

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

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

Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's Summary Sheet MUST accompany application.

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Date 1/7/2022

Contact Information

Organization Name: Arts Holding Hands and Hearts
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 Year Incorporated: 2013
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ED/CEO Name: Jan Michener
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 Board Chair Name: Peter Mike-Mayer
 Board Chair Approval (check here):
 Primary Contact Name: Jan Michener
 Primary Contact E-mail:

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: AHHAH’s mission is to empower children, strengthen families and mobilize communities through arts, literacy and mindfulness for social and racial equity and justice. Our vision is to close the gaps and inequities in education for children in poverty.

Geographic Area Served: AHHAH focuses its efforts in Chester County primarily in Coatesville, Kennett Square, West Chester, Downingtown and Oxford.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: We provide creative movement, story time yoga and reading programs to over 300 children and families in C.C.I.U. Head Start. We also provide programs to youth in the juvenile justice system at the Chester County Youth Center. Additionally, AHHAH spearheads the Chester County PULL (Pop Up Lending Library) Campaign which aims to make age-appropriate, relevant, culturally appropriate books accessible to children in Coatesville, Kennett Square and the surrounding communities. AHHAH is the nonprofit partner supporting the Greater Coatesville Imagination Library which provides quality, age-appropriate books to children under five years old who live in Coatesville (19320 zip code). Finally, AHHAH provides services to adults in the form of mindfulness, self-care, and resiliency workshops for teachers and others working with children impacted by poverty and trauma.

Annual Budget \$ 93,000 _____ 1 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
67 % of budget for program expenses 8 # of Board Volunteers
28 % of budget for administrative expenses 10 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
5 % of budget for fundraising expenses 1000 # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Individual and small business donations
 Program revenues from Chester County Youth Center
 Foundations – Justamere Foundation, PA Council of the Arts, CCRES,
 Program revenues from Chester County Intermediate Unit Head Start.

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

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary:

AHHAH requests funding to support the post-pandemic resumption and growth of our programs serving children in southern Chester County.

AHHAH spearheaded a grassroots campaign in 2015 to put 100 lending libraries, called PULL Stations, throughout the Coatesville municipality in locations where children gather both indoors and outdoors. AHHAH coordinated community workshops to build, design, paint and install the PULL Stations throughout Coatesville. Today our PULL Station initiative continues to grow as we support the Coatesville, Kennett Square, and Oxford areas and is always looking to expand throughout Chester County. AHHAH collected and distributed over 200,000 books, installed **100+ outdoor** PULL Stations across the Coatesville & Kennett Square area, and engaged over **200** volunteers in the building, painting, installation and upkeep of our PULL Stations.

In order to expand upon the impact of the PULL program, in November 2021, AHHAH partnered with a Coatesville small business to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Coatesville, PA. The newly formed Greater Coatesville Imagination Library provides high quality, age-appropriate books to children under the age of five who live in the 19320 zip code free of charge. Books are selected by the Dolly Parton Foundation, assigned to children based on their age, and one book is mailed directly to the child's home once a month until they reach the age of five.

AHHAH's provides weekly trauma-informed Story Time Yoga and Dance with Me to children in CCIU Head Start in Coatesville. The Coatesville C.C.I.U. Head Start preschool serves approximately 300 low-income students .

AHHAH also provides classes in mindfulness, artistic expression (writing and drama), and nutrition to children in the girl's shelter and in detention at the Chester County Youth Center (CCYC) in Pocopson. In September 2021, AHHAH added a new Culinary Business program at CCYC that teaches skills in gardening, food preparation, retail/customer service, and teamwork. AHHAH has received national awards for our programs with youth who are incarcerated.

In response to the Covid pandemic, AHHAH has developed and implemented Professional Development workshops focused on self-care, mental wellness and resiliency for teachers, and organizations working with children and families impacted by poverty and trauma. Participating organizations include Chester County Futures, Chester County Dept of Community Development, Coatesville and Phoenixville School Districts, Chester County Youth Center, and Chester County Intermediate Unit.

The Covid pandemic has made our mission more urgent because it has exacerbated the impact of trauma to children. Children have missed school, had reduced opportunities for exercise and recreation, have been isolated from their friends and extended families, and may have experienced increased food and housing insecurity. Parents have been stressed by isolation, restrictions and the need to take on many of the responsibilities of teachers. Many have also lost income through layoffs, furloughs, and reduced hours.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

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

Arts Holding Hands and Hearts (AHHAH) was founded in 2013 by Jan Michener. Our inaugural programs were trauma informed yoga classes and creative writing workshops at the Chester County Youth Center (CCYC). 40% of the youth who pass through CCYC are residents of Coatesville, so AHHAH made Coatesville our initial primary focus to determine if the flow of children into the juvenile justice system could be curtailed. AHHAH uses multiple strategies – **Community, Arts, Literacy, and Mindfulness (C.A.L.M.)** to mitigate the stressful effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Our programs engage youth in mindful and artistic initiatives that build resiliency and create pathways to productive and fulfilling lives. AHHAH programming is focused on key childhood development stages as follows:

