University of Central Florida

Collaborative Grant Proposal

Aim High Grant

Sandra Montenegro (yellow font)

Abigail Turner (blue font)

Cameron Wachtel (green font)

Angelika Robertson (pink font)

Writing with Communities and Nonprofits ENC 4354

Melissa Pompos Mansfield

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Melissa Pompos Mansfield

ENC 4654

3/22/20

Collaborative Grant Proposal: Aim High Grant

Aim High Committee, thank you for this opportunity to share about Urban Think Foundation Page 15 programming. Page 15 is the place where middle schoolers fall in love with literacy, forming the academic, social, and emotional foundation to succeed in middle school and high school. We serve 8th graders to advance outside the classroom through literacy. Currently, our success indicators reflect improvements in the quality and quantity of writing, writing satisfaction, public speaking presentations, social, and emotional skills.

We help middle school youth in the Paramore neighborhood of Orlando, Florida. The Parramore population makes less than $25K annually (three times below Orlando median), only 43% of the population completed high school, and only 12% attain a bachelor's degree ("Parramore Orlando, FL Overview, p. 2"). Aim High grant would boost our ability to help these students in their transition to high school with the funds for personnel/program expansion and enhancement of direct service activities. We recognize the critical role of middle school in the long-term academic journey. Our objective is to continue to make an even more significant impact in Parramore schools and communities towards a brighter future through the successful transition to high school, which will set students to be better prepared for college and beyond.

We have thrived on making the following document as clear as possible; however, if you have any questions in regard to the information, we are presenting. Do not hesitate to contact us. We will be more than happy to connect.

Eligibility Checklist

* 1. Is the organization applying for this competitive grant program a 501(c)(3) organization? X Yes

1. Organization Information

A.1. Organization Name: Urban Think Foundation

* + 1. Program name: Page 15
    2. Organization website: <https://page15.org/>
    3. Organization Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Page15Orlando/>
    4. Organization Twitter handle: <https://twitter.com/page15?lang=en>
    5. Address: 363 N Parramore Ave, Orlando, FL, 32801

B. Program approach

B.1. History and Mission (150 words)

The Urban Think Foundation’s Mission is to enrich Central Florida’s cultural landscape by developing and growing educational and creative literary art programs. Founded in 2008, our foundation is the legacy of the Urban Think! Bookstore, which served admirably as downtown Orlando’s local and independent bookstore from 2001 to 2010. Today, the Urban Think Foundation serves as an umbrella organization to Page 15 and Burrow Press. Between the two programs, Orlandoans of all ages have the opportunity to experience quality literary programming in their city.

B.2 Description of the program

B.2.1. What are the program’s mission and goals?

Pg. 15’s mission is to playfully and powerfully engage youth in sharing their unique creative voice while reinforcing and advancing critical reading and writing skills. We are dedicated to enhancing communication skills, encouraging personal creativity, and inspiring a lifelong passion for the language arts.

B.2.2. What was the first year that your organization offered out-of-school time programming?

Page 15 was founded in 2008.

B.2.3. What was the first year that your program began serving middle school students in out-of-school time programming?

We have served middle schoolers since the establishment of our program in 2008.

B.3. State the main purpose (50 words or less) of this funding request. What would the funds enable the program to accomplish?

The funds would provide direct services for introducing middle schoolers to high school concepts by interactions with high schoolers in a mentorship program, and technological exposure to ease their transition to 9th grade. We worry that our students feel unprepared so we provide them with as many opportunities as possible.

B.5. Please briefly describe (250 words or less) a typical day for a student in the program. In your description, please consider incorporating answers to the following questions:

Our students have unique talents and unique lives. For example, Madeline, a 12-year-old, has academic responsibilities and the personal responsibility to care for her younger sister with special needs. Every day, after school, she has the chance to express herself through poetry. Page 15 is her safe space to leave her stressful life behind and find freedom through literacy. In Parramore not many opportunities for after school are available. We know our students live in a community where the median income is only $18,001 and the most common crime committed is assault, with a score of 12.39, so there are feelings of uncertainty and unsafety, but our program has open arms for the student’s seeking a comfortable place to be creative (“Parramore Orlando, FL Overview”). After school, the students set down their bags, finish their homework, then dive into the literacy they are passionate about. We believe that successful students need consistency and freedom so our writing coaches are always there to help, but not judge. Each student is given a journal where they are free to write whatever they like and perform their work on our stage. Madeline, confidently performs her poetry knowing she is in a supportive environment.

