragaglia, Esq.

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Primary Contact Name: Lynn Unipan, MSW, CFRE

Primary Contact E-mail: Lunipan@gemmaservices.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities

Environment/Animal Welfare

Education

Health

Human Services

Religion

Mission: Gemma Services changes lives by transforming hope into action for children, youth, and families facing emotional and behavioral challenges.

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

Gemma primarily serves the five-county Greater Philadelphia region (including Montgomery, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Philadelphia counties), and in one program, other counties in Pennsylvania and the State of Delaware.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Each year, Gemma serves over 3,000 at-risk children, youth, and families who are experiencing significant emotional and behavioral challenges, often the result of trauma.

Annual Budget \$37,648,144

294 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

87 % of budget for program expenses

14 # of Board Volunteers

12 % of budget for administrative expenses

50 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

1 % of budget for fundraising expenses

~750-800 # of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources: Gemma Services’ programs are supported by a mosaic of funding that includes reimbursements from public sources, payers with whom we contract, which account for approximately 95% of our funding. These include Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) that manage Medicaid dollars, the Department of Human Services, School Districts, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and others. To fully cover the costs of the services we provide, we rely on charitable donations from individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations.

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating ?

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Partnerships & Collaborations

Fundraising, Development & Marketing Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$5,000

Proposal Summary: Gemma Services respectfully requests a \$5,000 grant from the Chester County Community Foundation to support general operating expenses for vital behavioral health and special education programs during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



December 10, 2021

Chester County Community Foundation
c/o Kevin Baffa, Grants Administrator
28 W. Market Street, Lincoln Biography Building
West Chester, PA 19382

Dear Mr. Baffa,

We write to you today from Gemma Services, a local nonprofit that was formed in 2019 by the merger of theVillage (formerly Presbyterian Children’s Village) and Silver Springs – Martin Luther School. Gemma Services is dedicated to providing vital behavioral health, prevention, and special education services for youth and families experiencing emotional and behavioral challenges. Operating from three locations in the Greater Philadelphia region, Gemma provides a continuum of behavioral health and child welfare services as well as a special education school for at-risk children and families from our local communities. We write today to respectfully request an unrestricted grant to support general operating costs associated with these crucial supports for youth and families who struggle mightily during the best of times, and significantly more so during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

History, Goals, Key Achievements, & Distinctiveness

Both of the long-standing Philadelphia-area nonprofits that merged to form Gemma were founded in the 1800s as orphanages and evolved over generations to provide a broader range of programs to respond to the growing needs of their communities. Uniting to become one enabled each organization to continue its vital work while expanding its continuum of care. Today, Gemma represents a combined 300+ years of service to at-risk youth and families in the five-county Philadelphia Region and surrounding counties.

Gemma’s work is guided by the vision of a world in which children and families feel valued and have the tools to realize their highest potential. Our array of programs is in service to our mission which is to transform hope into action for children, teens, and families who are experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties. Our current programs include:

- A 24/7/365 psychiatric Residential Treatment Program for boys and girls ages 6-14 who are experiencing significant mental health challenges, many as the result of trauma;
- Martin Luther School, a K-12th grade Approved Private School providing special education for students referred by more than 40 Philadelphia-area school districts as well as many served by Gemma’s Residential Treatment Program, and
- A range of Community Based Programs that provide services for youth and families in their own homes, schools, and communities. These Community Based Programs include Foster Family Care, Adoption and Permanency Services, an Outpatient Behavioral Health program, Intensive Behavioral Health (“wrap around”) Services, Applied Behavioral Analysis Services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Family-Based Mental Health Services, a Family Empowerment Center, and In Home Protective Services.

When the pandemic began in March 2020, we quickly pivoted to provide many of our operations virtually to ensure the wellbeing of children and families we serve and of our dedicated staff. At the present time, many have resumed in-person services with enhanced virus control and mitigation procedures.