Pre-Kindergarten (Families, Caregivers and children up to age 5)

- Greater Coatesville Imagination Library (326 children have been registered as of December 31, 2021)
- Family Story Time Yoga and Move with Me classes in Coatesville
- Head Start Move with Me and Read to Me classes in Coatesville
- Dr. Eleanor Brown of West Chester University psychology and Early Childhood Cognitions and Emotions Lab is conducting a 3 year cortisol study measuring AHHAH's arts and mindfulness programs with preschool children to mitigate stress and enhance emotional and academic learning for preschool children identified living in homes at poverty level.

All School Aged Children

- Yoga and Mindfulness classes at CCYC
- Creative Writing and Expressive Arts Workshops at the CCYC
- **PULL (Pop Up Lending Library) Campaign-** 200,000+books have been collected and distributed – mainly in Coatesville and Kennett Square. The PULL campaign involves many community partnerships including—two public-libraries, 16 schools; Chester County Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, local senior-living communities; and multiple local NPOs.

Teenagers

- Nutrition classes and “Cultivating Change” cooking and entrepreneurial program at the CCYC
- Resiliency workshops for high-school age children through Chester County Futures

Teachers, Families, and other Caregivers

- Resiliency workshops for teachers, counselors, and administrators. Participating organizations include Chester County Futures, Chester County Dept of Community Development, OIC PA Career Links, ChesPenn Health (Coatesville), Chester County Intermediate Unit.
- Community Yoga and mindfulness classes - donation based classes. Donations are used to buy books honoring diversity and SEL for PULL Stations.

Key Achievements:

- 2015 National Detention Centers and Alternative Programs award for our programs at CCYC
- 2016 a poem written in an AHHAH workshop won the 2016 JDC National Poetry Contest.
- 2016 Justice Restored: A Series of Writings and Poems from Incarcerated Youth, was published.
- 2016 “Heart with Service” award from the Kingdom Wives of New Life in Christ Church, Coatesville
- 2017 “Celebrate Literacy Award” Chester County Reading Association for PULL Campaign.

- 2017 Justice Restored 2.0: A Series of Writings and Poems from Incarcerated Youth, was published.
- 2018 chosen by 100+ Women Who Care Chester County as the non-profit for 2nd quarter of 2018
- 2019 Expanded classes from monthly to weekly for 9 classrooms at Coatesville Head Start.
- 2019 initiated a 3 year research project (with Dr. Eleanore Brown) to measure AHHAH's impact.
- 2020 implemented adult self-care and resiliency workshops for teachers, families and caregivers.
- 2021 Partnered with Looker Books to create the Greater Coatesville Imagination Library

AHHAH's distinctiveness and goals for the future:

There is growing recognition of the impact of trauma and ACE's on disadvantaged children, as evidenced by the fact that in July 2019, Governor Tom Wolf issued a directive to establish Pennsylvania as a "trauma-informed state." AHHAH cannot eliminate Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs") but AHHAH can, and does, guide children and caregivers to better manage the stress associated with ACEs.

Our trauma-informed programs teach children affected by ACEs how to calm their minds, better control their emotions and focus their attention. Children in AHHAH 's programs learn they have an impactful and unique voice enhancing sense of agency. Exposing children to their own power to create builds the self-esteem required for them to believe that change is possible. Participating with others in mindfulness exercises and storytelling, children learn empathy and cultivate caring communities.

A child's ability to read impacts their ability to succeed. Reading below grade level lowers a child's chances of completing their education and succeeding and it increases their chances of dropping out of school and being incarcerated. Over 1/3 of children throughout the Chester County area are reading and writing below grade level. Many children residing in the Chester County area come from economically disadvantaged families and many are not being exposed to enough words and reading before age five, when the brain is most malleable. By the time they enter school, they already have an academic disadvantage. Our goal through the PULL and Greater Coatesville Imagination Library programs is to help expose more children to words by age five as well as to provide opportunities for positive family experiences and engagement, and to foster a love of reading in the greater Coatesville community.

AHHAH believes that challenges associated with ACEs need to be addressed with three highly integrated disciplines (mindfulness, arts, and literacy). AHHAH integrates these disciplines to help children and caregivers achieve a better understanding of themselves, their place in the world and their future.