B.5.1 Additional activities and services offered during the year. This can include, but is not limited to, other academic enrichment, field trips, parent engagement and partnerships (such as linkages to the school day).

Our in-school program partners with more than 75 public schools which includes two on-line newspapers for Howard Middle School and Central Florida Leadership Academy. Students also enjoy immersive trips to the Orlando Museum of Art to enrich the quality of their work by experiencing cultural art *(Page.15, Additional Programs).*

B.5.2. What do students say about being in the program? What parts of the programming are popular or well-received by youth?

Our program opens a door that leads to self-discovery. Students are given an open space to write, free from judgement. They no longer “ felt closed and so far away from finding myself” as Raymond said. He was able to explore his love of comics through writing. *(pg. 15 student, PG.15)* Over 95% of students say “ Pg.15 has improved my confidence in reading and writing.”(Pg.15, annual report).

B.5.3. *What do parents of youth say about having their children in the program?*

Each year the parents are given a survey that says they are grateful for the program, but we also have testimonies posted on our social media. For example there is an interview with a parent who said “Cady never enjoyed reading for the most part, or writing...she came home the first day and said ‘my head is going to explode with ideas!’ and actually asked me if she could be a writer when she grows up. She Was like an entirely different person!. (Young Writers Parent, Youtube)” Another parent commented that she was “so excited to have registered Ethyan for his second year!”(Charlene Wilbur,Facebook).

B.7. Please provide numerical responses about the program’s hours of operation during the school year. If this does not apply to your program, please answer N/A.

B.7.1. The number of **weeks** the program is open during the school year: Approx 42 weeks

B.7.2. The number of **days per week** the program is open during the school year: 3 days a week

B.7.3. The number of **hours per day** the program is open during the school year: 1 hr/30min

B.8. Please provide numerical responses about the program’s hours of operation during the summer. If this does not apply to your program, please answer N/A.

B.8.1 The number of **weeks** the program is open during the summer: 7 weeks

B.8.2. The number of **days per week** the program is open during the summer: 5 days/week

B.8.3. The number of **hours per day** the program is open during the summer: 4hr/30min

C. Community and Student Need

C1. How would you characterize the community served by the program?

**X** Urban

C2. Please briefly describe (200 words or less) the community served by the program and the role that the program plays in meeting community needs. Include any relevant statistics on community at-risk factors and need such as:

x *Student demographics, including income and education levels of students, families and the community.*

x *Estimates of students performing below grade level, graduation rates, juvenile crime rates, and attendance and truancy rates.*

x *Services, or the lack of available services to students and families in the area.*

The community that Urban Think Foundation and Page 15 serve is the Parramore community in downtown Orlando. Within the Parramore community, 17% have no high school experience, 20% have some high school experience, and 31% stopped their education after graduating high school. In addition to low rates of educational attainment, the median income of the residents in Parramore is only $18,001 (“Parramore Orlando, FL Overview”).

The Parramore community faces crime challenges as well. The most common crime committed in this area is assault, with a score of 12.39. If comparing this to the national average of 1.0, this makes the chances of being assaulted over twelve times more likely. Within each category of crime in this community, they all rise above the national average (“Parramore Orlando, FL Overview, p. 2”).

Page 15 is rare due to the literacy aspects of the overall program. This allows the kids to be a part of a loving community and expand their creativity. By reaching out to youth, it is our goal to improve the community education and income, stopping racial and ethnic disparities and patterns of dropouts and violence, as well as increasing students’ appreciation for writing and reading, potentially leading to future success.

C3. What percentage of the program’s students...

