



## Application Template

### **Application Section I: Community Connectors Program Description**

1. The target population is students grades 5-12. Identify the grade level or levels at each school that your program will be targeting. Programs may serve students in one or more grade levels.

The target population for our Community Connectors Program will be at-risk, African-American, male students within grades 5 through 8.

2. Provide the number of youth in each grade level and at each school your program proposes to serve.

Under the existing program, there are partnerships with 35 units of students located throughout the Cleveland and East Cleveland school district community. Within each unit of students, there are approximately 30 students served with an estimated six (6) to (10) at-risk, African-American, male students who could likely be identified as eligible for this program within grades 5 through 8. The goal is to initially reach a total of 80 to 120 at-risk, African-American, male students within the aforementioned districts. Our – stance for being granted is to serve in the Greater Cleveland area, which includes Cleveland, East Cleveland and various charter schools. Students often times are in a transient position and we need to serve them to save them.

3. Select one: Which of the following best describes the proposed project? Select one.

- A.  Totally new program developed by this organization
- B.  Replication of an existing model in use by others
  - Please provide the name of this model.
- C.  Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization
- D.  Extension of an existing program to a new setting

C.) Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization.

The existing program to be expanded upon is ACE's Chapters: The Book Club for Young Achievers®. This proven program has been sustained over many years by the leading applicant in this grant proposal – A Cultural Exchange (ACE), a 501(c) (3) nonprofit literacy-based multicultural arts organization for children.

4. Please describe your project. How will it address each of the five Community Connectors core principles and what outcomes will you use to measure success.

Our project will be an expansion of the already successful Chapters® program. The proposed project would be titled Chapters® 4.0: The Book Club for Achievement, Character, Hope and Resiliency. The focus will be on our target population of at-risk, African-American, male students within grades 5 through 8. An already established asset exists from the success of Chapters® which has built partnerships within 35 community schools currently spanning grades 7 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Drawing upon ACE's successful introduction of community role models within these schools, Chapters® 4.0 will employ Reader Leaders, who will be both literacy champions and role models. They will help to build a literacy gateway between success and failure. This gateway will be occupied by these enthusiastic mentors, who will provide support and take an interest in the lives and futures of these young men.

The goals of the program will be driven by the five core principles of The Community Connectors Grant.

- 1) **Achievement** – Most students within our target group are struggling in school. Criteria of eligibility for the program will be that a student is not achieving in core subject areas in school. Enrolling these struggling students in Chapters® 4.0 will give them somewhere to go, and the goal of that somewhere is UPWARD! Chapters® 4.0 fosters literate discussion of books among students for pleasure. The program is curriculum-supported and aligned with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy, Chapters®

curriculum incorporates book discussions, reflection, writing, and arts- integrated activities and is designed to create a value system for students that includes reading. Books are chosen for their ability to provoke introspection, and an expanded view of the world and critical thinking skills. This program is conducted during the academic day throughout the school year. Each student as a participant will receive 10-15 brand new award-winning books that support the goal of building home libraries – a valuable component to creating an environment that promotes reading as a resource tool for academic and personal success. The literature utilized is multicultural, but heavily Afro-centric, with an emphasis on showing people of color as a central character in a positive light. Students also receive incentive items that promote a club environment – T-shirts, book bags, book plates and bookmarks. These , as well as school banners, contribute to a positive peer pressure that supports reading, while energizing students who like to read and encouraging others with an opportunity to become a lifelong reader in a comfortable and supportive environment. This award winning literacy project addresses each of the five Community Connectors core principles. We will address these core principles with our unique literacy program and the quality partnerships that we bring to this very valuable program:

**Setting Goals – To be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** A Cultural Exchange will work with its faith-based community partner to develop the criteria for literacy mentors who will work with our targeted audience. Candidates will be recruited from all sectors of the community. Business, civic, educational, faith-based, media and social service professionals will be selected based on qualifications that allow them to be the best literacy champions and mentors to the children that need help. These mentors will know at the outset, that their commitment must be forthright and serious. Mentoring in this program will not require a special skill set or talent. However, all mentors will have the qualities of good role models- “A strong sense of self” “A good listener,” someone who can “offer genuine support, encouragement and a willingness to listen.” Above all, the mentors we select will share their personal knowledge, and wisdom and draws out the possibilities with their mentees for the purpose of fostering success and a belief in self-realization. Our mentors will be individuals who have succeeded because of goal setting. However, before anyone can become one of our literacy mentors, they will have a basic- but thorough understanding of goal-setting. The literacy champions will receive training regarding goal-setting drawn from the article- “Goal Setting and Student Achievement” (Modern Language Journal – Moeller, Theiler, Wu, 201). The theme of the article places a focused view on goal-setting as a process of “establishing clear and usable targets for learning.” Emphasis will be placed on the two most applied theories of goal-setting improving and ability- focused- where external rewards (e.g. getting good grades, and doing better than other students). The former is identified as learning, task involvement, and the latter is labeled as performance or ego-involving goals (Dweck, Leggett and Elliot 1986-1988). It’s important to know that task-focused/effort achievement is supported by evidence that links mastery goals to an attribution belief that effort leads to success (Ames & Archer, Nichols et al 1985-1988). With mastery goal (setting) individuals are oriented toward developing new skills, trying to understand their work, improving their level of competence, or achieving a sense of mastery based on self-referenced standards (Ames, et al 1992). Research has shown that for goal setting to improve performance, students should be allowed to participate in setting their own goals. (Azevedo, et al 1986-1997). The Chapters® 4.0 program has these characteristics built into its student-driven curriculum. Teachers- (Reader Leaders) work to facilitate literacy activities, while students set literacy, leadership and academic goals by sharing with peers in each session. We know that when students can attach value to tasks assigned to them; they succeed. Identifying goals in the classroom, during Chapters Book Club sessions increases motivation to read, learn, create and grow.

