

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.chescofcf.org)  
[Steph@chescofcf.org](mailto: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: 5-12-2024

#### Contact Information:

Organization Name: Mighty Writers  
Address: 12 E Church Lane, Philadelphia, PA, 19144  
Phone: 267-239-0899  
sshah@mightywriters.or  
Web Address: www.mightywriters.org  
FEIN:01-0920922

Contact Name: Sukripa Shah  
Contact Title: Grants manager  
Contact E-mail:  
Fax:  
Year Incorporated:2009

**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:** Mighty Writers' programs are designed to be inclusive, serving marginalized areas in Philadelphia, Chester County, and New Jersey cities, including Camden and Atlantic City. Our recent expansion to El Paso, Texas, has allowed us to extend this inclusivity to additional migrant kids and youth. We provide free after-school writing programs to historically underserved kids and teens, and distribute free food, diapers, and books to their families and neighbors. This inclusive approach not only lifts their communities but also opens doors to achievement, making a tangible difference in their lives. Our locations lies in areas marked by high poverty, crime and disinvestment. MW Germantown, 12 E. Church Lane, Phila., PA 19144

- MW West, 34th & Fairmount, Phila., PA 19104 (PHA site)
- MW El Futuro, 1025 S. Ninth St., Phila., PA 19147 (bilingual site)
- MW North, 2300 Master St., Phila., PA 19121 (PHA site)
- MW El Futuro Kennett, 121 Willow St., Toughkenamon, PA 19374 (bilingual site)
- MW Camden, 1801 Broadway, Camden, NJ 08104
- MW Ablett Village, 307 Ablett Village, Camden, NJ 08105
- MW Atlantic City, 15 N. California Ave., Atlantic City, NJ 08401
- MW Newark, 59 Lincoln Park, Newark, NJ 07102

**Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:** Mighty Writers served 5,000 kids and youth ages 7-17 across nine locations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and El Paso, Texas. More than 90% of Mighty Writers' students are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), living in areas marked by poverty, crime and inequity. According to our 2023 demographic survey, 49% of our students identify as Black, 39% as Latino, 3% as Asian, 3% as White and 3% as other (3% selected "prefer not to answer"). Many of our students attend underfunded schools. They have reading and writing



challenges, putting them at a disadvantage. Eighty percent of our students rely on free or reduced-price lunches in schools. Approximately 53% of the students in our literacy programs are female.

**Mission Statement:** Mighty Writers teaches kids of all ages to think clearly and write with clarity so they succeed in school and learn the transformative power of self-expression

**Organization Description:** Mighty Writers (MW) provides free, community-based after-school writing and literacy programs to kids of all ages using a multidisciplinary approach that addresses the opportunity gaps in marginalized communities. We have nine writing centers across Greater Philadelphia and New Jersey where all our programs, from literacy workshops to food distribution, are free. We teach roughly 5,000 kids per year in our core programs: after-school academy, one-on-one mentorships, mindfulness workshops, college and career prep and teen fellowships. Two of our centers are fully bilingual and cater to Spanish-speaking migrant children who are taught to see bilingualism as a strength. Our nine locations include,

- MW Germantown, 12 E. Church Lane, Phila., PA 19144
- MW West, 34th & Fairmount, Phila., PA 19104 (PHA site)
- MW El Futuro, 1025 S. Ninth St., Phila., PA 19147 (bilingual site)
- MW North, 2300 Master St., Phila., PA 19121 (PHA site)
- MW El Futuro Kennett, 121 Willow St., Toughkenamon, PA 19374 (bilingual site)
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- MW Newark, 59 Lincoln Park, Newark, NJ 07102

The majority of our students are underserved and thus systemically locked out of academic opportunity, with less than 70% graduating high school and a literacy proficiency rate of 35%. They come from neighborhoods that grapple with food insecurity, community stress and insufficient healthcare, which is why we have a robust food and basic needs distribution program that serves 70,000 families each year. After all, kids can't think and write when they're hungry, or when they're worried about their parents' inability to afford essential resources. We also host free vaccine and primary care clinics.

Annual Budget \$ <u>5,744,100</u>	<u>42</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>85</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>12</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>10</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>549</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>15</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>5490</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<i>100 % total</i>	

**Top 3-5 funding sources:**

- Hamilton family Foundation
- Longwoods Graden Foundation
- William Penn Foundation
- Loen Lowenstein family Foundation
- W.W Smith Charitable Trust

**Proposal Information:**

Grant Amount Requested: \$50,000

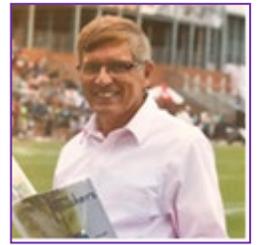




Year 1 \$ 25,000 + Yr 2 \$ 25,000 = Total \$ 50,000 (Maximum \$50,000 Total)

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

Mighty Muchachos will provide underserved and underrepresented unaccompanied Latino youth with safe and inclusive spaces to overcome barriers and lead dignified lives in the US through meaningful career and educational opportunities. We understand that many of these youth face several challenges upon arrival in the US. Many lack documentation, creating hurdles in finding stable housing and accessing appropriate educational services and health care. At Mighty Writers, we recognize the gravity of the migrant issues in many communities we serve. By investing in the youth, we are paving pathways to leverage unique roles nonprofits like ours can play to advocate for these youth using holistic ways and coordinated support to create a future with limitless opportunities.