C.3.1. Qualify for the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program:

According to OCPS Food & Nutrition Services, if your child attends one of the schools listed within their website and document, they qualify for breakfast and lunch at no charge--some schools even supply free dinner. The reasoning behind this is that each of these schools participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). If the school does not participate with CEP, they are still able to apply for meal benefits at <https://www.myschoolapps.com/> (OCPS Food & Nutrition Services, p. 2).

C.3.2. Are limited English language proficient:

Our main focus is not on students who are not English language proficient, as that is a focus of OCPS, rather our focus is with students not understanding how to apply their knowledge and creativity in both educational and non-educational settings. At Page 15, 95% of students say how both their confidence and enjoyment of reading/writing improved. While 76% of students had a noticeable change of increased quality of written and/or reading words (*Page 15,* “Our Success”*)*.

[D. Project description and expected outcomes](https://docs.google.com/document/d/19QapAbFljBeZTmtr5RjjLXmx5U7qtDFP2Aab2YVhFX0/edit)

D2. If there is any additional information (200 words or less) that you would like to share relating to the activities, goals, and outcomes of the project outlined in the Goals and Outcomes Chart you completed in question D1, please provide it here.

The goals and expected outcome from the funding of the Aim High Grant is focused on children making the transition from middle school to high school, specifically to improve their language arts skills to further prepare them for upper-level English courses. Page 15, grows the love for literacy in middle schoolers, with full engaged writers the grammar revision process becomes meaningful for each student setting them up for success.

Having new forms of technology will make the program more unique, accessible, and more adapted to the times. As writing and language move towards a more digital mode, it is important that students get experience with these technologies before they enter high school.

The mentoring program is another element we want to add to Pg. 15, the mentors will be made up of highschool volunteers from Orange County Public Schools. We hope that middle school students having a personal connection with a highschooler will not only help them transition when it comes to highschool writing, but it will help them adjust to high school in general as they can ask the mentors any questions or concerns they have.

E. Program Evaluation, Quality Assurance, and Data Collection

E1. Which of the following data does your program collect?

Page 15 collects data on program attendance, behavior in the program, data relating to social and emotional learning (SEL) skills, and youth/family experiences and satisfaction.

E2. Please provide details (in 250 words or less) on the data collected by the program, as referenced in the previous question.

During 2018, Over 500 students participated in our programming. Last year for the Young Writers' Society, 29 students came to us after school voluntarily to write for an hour. Our staff counts the number of words the student-produced daily. The quality of words written is rated on a scale that ranges from deficient, developing, to proficient. Last year, 95% of students improved their confidence in literacy, 76% increased the quality of their words.

We collect qualitative data in the form of anecdotal information through the student’s survey. For example, Madeline, 12-year-old, managed to balance her academic responsibilities and personal responsibilities of caring for her sister with special needs. Madeline wrote that Page 15 became her space to shape her identity and restore emotionally from her very adult responsibilities.

In our program, students fall in love with literacy without the pressure of being graded. This freedom allows us to, later, focus on grammar with a fully engaged student. Even though we do not collect school measures, our efforts correlate with the improvements of (ELA) Florida Assessment (F.A.) scores in Parramore. Since we started working in the K-8 ACE School, the students have scored higher on ELA. From 16 in 2017-2018 to 26 in 2018-2019 ("School Report Cards"). ACE was among the only two schools in the county to improve ELA scores. F.A. also reminds us that there's still much to contribute to the children in Parramore. ACE scores are still much lower (26) compared to the district median (52).

G. Program Administration, Capacity, And Sustainability

G1. Please provide a detailed explanation (200 words or less) regarding the program’s capacity to manage and administer this competitive grant, as well as sustain the program once the grant ends. In your description, please consider the following:

x *What is the program’s experience managing a grant of this size?*

x *What key staff members will help to manage this grant and what expertise do they bring to managing the grant?*

x *How will the program ensure that staff is provided the necessary supports to successfully work toward the goals and outcomes outlined in the project description?*

Jill Goddard, the Development and Operations Director, manages our umbrella organization, Urban Think Foundation, as a whole and has appointed others to specifically run Page 15 and its team. Our other main three directors of UTF are Julia Young, Paul Driscoll, and Ryan Rivas--whom have all had lots of experience and time spent within this organization. For example, Julia Young co-founded UTF and Page 15 and still remains in charge to this day. While Paul Driscoll, the man who “helped establish and direct the nationally recognized Student Writing Center” at Lake Highland Preparatory School in Orlando, specifically runs Page 15 and all its programs (Page 15, “Our Staff”). Not to mention, UTF has been in existence since 2008, making us very fit to qualify for a grant of this size (*Page 15,* “Our Staff”).