We would like to take this opportunity to share some recent highlights:

- Our special education school, Martin Luther School, was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to expand its special education programs from K-8th grades to K-12th grades. After more than a year of virtual learning due to the pandemic, we were thrilled to welcome all students back to in-person learning in September 2021, including our first class of 9th graders. Martin Luther School regularly serves children referred from Chester County school districts, as does our Residential Treatment Program — both located on our campus in Plymouth Meeting.
- In May 2021, we launched our first new program since the merger. Family-Based Mental Health Services (FBMHS) is an intensive behavioral health program in which teams of two professionals work with families whose children have high emotional and behavioral health needs, including those who are transitioning home from a residential placement such as Gemma's. This program was awarded to Gemma by Philadelphia's managed care organization, Community Behavioral Health, in part because of the expertise of our combined team post-merger. We presently have two teams in place and are hiring our third.
- We have launched three significant initiatives. The first is our Southwest Philadelphia Initiative, in which a committee of Board, management, staff, and community stakeholders are exploring unmet needs of the Southwest Philadelphia community, where theVillage was founded, and considering ways in which Gemma may expand or evolve to meet these needs. In line with that initiative, we have launched a Strategic Planning process in which we are envisioning the future for Gemma's next 5-10 years. Finally, we are well underway with a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiative to ensure that Gemma is as fully inclusive an organization as possible. A staff committee of approximately 30 employees with three co-chairs is working in partnership with national consultants from BCT Partners (www.bctpartners.com). A DEI framework for Gemma is being developed to include a vision, mission, and action steps to guide our DEI work. BCT Partners is also working with our Board of Directors and Management Team, and is evaluating many of our processes, such as recruitment and HR-related procedures, and will make further recommendations to leadership.

Funding Request

Gemma Services respectfully requests a \$5,000 grant to support general operating costs during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Youth we serve in our programs are experiencing significant emotional and behavioral challenges and are at-risk of significant emotional, behavioral, social, economic, and other hardships. Many have experienced traumas that include what are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Defined in a landmark study by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, ACEs are traumas such as abuse and neglect that result in negative physical and mental health, social, and behavioral consequences throughout one's life. ACEs also impact society as they result in increased costs to the mental health, health care, emergency response, and criminal justice sectors.

The majority of youth and families we serve across all programs are from low-income communities and communities of color, populations that are particularly vulnerable during the current pandemic especially as they historically experience barriers to accessing services. Behavioral health care is a vital service that provides important support and linkage to other social services often needed by those who are particularly vulnerable during period of high economic stress. Additionally, the youth we serve through Martin Luther School are referred to us because they have been identified as "Severely Emotionally Disturbed" on their Individual Education Plan, which specifies that they need additional support. According to a 2021 study by the Pew

Charitable Trusts, the already high poverty and unemployment rates in Philadelphia were only exacerbated by the pandemic (www.pewtrusts.org). Gemma is uniquely positioned to respond to the high behavioral health needs of vulnerable at-risk youth and families in the Greater Philadelphia region and surrounding counties, which will increase access to services and corresponding health outcomes.

Like many nonprofits, Gemma has felt the effects of the pandemic acutely. To assist us in weathering the fiscal challenges of the last year and a half, we are energetically seeking philanthropic support from our current partners and potential new ones. As the course of the pandemic remains uncertain and recovery protracted, the caring support of such partners is essential to our ability to financially sustain and continue to provide our critical safety net, behavioral health, and special education programs.

Each Gemma program has tools they use aligned with evidence-based practices that measure success in fidelity to those approaches and success in helping youth and families meet their goals. For example, in our Residential Treatment Program, we track Critical Incidents, which are instances of unsafe behaviors, as well as individual progress toward their treatment goals. Additionally, we conduct an Aftercare Study in which we contact guardians of children discharged to a family setting at regular intervals for up to three years post discharge. This survey assesses if children are "At Home," "In School," and "Out of Trouble." We have consistently found that approximately 75% of children served in this program discharge to a less restrictive setting – meaning a home setting. Furthermore, we are pleased that as best as we can assess, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of these children remain in such a less restrictive setting for up to three years, a strong indicator of the program's positive impact on children's lives.


Another example of how we measure progress can be seen with Martin Luther School, in which we assess children's academic progress regularly, as well as achievement of individual social and emotional goals. Finally, on an organizational level, we review the organization's financial health through regular analysis by our Chief Financial Officer and CEO, in with our Board's Finance Committee, of our expenditures and revenues as compared to the Board approved projected budget for the fiscal year. There are countless other goals that the organization is pursuing at any point in time that are assessed on an ongoing basis as well.

A grant of \$5,000 would greatly assist us this year, one in which we anticipate serving upwards of 2,500 youth and families and one in which we continue to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our operations, those we serve, and our community. Thank you for considering this request. Should you have any questions, please contact Lynn Unipan, Chief Development Officer, at Lunipan@gemmaservices.org or 610-825-4440, ext. 3206.

Most sincerely,



Kristen E.M. Gay, Ph.D.
President and CEO



Lynn Unipan, MSW, CFRE
Chief Development Officer

Encl: 501(c)(3) letter
Board of Directors list
FY2021/2022 Budget
Most recent audited financial statement