

CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 9/13/23

Contact Information

Organization Name: Barnstone Art for Kids ED/CEO Name: Sean Halloran
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Year Incorporated: 2012 Primary Contact Name: Sean Halloran
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Barnstone Art for Kids uses the power of art and community connection to foster resilience in children facing adversity.

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

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: Historically, our children and families live in the Greater Phoenixville area. Our zip codes include 19460, as well as 19355, 19343, 19301, 19442, 19475, and 19465. For We also offered our summer session programs to 4 groups of elementary through high school aged kids, and here we served 28 children. Our alumni Beyond the Power and Teen Open Studio continued to meet monthly, and averaged 8 children per session in both programs. Our On the Go programs are a little more difficult to quantify, but our estimate is that we served approximately 150-200 children. This number includes a robust attendance from our weekly Library group for preschoolers, our Art After School program with PAPA and other community-based programs. We did see a slight decrease in our Awareness (advocacy) presentations, but we estimate that we shared information about childhood trauma and our work with 50-100 adults in the community. In terms of demographics of our participants, they seem to follow the distribution of the region: our kids are predominantly Caucasian with a smaller percentage of Biracial, Black and Latino youth. No matter their circumstances, children and families have a supportive and nurturing partner in Barnstone Art for Kids.

Annual Budget \$217,714 _____	<u>1.5</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>73</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>6</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>20</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>35</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>7</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>1258</u> # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total	

Top 3-5 funding sources: Detwiler Family Foundation, CC-ARPA, St. Andrews Mission Fund, 2023 Live! Art Spectacular (event)

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

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 13,000

Proposal Summary:

Children's mental health providers are struggling to meet the needs of our youth across the country. The US Department of Health and Human Services anticipates a shortage of children's mental health professionals across the country, with a deficit of nearly 10,000 by 2025. Our children need greater access to mental health services urgently. Barnstone Art for Kids has, for over 10 years, directly addressed the mental health needs of kids and teens who have experienced trauma through our art programs. Our programs represent a meaningful and effective complement to traditional outpatient mental health services, and are often a starting point for families seeking help for their child. This proposal, *Building Better Mental Health for Our Children*, further expands our services through community collaboration.

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

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

Mental health providers for children are struggling to meet the needs of youth across the country. This problem is predicted to continue and to some degree, worsen in the upcoming years. The US Department of Health and Human Services anticipates a shortage of children's mental health professionals across the country, with a deficit of nearly 10,000 by 2025. This is unsurprising given the recent reporting around the overall increases in the need for services. In Pennsylvania, we have seen a sharp increase in the reporting of clinical depression amongst children 3 to 17, an increase of over 25%. We have also been facing the lingering effects of trauma as a result of the pandemic. Our children need mental health services urgently!

Barnstone Art for Kids has, for over 10 years, directly addressed the mental health needs of kids and teens who have experienced trauma. Our array of trauma-informed programs represent a meaningful and effective complement to traditional outpatient mental health services, and are often a starting point for families seeking help for their child. These programs differ from traditional outpatient services in that they are completely free to the family, are provided in the community that the child resides in, and teach skills that will both address the impact of trauma while also developing the child's brain architecture through creative activities. The therapeutic elements to our programs are supported in psychological research, and are an effective intervention for mitigating the symptoms of trauma. Our facility-based signature programs (Power of Art and Emerging Voices) do this while introducing the child to a trained Mentor whose role is to support the child across a year long program. The use of art therapy and mentors in the treatment of childhood trauma are established, evidence supported interventions: Art therapy has long been held as effective for children as they are a population that benefits from strategies that do not rely on traditional "talk" therapies. Art therapy is linked to improved self-esteem and self-awareness, improved cognition and sensory-motor functioning, reduction of distress, improved social skill development, and emotional resilience. These programs, along with our community-based On the Go programs, harness these therapeutic elements and provide supportive, healing experiences for the children who participate. Our own outcomes tool, the Mentor Evaluation Tool, also supports the effectiveness of our work. This measure examines the child's progress along 5 areas of functioning. Our group results (from programs that have just completed this Spring) indicate that our kids are improving in their communications, social skills, and problem solving abilities. These are areas of functioning that are directly (and negatively) impacted by childhood trauma. We believe in