The funds from this grant, ultimately helping the children, would be helping the staff mentioned by being able to expand the program. The largest group of kids that participate in Page 15’s Young Writers Summer Camp are middle schoolers. With this being said, it is one of the only programs Page 15 provides in which the kids have to bring compensation. With this grant, we could guarantee that the kids who are not able to pay are still able to participate.

H. Verification

H4. Please describe (in 100 words or less) your vetting process (criminal background and reference checks) to ensure that staff and volunteers that work with children are cleared to work with children.

Every volunteer has to fill out a “Volunteer Registration Form” which has an “Initial Background Check” section. This section provides us with answers to questions like “Have you ever been convicted of a felony?”. The other question asks about their possible experience at drug programs or pretrial intervention programs, etc. The form also asks for the volunteer’s social security number to verify and run the background check. This same process occurs with UTF employees.

H5. Discrimination Verification

By submitting this application, you warrant that your organization does not discriminate on the basis of age, citizenship, color, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran, or other protected status.

I. Additional information (0 points maximum)

I1. (Optional) Please include any additional information (250 words or less) you would like to

share that has not been covered in previous questions. This is an opportunity to highlight any

relevant information you would like to be considered during the review process

Another important thing about this grant is how we will be using the funding within our program. One specific way is by providing the compensation needed for children that want to take part in our summer camp but do not have the ability to pay it. This is important for middle-schoolers heading into high school to gain confidence in their creative abilities, as well as being surrounded by positivity from others.

The mentoring program eases our student’s transition to the 9th grade as an opportunity to connect with peers who have experience in high school. The high school mentors will provide advice and be a role model for the students. To ensure safe procedures we will need a mentor coordinator to supervise and manage the new program and we want to pay that person for their hard work. If awarded the grant, some of the funding will go to the administrator in charge of developing the mentoring program.

To better understand our mission through an anecdote the committee may want to consider the following testimony: “One of the girls on Page 15 presented her work shyly and quietly. Christian, one of our volunteers reported that she didn't need to be outgoing during the presentation because her words were strong enough. This type of experience left us with some questions: how long does it take for someone to hear what the kids in Paramore have to say? Through Page 15, we want to let them know that what they write matters”.

