

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

Contact Information

Organization Name: Mighty Writers
 Address: 1901 S9th St, #622, Philadelphia, PA, 19148
 Phone: 267-239-0899
 Website: www.mightywriters.org
 Year Incorporated: 2009
 FEIN: 01-0920922

ED/CEO Name: Tim Whitaker
 ED/CEO E-mail: twhitaker@mightywriters.org
 Board Chair Name: Mustafa Rashed
 Board Chair Approval (check here):
 Primary Contact Name: Sukripa Shah
 Primary Contact E-mail: sshah@mightywriters.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: Mighty Writers' mission is to teach kids and youth ages 3-17 to think clearly and write with clarity to succeed in school, work and life.

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

Kennett Square areas, Oxford, West Grove and Toughkenamon in Chester County, Pennsylvania.
 Zip codes: 19311, 19348, 19390, 19374, 19363, 19380

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

Mighty Writers El Futuro Kennett serves 500 kids and youth in free after-school bilingual programs. We serve 10,000 families yearly through our Client Choice Food Pantry.

In the areas we serve,

- 100% of the students are Latin(x)
- 75% of the students are children of migrant mushroom farmworkers
- 85% of the students live below the poverty line
- 85% of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches in school.
- 30% of the students have been US residents for three years or less.
- 95% of the students speak Spanish as their first language in their homes.
- More than 50% of them are below grade-level proficiency in English Language skills.

Annual Budget \$ 5,826,300	65	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
82 % of budget for program expenses	12	# of Board Volunteers
8 % of budget for administrative expenses	350	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
10 % of budget for fundraising expenses	15,000	# of Volunteer Hours

100 % total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Longwood Foundation
 WW Smith Charitable Trust

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: \$7,500

Proposal Summary:

Mighty Writers respectfully requests \$7,500 in general operating to teach 500 kids and youth in our free after-school literacy programs and serve 10,000 low-income families through the client-choice Food Pantry.

The programs include After-school Academy, college and career prep, literary art and mindfulness workshops, one-to-one mentorship, summer camps and Mighty Toddlers. Throughout the school year, MW will also provide a range of family-based workshops and activities, such as Family Write Night, Family Cook Night, and Mindfulness Family Night to strengthen family relationships and community ties. Funding will be used immediately to mobilize full, and part-time staff members and workshop leaders to teach culturally responsive literacy and art programs, purchase program supplies, take students on field trips, and manage operational costs of running in-person programming in MW El Futuro Kennett.

The total budgeted cost of this project is \$1,147,678. We have raised over 50% of our revenue through support from foundations, charities, and individual donations.

With the help of the Chester County Community Foundation, MW will achieve the following goals by

1. Teach 500 kids and youth through our bilingual after-school, literary art, and mentorship programs in 2023, and reach up to 700 students by the end of 2024.
2. Serve 10,000 low-income Latino migrant and immigrant families via the food pantry, which provides fresh and shelf-stable culturally relevant food items to take home along with diapers and bilingual books.
3. Enroll 30-40 mothers-toddler pairs in the Mighty Toddler program in the first year and increase participation to 50-75 mothers next year.

4. Achieve 30-45 successful 1:1 student-mentor relationships.
5. Increase academic performance across the curriculum (reading, writing, and critical thinking)
6. Improve English proficiency in ESL students.
7. Increase creativity and motivation to write frequently through culturally responsive arts programs.
8. Provide inclusive spaces to explore imagination and practice self-expression
9. Increase commitment and attachment with schools for increased school attendance
10. Develop positive cultural identities, pride, ownership, and awareness.
11. Strengthen family relationships



**MIGHTY
WRITERS**

EL FUTURO KENNETT

**A PROPOSAL TO
CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

MIGHTY WRITERS | EIN: 01-010920922

**PROJECT TITLE: MIGHTY WRITERS AFTER-SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAMS
FOR BILINGUAL STUDENTS**

August 2023



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Who We Are

Mighty Writers teaches kids to think clearly and write with clarity so that they succeed in school, work and life. At our Mighty Writers centers, and through virtual programming and partnerships with schools and community organizations, we provide free bilingual literacy programs to youth ages 3-17. As a result, grades improve, self-esteem soars and futures come into view.