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### 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**
2. **Paradigm Shifting Funding request:**
  - A. **Specific Chester County needs and issues to be addressed**
  - B. **Paradigm-shifting impact**
  - C. **Overall strategies to implement the initiative**
  - D. **Why it is important to fund this now**
3. **Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit's mission**
4. **How impact and results will be demonstrated**

### III. ATTACHMENTS

*Please attach the following support information:*

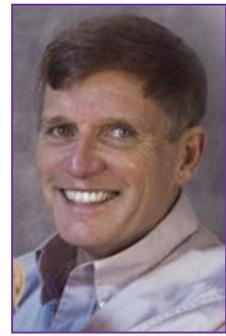
1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report and financial statement, audited if available
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year and current fiscal year to date
5. Itemized 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@chescocf.org](mailto:grants@chescocf.org)

Stephenie Stevens, Grants Director & Outreach Officer  
Chester County Community Foundation  
28 West Market Street  
West Chester, PA 19382  
[www.chescocf.org](http://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 Ovation 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.

**Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness:** Mighty Writers (MW) teaches kids of all ages to think clearly and write with clarity through free educational programs that improve academic performance, address racial and cultural inequities and build social-emotional skills. We teach roughly 5,000 kids per year in our core programs: after-school academy, one-on-one mentorships, mindfulness workshops, college and career prep and teen fellowships. Two of our centers are fully bilingual and cater to Spanish-speaking migrant children who are taught to see bilingualism as a strength.

MW was founded in 2009 and opened its first writing studio in South Philadelphia. MW West launched in 2013 in West Philly. In 2016, we expanded to North Philadelphia. That same year, we opened our first bilingual site, MW El Futuro, in the heart of a vibrant Mexican-American immigrant community. In 2019, partnerships with Parks & Recreation and the Philadelphia Housing Authority helped us open two more locations, expanding our programs to Chester County and Camden, New Jersey. Between 2020 and 2022, we opened two new sites in Atlantic City and Newark, New Jersey. In 2023, we expanded to El Paso, Texas, with efforts to open a new site by spring 2025.

While some organizations focus on specific age groups (teens or middle schoolers) or one specific program, MW focuses on students at every grade level to increase literacy rates for long-term success. In the last 15 years, MW has taught thousands of students the joy of literary expression, providing 200,000-plus hours of direct instruction and resulting in expanded opportunities and exposure to arts and culture.

**Paradigm Shifting Funding request:** MW requests \$25,000 for two years (totaling \$50,000) to support 120 unaccompanied Latino migrant youth ages 13 and above through our bilingual teen programming called the Mighty Muchachos. Programs include weekly ESL, GED and career readiness workshops, monthly community-based events and coordinated services for immigrant status, job placements and youth mentorship. All programs will be offered in person at our writing center (121 Willow St., Toughkenamon, PA). All the listed programs will be provided in Spanish and English.

- **ESL and GED workshops:** Weekly 60-minute workshops for 15-20 unaccompanied youth for 8-10 weeks, offered four times a year. Based on individual assessment and learning needs, youth learn basic English writing and speaking skills to work on educational goals. A group of teen chorots meet monthly to share their learning experiences and learn social skills to acclimate to a new culture while embracing their cultural heritage and identity. Teens also go on field trips to various to explore the art and history of the US.
- **Community-based cultural programming:** We will host events for MW students and unaccompanied youth to celebrate occasions such as Cinco De Mayo, Día de los Muertos, Posados and more to commemorate Mexican culture and heritage.
- **SEL/mindfulness workshops:** Quarterly 60-minute workshops to process trauma and grief resulting from fear of deportation and homelessness. Workshops include meditation, yoga and mindfulness activities.
- **Work readiness workshops:** Monthly workshops for 20-25 youth to gain financial and digital literacy skills to navigate job opportunities and apply for them.

- **Coordinated care:** MW will also partner with other community-based partners to connect unaccompanied youth to various resources to help them navigate their immigration status, housing stability, and healthcare access.

**Program need:** Nearly hundreds of migrant kids and youth cross the border monthly and come to Pennsylvania in search of better opportunities. MW Kennett El Futuro is our bilingual site at 121 Willow St., Toughkenamon, PA 19390. Most families of the kids and youth we serve are migrant farmworkers, subsisting on an average annual per-person household income of \$27,380 or less. The income disparity in Latino immigrant communities is substantial, leading to differential outcomes in education, income and opportunity. The migrant kids and families we serve at MW Kennett El Futuro are primarily from Mexico, lack English proficiency and live below the poverty line. 100% of the youth 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.