Appendix B. Goals and Outcomes

Template Chart (Question D1)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aim High Grant Proposal: Goals and Outcomes Chart  Urban Think Foundation  Page 15 | | | | |
| **Timeframe** | **Activities** | **Outputs** | **Expected Outcome(s)** | **SMART Goals** |
| May-November 2020 | -Create and establish a system for measuring improvement.  -We want to expand the administrative duties of Pg. 15 by adding another administrator to work with Paul, in daily operations. | -By establishing a system of tracking students, UTF staff will have a broader idea of how our participants are functioning as writers.  -By adding another administrator for Pg. 15, it will help Paul in everyday operations. Also, this is essential in Pg. 15’s expansion in the future. | -UTF staff will be able to have a more individualistic approach as each child has different issues in their writing. This will give the students confidence in their writing and will prepare them for the transition to 9th grade English classes. Introducing the students to concepts that they will see in high school, will give them a head start when learning these concepts in high school class.  -Adding another administrator will increase the capabilities of Pg. 15, as well as delegate some responsibility from Paul. Another administrator for Pg. 15 is needed for expansion and implementing new elements into the program. | - Students will improve with their technical skills and get prepared for language arts classes in high school. Most students in the program have not been taught higher-level writing concepts. Page 15 is all about the students expressing themselves however they feel fit, we want to keep this level of personal engagement while slowly introducing them to things like claims, thesis’, supporting details, etc.  -The new administrator will be working with Paul and should increase the functionality of the program. We will be able to serve more children and expand the program further as more elements to the program get added. |
| November 2020-May 2021 | - Add a “mentoring program”, which will be run by the new administrator.  - With the remaining funds after the first year grant, we will put that towards paying for middle school students who want to attend our summer camp but financially can’t afford it. | - The mentoring program will be high school volunteers, we will work with Orange County Schools to obtain volunteers for the program and can offer community service hours for them. | - We think that giving the kids personal time with a student in high school will help them not only learn the concepts that they are learning in their high school English class, but also give the kids a personal connection with someone in high school they can ask questions too, and share experiences with.  - We hope that adding more middle school students to our writing summer camp will expand our reach in the community and prepare more students for the transition to high school. | - We hope that by introducing a mentoring program like this that it helps students in our program get a feel of what high school is about, and make them more comfortable when they walk into school as a 9th grader.  - The mentors’ job will be to mentor them with their writing like providing advice, and discussing concepts about highschool writing and high school in general. |
| May- November 2021 | -Implement newer forms of technology for student use (laptops, tablets, kindle, etc.) | -This will increase the technical skills of the students as they enter high school. I think this broadens Page 15’s mission as it expands it beyond just writing. With computers and technology, it opens up new ways that students can express themselves like videos, powerpoints, art, etc. | -Giving the students newer technology to use will get them familiar with the direction writing is going. It will give the students multimodal experience, and give them experience with technology as they move on to high school, college, etc. Introducing the students to tools like Word, Excel, and PowerPoint (things they will use in high school) will get them familiar with them making them more comfortable when asked to utilize them. | -Students will improve their abilities with newer forms of technology they may have not had a chance to experience. Technology is a huge part of higher-level learning, students should have experience with them.  -Students using technology will have a more freeform and creative method when expressing themselves through writing. |
| November 2021- May 2022 | -This time will be used for maintenance and observation. After implementing new elements in Pg. 15, this period will be used to assess further needs of Pg. 15 and how we can improve. | -As we see the fully-functioning Pg. 15 there will be things that need to be tweaked or adjusted for the best results. | -One task for us will be to see how the program is functioning and how Paul and the new administrator want to split or delegate the new responsibilities of the program. | -Starting November 2021 will be our time to assess how the program is functioning, and make changes as needed. For example, more technology, more volunteers, etc. |

Budget Chart–2-Year Grant

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Year1 Project Budget Request** | **Year 2 Project Budget Request Aim High Funds** | **Cost/Revenue Explanation** |
| **Program Fees** | N/A | N/A | In accordance with the grant requirements. We do not charge any fees for after school programs. |
| **Grant Funding** | $25,000 | $25,000 | From other foundation grants and government grants |
| **Other Revenue Sources** | N/A | N/A | From donations, workshops, and fundraising events. |
| **Total Revenue** | $25,000 | $25,000 |  |
| **Salaries and Fringes (include FTE's)** [SM1] | $18,000 | $18,000 | Page 15's current salary budget is $122,150 with the additional $25,850 increase in the salary budget a new intern coordinator for the mentorship program can join our team. |
|  | $3,500 | $3,500 | To support students from low-income families in Parramore to participate in our summer camp. Young Writers Summer Camp expenses include the cost of student’s book illustrations, publications, and meals. |
| **Program Travel and Meetings** | $0 | $0 | No Aim High grant funding would be put toward travel and meetings |
| **Program Event Expenses** | $0 | $0 | No Aim High grant funding would be put toward event expenses |
| **Program Materials** | $3,500 | $3,500 | To buy the technology equipment that would allow students to interact with important professional software. |
| **Field Trip and Admissions** | $0 | $0 | No Aim High grant funding would be put towards field trips and admissions |
| **Program Food** | $0 | $0 |  |
| **Other Direct Cost** | $0 | $0 | No Aim High grant funding would be put towards other direct costs |
| **Indirect Cost** | $0 | $0 | No Aim High grant funding would be put towards other indirect costs |
| **Total Cost** | $25,000 | $25,000 |  |

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