



REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER

The Chester County Community Foundation seeks grant applications from selected nonprofit charitable causes, to be considered for funding from the **Pay It Forward Fund**.

Focus of CCCF Pay It Forward Fund: To award 2 years of grant funding to a **paradigm shifting initiative** of selected Chester County-based nonprofit charitable causes, as recommended by a Community Foundation grant panel and approved by the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

Grant Award Amounts: Typically range from \$30,000 - \$50,000.
(Example: Split over two years \$30k awarded yr 1 + \$20k awarded yr 2 = \$50k).

Proposal Process:

- Grant applications, using the attached format, should be e-mailed by **May 15 at 11:59 pm** to grants@chescofcf.org
- The e-mail heading should read: Re: **Proposed Grant Requested from CCCF Pay It Forward Fund**
- Upon review of the initial proposal, a site visit may be conducted
- Grant Panel Review Committee will decide grant awards by early summer
- Grant award checks will be sent by late summer

Please note that all grant applications will be posted on the Community Foundation's website for funding consideration by additional Community Foundation Donor Advised Funds.

Questions? Please contact:
Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
28 West Market Street
West Chester, PA 19382
www.chescofcf.org
Steph@chescofcf.org
(610) 696-8211

PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER



I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

(One page only. This page will be shared with Grant Committee Members.)

Date: 4.17.24

Contact Information:

Organization Name: The Garage Community & Youth Center Contact Name: Kristin Proto
Address: 115 S. Union Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348 & 121 Pennsylvania Ave, Avondale, PA 19311 Contact Title: Executive Director
Phone: 610-444-6464 Contact E-mail: Kristin.proto@garageyouthcenter.org
Web Address: www.garageyouthcenter.org Fax: N/A
FEIN: 10-0007967 Year Incorporated: 2001

Has your nonprofit previously applied to the Community Foundation: Yes No

Field/s of Interest:

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

Organizational Information:

Geographic Area Served: Southern Chester County, primarily the Kennett Consolidated and Avon Grove school district areas.

Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served: In 2023, The Garage served 343 individual students and 149 community parents. Our target population is from economically depressed households with parents who work long hours in the mushroom industry and face numerous language and cultural challenges. Many Garage families speak little-to-no English, thus most of the resources, information, and opportunities are overlooked.

The Garage served a diverse group of 6th-12th grade students comprising 81% Latino, 1% African American, 5% Mixed race, 12% Caucasian, and 1% Asian. For 40% of our population, neither parent graduated high school and 86% of students are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch based on familial income as a result of living between 130-180% of the poverty level (Up to \$54,000 annual household income for a family of 4).

Mission Statement: The mission of The Garage Community & Youth Center (The Garage) is to empower youth to pursue their potential academically, relationally, and spiritually. Our desired impact is to: help youth make wise decisions about themselves, their core convictions, their relationships, their educational pursuits, and interactions with their communities. The Garage assists students to begin a cycle of hopefulness by acknowledging and taking steps to overcome life challenges, engage in programs, trusting The Garage as a second home, taking part in shaping activities, and enjoying productive experiences.

Organization Description: The Garage believes that all youth are valuable and are created with purpose, but unfortunately, we live in a society rife with inequality that suppresses the equality and value of youth as members of the community. Youth face incredible barriers that limit their potential and value that include, but are not limited to: racism; immigration status; gender; sexual orientation; inequitable education; unaffordable post-secondary education options; prejudiced judicial systems; low socioeconomic status; minimal access to affordable housing; limited public transportation; language barriers. These factors often have negative consequences on the mental, emotional, and physical health of youth. It is our understanding, through our work and experience in the field of youth development, that all youth face potential threats and obstacles that hinder them from finding value and purpose, in turn, incapacitating full access as a member of their community. While addressing the inequities of systems that directly affect local youth, The Garage's work is informed by an asset model that recognizes that our youth are not broken; instead it is the systems surrounding them which are fractured.

Annual Budget \$1,316,474

85 % of budget for program expenses

6% of budget for administrative expenses

9% of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

5 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

10 # of Board Volunteers

169 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

3,104 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

The Nelson Foundation

The Longwood Foundation

The United Way of Southern Chester County

Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested:

Year 1 \$25,000 + Yr 2 \$25,000 = Total \$50,000 (Maximum \$50,000 Total)

Summary Description of **Paradigm-Shifting** Grant Purpose:

The Garage believes that all youth have the capacity for great distinction and potential and, through guidance and support, should be equipped to define their own success and create thriving lives within their communities. Therefore, The Garage desires that all middle and high school youth, in Kennett Square and Avon Grove, feel empowered to pursue and reclaim their value and purpose in the world. Empowered youth make wise decisions, have hope for their future, and will be prepared to be successful, balanced, healthy, and active members of their community. The dynamic nature of The Garage's program provisions, development, and community relationships allow our organization the ability to face any challenges with an empowered and strategic response. Change is essential within a community organization, as the community changes, so should the services, programs, and opportunities provided.



PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER

II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

*Please provide the following information clearly and concisely.
Proposals of 1 or 2 pages are strongly encouraged.*

1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

In 2001, a local pastor and businessman saw the opportunity for a reclaimed car garage to serve a greater purpose than service vehicles. The Garage Community & Youth Center (The Garage) was born from his passion for serving the community and over two decades later, we continue to thrive in Kennett Square. This success launched the desire to open a second location to serve more youth in the surrounding communities. In 2011, The West Grove location opened its doors to local youth. In 2021, The Garage expanded to a larger location in the Borough of Avondale and has transitioned services from our West Grove location. Our programs focus on how to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles that our students face, while fostering healthy adult and peer relationships and building self-esteem and healthy habits. This space is the only social service in the borough of Avondale, further demonstrating the isolation in which many of our community members live. We focus on achieving the follow specific goals through our programmatic outputs:

- *Create an environment where teens feel safe and their basic needs are met*
- *Encourage students to stay in school and to continue their studies after graduation*
- *Promote social, and professional development*
- *Promote economic opportunities*

2. Paradigm Shifting Funding request:

A. Specific Chester County needs and issues to be addressed

It is within the interaction of negative social and behavioral influences, educational inequities, discriminatory residency status, and socio-economic issues in which The Garage's work exists. Garage youth are, more often than not, youth of color, immigrants, English language learners, youth experiencing learning differences, and living in poverty. However, The Garage is also aware that many barriers exist that transcend race, gender, and socio-economic status, and affect all youth. The Garage's programming is both broad and specific in order to sufficiently empower all youth in our community, regardless of background.

B. Paradigm-shifting impact

Collectively, our youth and advocacy services work together to address the racial and social inequities and disparities experienced by youth and families in Kennett Square and Avon Grove. Across all of our work, we are in the pursuit of more equitable communities where middle and high school youth are empowered to make wise decisions, have hope for their future, and are prepared to be successful, balanced, healthy, and active members of their community.

C. Overall strategies to implement the initiative

The Garage exists to provide academic, vocational, and social-emotional guidance, a safe and welcoming community, and advocacy on behalf of our youth and their families. We implement the following strategies through program service:

- Provide structured and resourced space and time for youth to complete necessary academic work
- Provide the adult resources to guide youth in their academic school work
- Provide youth with the opportunities to learn about a variety of future educational and occupational pathways
- Provide youth with access to professional employment opportunities
- Connect youth with adults who are invested in their development and building a healthy, safe, and strong relationship
- Coordinate age appropriate volunteer service opportunities that encourage social responsibility
- (Community development, Connecting with community members, provide a sense of purpose, increase social awareness, encourage citizenship)

- Provide youth with the opportunity to explore their faith and spiritual beliefs to better understand their value and the place they hold in the world
- Provide workshops which teach self-care, self-awareness, and strategies for good mental and physical health
- Provide workshops which encourage self-discovery (Creativity, trying new things, life skills, critical thinking skills, new friendships, build self-esteem and confidence)
- Educate the existing network of The Garage’s dominant culture volunteers, funders, and community members about the systemic inequities that affect our youth and families.
- Share needs and potential policy and system changes that would benefit our youth.
- Participate in systems change groups and organizational efforts. Support and amplify the efforts of policy changes that benefit our youth and families.

D. Why it is important to fund this now

The Garage’s services, programs, and supports are more essential than ever to the community that we serve. Research on the importance of “community-based education spaces” has been increasing and it has been demonstrated that these spaces are of particular importance to minority and marginalized communities. According to educational research performed by Baldrige, Beck, et.al, “Community-based spaces provide the structured strategic space for youth and adults to reimagine and co-create alternatives to suggest how communities should address social issues like education violence and health care...youth are able to heal, create, and resist within community-based spaces.”¹ To endanger and disregard community-based spaces, including The Garage, is to endanger and disregard the upward trajectory of community youth. An investment in The Garage and the space provided, not just physically but emotionally and relationally, is paramount to investing in youth and their narrative of success.

2. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit’s mission

The Garage utilizes resources of talented staff, volunteers, and an active community to master our craft in each unique area of our programming. Our current population is students 6-12th grade, ages 11-18. Out of School Time programming operates Monday- Thursday 3 PM – 6 PM during the school year and will pivot to Monday through Thursday from 11 AM – 4 PM during summer months Our programs are designed to ensure that a student is satiated with quality experiences and support at all stages of their time with us.