AHHAH has a unique niche in that we believe both arts and mindfulness are necessary for the development of the whole child. AHHAH's unique value proposition is not simply offering art and mindfulness classes under a single umbrella. AHHAH's value is that we make mindfulness the foundation upon which everything else is built. Mindfulness enables children to calm their minds, focus their attention, control their emotions and builds resiliency and self- esteem. It is the basic building block upon which art and literacy education (and other disciplines) must be solidly built.

2. Funding request

We seek funding to support the following initiatives.

- Deliver our weekly pre-kindergarten programs to the 300+ students in the Coatesville Head Start program.
- Continue the collaboration with Dr. Eleanor Brown of West Chester University in her longitudinal "Creativity and Calm" study to measure the efficacy of AHHAH's preschool curricula.

- Work with youth at CCYC, students in Coatesville, Kennett and Oxford in the collection of stories and drawings for Justice Restored 3.0.
- Continue and grow our Cultivating Change program at the CCYC. Residents currently receive weekly cooking classes: additionally, they grow herbs and create spice blends and mixes which they will sell at area farmers' markets and specialty food stores. Income will go to the CCYC Restitution Fund to help pay court fees and victim restitution costs, thus shortening their time in the juvenile justice system. We are collecting recipes and stories about food and family for Cultivating Change: A cookbook of recipes and stories from youth who are incarcerated to be published Fall 2022.
- Continue to work with communities in the building, painting and stewarding the Pop-Up Lending Library program to give every child in our communities access to age-appropriate, language appropriate, culturally sensitive books.
- Grow the number of children supported by the Greater Coatesville Imagination Library until all eligible children are registered (approximately 3,900 children)
- Continue and expand our trauma informed self-care and resilience workshops for teachers, parents and organizations working with families impacted by trauma. This program has proven both effective and popular and we are receiving a steady stream of requests to provide workshops in Chester County.

Specific needs & issues to be addressed

According to the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort*, the differences in proficiency levels of those living in poverty start as soon as a child is born. The prevalence of early childhood trauma is difficult to establish but one study in the *Infant Mental Health Journal* (2014), 35 (6), 544-554, found that 70% of children endure three or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) by age 6. Trauma occurs more often in families facing financial hardships.

Poverty-related stress and trauma interferes with brain development, executive functioning, emotional regulation, cognition and behavior. The stress of caring for a young child who is a victim of trauma can negatively impact parents. Teachers are impacted by trauma when challenging behaviors lead to high-levels of stress -- in turn reducing their capacity to work effectively. A recent report of the National Research Council, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8* listed several strategies for reducing teacher stress, including training on self-care and mindfulness.

Why it is important to fund this now

There is growing recognition of the need to address the impact of trauma and ACE's on disadvantaged children. In July 2019 Governor Tom Wolf issued a directive to establish Pennsylvania as a trauma-informed state. This led to the mid-2020 publication of [A Plan to Make Pennsylvania a Trauma-Informed Healing Centered State](#). That report recommends that Pennsylvania "embed trauma-informed and healing-centered practices and principles into the culture of every state office and agency, as well as in the culture of every county office and nonprofit social service agency and faith-based program." (p32)

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The Covid pandemic has exacerbated the impact of trauma to children. Children have missed school, had reduced opportunities for exercise and recreation, have been isolated from their friends and extended families, and may have experienced increased food and housing insecurity. Parents have been stressed by isolation, restrictions and the need to take on many of the responsibilities of teachers. Many have also lost income through layoffs, furloughs, and reduced hours.

The Covid pandemic has also negatively impacted AHHAH's finances. The suspension of on-site activities at Coatesville Headstart and CCYC caused a 60% reduction in AHHAH's program revenues in Fiscal year 2021. Our supporters have responded to this challenge generously, but we still ended the Fiscal Year with a net-income that was negative by approximately \$12,000.

How impact & results will be demonstrated

At Coatesville Headstart AHHAH measures the efficacy of our programs through observation in classes, meetings with teachers, administrators, and parents and by using the objective data gathered in Dr. Brown's "Creativity and Calm" longitudinal study.

At the CCYC, we measure by recording attendance and participation in classes and by gathering feedback from the center's professional staff and administrators. The new Cultivating Change program at CCYC will be measured by the volume of products sold, and the revenues contributed to the restitution funds.

For the PULL (Pop Up Lending Library) Campaign, we track PULL Stations installed and the number of books collected and distributed. The Greater Coatesville Imagination Library has a sophisticated database and reporting system which will allow us to track the number of children currently registered, total books mailed and for which age groups, as well as the number of children who have graduated from the program when they reach age five. The goal of the PULL and Greater Coatesville Imagination Library programs are to increase reading levels among preschool-aged children and to prepare them for kindergarten by inspiring a love of reading before they enroll. Additionally, we plan to survey the parents of GCIL participants for stories and information on how the program has impacted their child(ren).

Our new workshops for teachers gather feedback through a formal survey instrument.