our programs, and hope to continue to expand our work in the community. Specifically, this proposal will support the continued growth of our On the Go offerings. As we have eased back into our post-COVID world, the call for partnerships and collaboration has never been greater, and we are working to answer these calls. Barnstone has been able to incorporate up to 5 collaborations simultaneously while also running our signature programs. These partnerships identify a specific need or population in the community, and, working with a collaborator, Barnstone is able to create a unique program that addresses the needs of the participants and incorporates many of the therapeutic elements discussed. These programs are responsive and effective, and the feedback that we have received (through survey and anecdotal reports) suggest that the experiences are highly-valued by parents and caregivers. We want to do more. This is why we need the support of the Chester County Community Foundation and our community, and is the motivation for our current request.

2. Funding request

Barnstone Art for Kids' proposal, *Building Better Mental Health for Our Children*, is seeking funding from the Chester County Community Foundation to maintain our current programming and staffing, while expanding our On the Go partnerships. These funds are urgently needed to support this work during the upcoming program cycles, while also covering a portion of our staffing costs, as well as supporting an ongoing effort to recruit and train our amazing volunteer Mentors.

Barnstone Art for Kids' programs resonate with the kids and families that we serve. This request will ensure that we are able to continue providing our signature programs (Emerging Voices and Power of Art), and enable us to expand our On the Go offerings to the community. As these community-based programs have grown in number, our expenses have also grown. Our focus remains on delivering high quality, trauma-informed art programs to children and families, and part of that is making sure that each On the Go program has the supplies and staff time needed for success. Since we first targeted these programs for growth in our 2021 Strategic Plan, spending has increased; approximately 20% per year increase for non-salary operations-related expenses. These programs will continue to demand more staff time and supplies than in previous years.

We will also be using a portion of the requested amount to offset the costs of staffing. This is our biggest expense despite being a staff of only 1.5 FTE's. That said, Barnstone's professional staff facilitate every session across the program year, so these costs are directly related to the provision of programs. In the upcoming year, we anticipate the continuation of our full complement of programs: 6 sections of Emerging Voices and Power of Art, a minimum of 5 On the Go programs, a full year of Creative Kismet (for adults), as well as multiple Awareness

(advocacy) presentations. All of these direct service, mental health programs require hours of preparation as well as actual program time and all are attended by our staff.

Finally, in the Summer of 2023, we began a recruitment effort to both attract new Mentors, and re-engaging with those from previous years to provide a “refresher” training. The Mentor Orientation sessions have historically provided an overview of Barnstone's work, the impact of childhood trauma, and the role of the Mentor. We have enhanced the orientation presentation to provide additional information and strategies for working with children who have experienced trauma, and are "digging deeper" into the specific interactions and language used by our Mentors in program. In doing so, we are creating an even more robust and meaningful dialogue between Mentor and child that will facilitate a deeper connection, and result in a more positive outcome for the child. We have had a great deal of success with Mentors who have worked with our kids over the course of multiple years, and believe that this is the result of Mentor-learning that has occurred over time. By "front loading" this information and their experiences, we hope to produce the most effective volunteer as soon as they enter their experience. While the cost of finding and recruiting Mentors may be nominal, the ongoing training and engagement requires some resources. Each year, we conduct a minimum of 3 Mentor Orientations, and 2 Appreciation events. The valuing and nurturing of our volunteer staff is a priority at Barnstone, and we need to spend in order to retain this group that we have invested so much time in.

We understand that in this highly competitive non-profit environment that targeting funding toward impactful programs is the priority. Barnstone Art for Kids has a track record of success, and we are determined to continue the work of helping children in our community heal from their traumatic experiences. In the upcoming year, we anticipate a significant increase in direct contact hours with participants as well as numbers served. At year's end, 2023 will prove to have the highest numbers served in organizational history. All of our services and programs remain completely free of charge, and we are asking for your urgent support to help us keep it that way. We are truly grateful for your support and consideration.