2023-24 School Year Projected Outcomes:

- 375 individual middle and high school students attend The Garage during the 2023-24 school year, 175 of which will be core participants (participating 30 days or more in Garage programs)
- At least 85% of students who actively participate in Garage programs report that the Garage helps them avoid skipping or dropping out of school.
- At least 95% of Garage students avoid risky behavior including alcohol, drugs, and gang activity for a minimum of four consecutive weeks and will understand the consequences of substance use, risk-taking, and the influences of the media
- Core students actively participating in Garage programs will increase their GPAs by 25% after participating in Garage programs for an entire school year
- 100% of core Garage senior students who actively participate in programs provided will graduate from high school
- At least 70% of MAPS students express an interest in post-secondary education and feel supported to explore those avenues
- At least 50% of seniors who actively participated in MAPS will enroll in post-secondary education or training
- Core students report feelings of confidence in a new passion or interest or confidence to explore a potential passion or interest
- Students gain and are able to execute skills to cope with a wide range of emotional issues including anxiety, stress, trauma, and other mental health issues.

¹ Baldrige, B. J., Beck, N., Medina, J. C., & Reeves, M. A. (2017). Toward a New Understanding of Community-Based Education: The Role of Community-Based Educational Spaces in Disrupting Inequality for Minoritized Youth. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 381-402. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16688622>

- Students feel a greater sense of hope, value, and purpose while actively participating in Garage programming.



3. How impact and results will be demonstrated

The Garage administers pre and post-program surveys to track student growth over the program duration. In addition, surveys are sent to parents at the completion of the school year to gain insights from inside the home. Information collected is used to measure the success of our program and to continuously refine and improve our services. The Garage uses an updated database system, Apricot. The database streamlines our data to improve accuracy, improve how data is used to inform programming decisions and improve the efficiency and capacity of staff. Through participation in The PEW Charitable Trust ECBI, The Garage is implementing evaluation improvements based on the lessons learned during the initiative by looking at multi-year data and highlighting two years of progress in high-frequency students collected through pre and post-program surveys.

III. ATTACHMENTS

Please attach the following 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 and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. Itemized project budget (if applying for project-specific grant)

Note: The Philanthropy Network's Grant Application may be submitted with CCCF Summary Sheet.

Please e-mail completed applications by May 15 midnight with e-mail heading **Re: Proposed Grant Requested from CCCF Pay It Forward Fund** to grants@chescofc.org

Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer
Chester County Community Foundation
28 West Market Street
West Chester, PA 19382
www.chescocf.org
(610) 696-8211

THANK YOU!

PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER

Focus

To award 2 years of grant funding to a **paradigm shifting initiative** of selected Chester County-based nonprofit charitable causes, as recommended by a Community Foundation grant panel and approved by the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

About Ronn Fletcher

Growing up in Richmond, Virginia, mechanical engineer Ronn Fletcher earned his B.S. from Virginia Tech and his M.S. from Tennessee Tech. Recruited by the DuPont Company, for over 32 years Ronn worked at a myriad of sites. For the last decade of his career, Ronn served as Research Operations Manager at DuPont's Experimental Station in Wilmington, retiring to Ovations at West Grove in 2001.

Always on the move, Ronn couldn't 'settle down' into retirement. Seeking variety and adventure, he travelled the world. First on a west-to-east round-the-world excursion; and soon after, east-to-west. The Orient Express, Great Wall of China, Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, moai statues of Easter Island, Great Barrier Reef, Taj Mahal, Jaipur home of the maharajas, Serengeti Plain safari, Egyptian pyramids, the medina of Marrakech...always exploring.

On a quest in his own neighborhood, Ronn discovered something that captured his imagination: nonprofit charities. Ronn quickly jumped in and became passionately involved in Chester County charitable causes focusing on health care, homelessness, disadvantaged children with vision issues, and special needs youth.

Always pushing boundaries and pressing for improvement, Ronn focused his considerable energies on **charitable causes which have the courage to re-engineer themselves, remain flexible, and change the paradigm.** Ronn believed in **empowering nonprofits to shift their programming to best meet the moment and support their constituents.** Sometimes this worked; and sometimes it didn't. But Ronn persisted.

Ronn was grateful to be able to serve his community and make a positive impact. With his passing, Ronn generously left the remainder of his seven-figure estate to his legacy funds at the Chester County Community Foundation. We are honored to carry forward Ronn's legacy wishes, now and forever.