Through our core values of resilience, respect and optimism, our young people develop their superpower: the power of the pen.

Our approach is focused on the whole child. That's why we provide food and resources like school supplies, diapers and winter coats at many of our sites — all given away for free to anyone in the community with a need.

All of our bilingual literacy workshops incorporate social-emotional learning to teach kids to be emotionally resilient, cultivate their inner strength, and foster their overall sense of well-being. Ultimately, we want all our students to be advanced thinkers and clear writers — college graduates who continue to reflect our Mighty values of kindness and integrity.

We've been doing this work since our founding in 2009. We opened our first bilingual site, MW El Futuro, in the heart of a vibrant Mexican-American immigrant community in South Philadelphia. Our second bilingual site was MW El Futuro Kennett in Chester County. Now we have eight writing centers in Greater Philadelphia and New Jersey where we serve an average of 4,500 kids with the support of 50 staff, 350 volunteers and an operational budget of \$5.8 million. We have a robust social media presence and an engaged mailing list of more than 30,000 people.

Our success in helping kids and communities have access to opportunity has been recognized many times in the last 14 years. We've been featured in The New York Times and The New Yorker. We were chosen by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities as one of the country's top arts and humanities-based programs. We were honored by the Library of Congress as a Best Practice Honoree.

Mighty Writers in Chester County

MW El Futuro Kennett serves children of Latino immigrant families, primarily from Mexico, who lack English proficiency and live below the poverty line. 100% of the students in our literacy programs are from marginalized low-income communities. They are systemically locked out of academic opportunities, with less than 70% graduating high school and a literacy proficiency rate of 35%. Half of the boys in these communities are in the criminal justice system two years after dropping out of high school.

More about the kids we serve in Chester County:

- 75% of the students in our programs are children of migrant farmworkers.
- 30% have been U.S. residents for three years or less.
- 95% speak Spanish as their first language.
- More than 50% are below grade-level proficiency in English language skills.
- 85% rely on free or reduced school lunches.
- 90% grapple with assimilation stress, bullying, slippage of core identity and low self-esteem.

We approach bilingual education in Chester County from a strengths-based perspective. Rather than seeing students who are proficient in their native language but struggle with English as suffering from a deficit, we see them as starting with an advantage. As future bilinguals, they are primed for higher achievement. Longitudinal data has shown that dual-language Latino students are more engaged with school, have higher self-esteem, are cognitively more sophisticated, and have higher

high school graduation rates than their peers who are not dual-language learners. We work with community-based organizations such as People's Light and Casa Guanajuato to teach workshops that improve literacy skills while also promoting pride in Latino art, culture and heritage.

Our Request

MW requests \$7,500 to teach 500 youth in our core bilingual education program and serve 10,000 families through food, books and diaper distribution in 2024. Approximately 125 students will be recruited for spring, summer and fall sessions. Students in our programs come to us from local schools in Kennett Consolidated and Avon Grove school districts and are recruited through social media, an email list of 30,000 recipients, and outreach to community partners, businesses and schools. This core bilingual education program gets results (see p. 3), making life better for children in Chester County.