Mighty Muchachos is a specialized bilingual program for unaccompanied teens ages 13-17 in Chester County, PA. These teens lack documentation to qualify for government-funded programs and benefits. They come to us with the bare minimum. They lack essential and financial resources and barely speak English. Poor socioeconomic conditions, along with acculturation stress and language barriers, pose several physical and mental health challenges for these youth. Studies also show a direct correlation between loss of cultural identity and a high academic failure rate in Latino immigrant youth. Many of the students we serve in Chester County undergo acculturation of learning and adapting to a new culture. Navigating a new life in a foreign country for anyone is daunting, but specifically hard for Latino migrant youth who have escaped their own countries and come to the US in search of better opportunities.

**Paradigm-shifting impact:** Mighty Muchachos will provide underserved and underrepresented unaccompanied Latino youth with safe and inclusive spaces to overcome barriers and lead dignified lives in the US through meaningful career and educational opportunities. We understand that many of these youth face several challenges upon arrival in the US. Many lack documentation, creating hurdles in finding stable housing and accessing appropriate educational services and health care. At Mighty Writers, we recognize the gravity of the migrant issues in many communities we serve. By investing in the youth, we are paving pathways to leverage unique roles nonprofits like ours can play to advocate for these youth using holistic ways and coordinated support to create a future with limitless opportunities.

**Overall strategies to implement the initiative:** MW will mobilize the FTE literacy director and managers to implement the year-long Mighty Muchachos curriculum with the funds. Literacy directors and managers are lead instructors who teach the robust lineup of bilingual teen writing programs, engage and promote leadership among volunteers, and ensure program recruitment and retention of youth. They will facilitate field trips and workshop activities and support program volunteers with timely communication with stakeholders and community partners. We will also hire specialized contracted

educators to lead youth development workshops to help these youth overcome trauma and grief and achieve GED certification and career-ready skills to become financially independent.

**Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and relevance to the nonprofit's mission:** Mighty Writers' vision for the next five years is to reduce poverty in the short term and enhance physical and socio-emotional health in the long run. By emphasizing the importance of critical thinking, Mighty Writers prepares kids for all kinds of challenges they'll face in the future, whether academic, interpersonal or professional. By improving English literacy proficiency for non-native speakers and opening doors to educational and career opportunities, we provide youth, especially marginalized, unaccompanied youth with pathways for achievement, community engagement and, ultimately, socioeconomic advancement. Being a good writer and clear thinker sets youth up for success, and learning these skills in the community fosters connection, trust and empathy.

**Timeline:** During the two-year funding period, MW will offer the following programs within the Mighty Muchachos curriculum:

- **Year 1 (fall 2024 to fall 2025):** Quarterly ESL and GED workshops for 8-10 weeks. Monthly community-based cultural programs include project-based activities for youth to learn about Mexican folk dance, theater and music. Examples: The significance of the Matachines Dance, The history of the Escaramuza Charra, and more. Up to 20 SEL/mindfulness workshops led by certified bilingual trauma-informed instructors. Literacy directors will mentor youth to help them connect with community partners for coordinated care with immigration, job placement and housing. 1-2 field trips.
- **Year 2 (spring 2026 to fall 2026):** Quarterly ESL, financial literacy and GED workshops for 10-12 weeks. Monthly community-based cultural programs include project-based activities for youth to learn about Mexican folk dance, theater and music. Career fairs and networking events for youth participants in Summer 2026. Up to 30 SEL/mindfulness workshops led by certified bilingual trauma-informed instructors. Literacy directors will mentor youth to help them connect with community partners for coordinated care with immigration, job placement and housing. 2-3 field trips.

**Anticipated outcomes:** We will use program surveys to calculate metrics to measure the program performance of the youth participants. Surveys are designed by MW's operations director and distributed quarterly to collect data and feedback. MW's operations director will evaluate the data and convert it to measurable metrics to assess teen-centric outcomes for academic, social and emotional learning, career readiness and bilingual identity. Increase academic performance across the curriculum (reading, writing)

- Empower 120 unaccompanied Latino teens in Chester County through culturally responsive literacy programs.
- Improve English proficiency in unaccompanied teens.
- Increase creativity and motivation to write frequently.
- Provide inclusive spaces to explore imagination and practice self-expression.

- Develop positive cultural identities, cultural pride, ownership and cultural awareness.
- Strengthen community relationships through coordinated support and networking.
- Reduce factors associated with stress and trauma.

**How impact and results will be demonstrated:** Mighty Writers produces an annual and end-of-school-year report summarizing results from the fiscal and school years to measure the impact of all programs. In these reports, we will dedicate a section to the Chester County Community Foundation's Pay it Forward grant to showcase the impact of the funds on the unaccompanied Latino youth in Chester County. These reports will be made available through Mighty Writers' communications and website. Additionally, we will use our email list of 30,000 recipients to share program outcomes, annual reports and newsletters. MW's communications and marketing directors will ensure programming information and outcomes, including highlighting Mighty Muchachos workshops, youth achievements and community partners' support across all social media platforms.



*Caption: Mighty Muchachos teen cohort vistig Washing D.C in Fall 2023.*