Core Bilingual Education Program

- **After-School Academy:** The Mighty Writers After-School Academy is our flagship high-quality out-of-school-time curriculum and runs Monday through Friday at our centers from 3-6 p.m. Students get homework help, work on long-term projects in narrative, informative or persuasive writing, and engage in Social and Emotional Learning activities to build self-awareness, compassion and resilience.
- **College & career prep:** A range of workshops help teens prepare for the future by offering skills training they'll need to move forward. College essay nights brings teens together with volunteers for one-on-one mentoring to create the perfect application. Paid summer internships and teen fellowships provide invaluable exposure to workplace expectations, accountability and skills.
- **Literary arts workshops:** These workshops, tailored to diverse age groups, offer arts-integrated activities that foster creativity and inspiration through music, visual arts, theater, dance, literature and more. Past workshops include: Hip-Hop Poets, Girl Power Rocks, Musically Mighty, and Give Me the Beat.
- **One-on-one mentorships:** Students are paired with community-based tutors to achieve academic and social-emotional goals. Students meet with their mentors, who are chosen for compatibility and expertise, for four hours per month. They work as a team on three goals, at least one of which is writing-related.
- **Mighty Toddlers:** Our evidence-based early childhood literacy curriculum is designed for the littlest of our Mighty Writers, who learn to familiarize themselves with words and writing through letter recognition, storytime, book creation and more. Parents and caregivers are involved in these groups and often form strong bonds.
- **SEL workshops:** Trauma-informed mindfulness workshops help kids and youth effectuate concepts like gratitude, compassion and respect through activities such as yoga, meditation, journaling and storytelling. Examples of past workshops include: Mindful Meetup for Kids, Mindful Boy Warriors, and Mighty Family Values.
- **Summer camp:** We provide fun and innovative six- to eight-week day camps for children of all ages to help reduce learning loss during summer months. Camps have a variety of activities, all of which have a writing component, that range from learning to surf in Atlantic City to field trips with family and friends to museum.

MW El Futuro Kennett Client Choice Food Pantry

The need for healthy and culturally relevant food in low-income households in Chester County surpasses the availability of resources. Kids from disadvantaged areas, such as Kennett Square, Avon Grove and Toughkenamon, are three times more likely to need healthy food and consistent meals. Food providers have doubled their costs, and several other organizations have increased their meal costs.

We serve 600-plus families weekly at our food pantry. The pantry is open Mon.-Thurs., and stocks fresh foodstuffs (milk, ground chicken and beef, eggs, fruits, vegetables, tortillas) and shelf-stable food items (tuna, pasta, rice, cooking oil, beans,

corn, peanut butter, etc.). We also distribute diapers, bilingual books and learning resources to pantry visitors, many of whom are the families of our students.

Our Track Record

After-School Academy participants' performance is measured using MY Access. MY Access is an application to score student writing proficiency using linguistic analysis and millions of student writing samples nationwide. All other workshops (literary arts, mindfulness, etc.) are measured using quarterly surveys of students and parents. After years of tracking our results, we can anticipate the following outcomes for the students in our El Futuro Kennett bilingual programs.

Literacy proficiency

- 65% of the students will reach grade level proficiency, up from 35% before they joined MW.
- Per site writing proficiency rate will be at 75%.
- 100% of high school students will graduate.
- 97% will enroll in college.

Writing and reading frequency

- 68% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, I read more frequently."
- 78% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, I write outside of school more frequently."

Bilingual education

- 90% of students will say, "Being bilingual is important and special."
- 90% of the students will say, "Mighty Writers supports my bilingual identity."

Social-Emotional Learning

- 81% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, my confidence and self-esteem have improved."
- 80% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, I am learning to recognize my emotions."
- 73% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, I am learning to focus better."
- 69% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, I can stay calm in difficult situations."
- 70% of students will state, "Because of the Mighty Writers program, I usually make positive decisions."

Teen education:

- 86% will state, "I have researched at least five careers that match my interests and skills."
- 87% will state, "I have researched colleges related to my interests and skills."
- 81% will state, "I have attended a college fair and/or job fair."

Food, diaper and book distribution:

- 97% will strongly agree with: "MW saves me time and money."
- 99% will strongly agree with: "MW helps me meet basic needs."
- 98% will strongly agree with: "I trust the staff and volunteers at Mighty Writers."