**Building Character** – Many of the students we will serve have a core base of personal character. However, if asked what is character? many of them and perhaps the adults holding places in their lives as caregivers, extended family, teachers and employers may not know. In defining character, mentors and mentees alike will understand that character is defined by how ones’ habits, motives, thoughts and so on relate to morality, particularly as it relates to integrity. There are three important qualities of true character – **moral discipline, moral attachment, and moral autonomy**. **Moral discipline** as defined by- “A virtuous determination to abandon any non-virtuous action, for example, by understanding the disadvantages of killing, stealing or sexual misconduct. We make a firm decision to refrain from such actions, is moral discipline” (NKT-2013). Children need to know the consequences of their choices. The most popular young adult literature often has character building values inserted into the story and focused on the central character. Students are able to relate to the challenges facing the central character, the decisions made to resolve conflict, and the consequences of good and/or bad decision-making. Our literacy champions will be trained from a “best practices” approach on how to reinforce these values. **Moral attachment** means being committed to set of higher ideals ...and if need be, sacrificing for the greater good of one’s community. It will be an important responsibility for each adult to be in a position of knowledge and experience, where it is clear to all student participants that the building of character and therefore possessing it-has always been about something greater than self which benefits a wider community. Last, but not least, the idea of **moral autonomy**. In building character, our students will emerge from this program with a new found perspective of the moral structure for character. Through our programs, character is defined in how habits, motives, thoughts and so on relate to morality, particularly as it concerns integrity. It is a nature and nurturing process that does not develop in an environment where every single ethical or moral decision will be forced on them. We want them to understand that character, **their** character is a product of judgment, discretion and choice. The results of these elements in their daily and future lives will depend on how well they facilitate decision making. The choice of the right mentors will ensure that this program benefits young people in that respect.

**Developing Pathways to Achievement** –Good decision making is the foundation of every component of success. Every life choice is dependent upon it. However, decision making requires the ability to problem-solve. Without the essential tools to do so – critical thinking skills, which facilitates problem solving as a consequence to decision making. In the Chapter 4.0 literacy program, book club members will be immersed in a literacy environment that promotes self-expression and awareness. The teachers “Reader Leaders” use a constructivist approach to teaching which is based on the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction as opposed to passively receiving information. Learners are the makers of meaning and knowledge. Constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking, and creates motivated and independent learners. Therefore constructivists suggest that learning is more effective when a student is actively engaged in the learning process. It is important to grasp the value at this method of instruction. The primary goals of using this method:

- Learners are actively involved
- The environment is democratic
- Activities are interactive and student-centered

The teacher facilitates a process of learning in which students are encouraged to be responsible and autonomous. It is clear that our students will be on the pathway to achievement. In this innovative program, we respect the tenets of the traditional classroom, but enthusiastically embrace the structure of the constructivist classroom. Some examples of both are illustrated here:

The Traditional Classroom -

- Strict adherence to fixed curriculum, instructor gives/student receives, instructor assumes directive, authoritative role, knowledge is inert, and students work individually.

Constructivist Classroom -

- Student-driven curriculum, pursuit of student questions/interest, learning is interaction-building on what students already know, instructor interacts/negotiates with students, knowledge is dynamic/change with experiences, and students work in groups (Thirteen Ed Online 2004)

Because existing knowledge or **schemata** are explicitly acknowledged as a starting point for new learning, this approach tends to validate individual and cultural differences and diversity. If the research that promotes the basic foundations of critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making states that these skills lead to higher quality decisions, greater innovation, goal achievement, opportunity recognition, mistake avoidance, and higher productivity- then we must begin at a point of recognition of respect for the learner.

### **Building Resiliency-**

We are in sync with the belief that resiliency is the ability to bounce back and not be defined by negative circumstances... without a doubt, it is fair to say that- it is achieved through gradually developing a reserve of social, emotional, cognitive and other competencies and is vital to self-mastery, self-esteem a sense of belonging and validation.

The prudent approach to understanding resiliency is to understand the factors that contribute to the positive outcomes for resilient children. There are three areas of focus:

- Individual psychological characteristics that allow children to cope effectively with stress, including “belief in one’s own self-efficacy, the ability to deal with change, and a repertoire of social problem-solving skills” (Rutter 1985);
- Social and economic factors such as socioeconomic status; family dynamics; parenting quality; quality and relationships with teachers and other adults (Werner 1993); neighborhood effects; and exposure to violence or trauma; and
- Access to quality educational and recreational opportunities, such as schools, sports teams, churches, and Boys and Girls clubs (Smokowski 1998)

Resilient children are the result of an environment full of academic, personal and social dynamics. In urban communities specifically, the risk factors and stressors that impact outcomes-good or bad are:

- Major risk factors include poverty status, low maternal education level, mental disorders (either of a parent or the child), and physical health problems.
- Stressors include a range of types of events, ranging from the relatively benign—birth of siblings, change in residence or school—to much more negative events like separation from parents, familial instability or discord, or the death of a close relative.

To help this communities’ children we – the parents, mentors, teachers and leaders must work together from a pro-active position to empower and protect these students. Cultivating a community of literate and resilient children should be our ultimate objective. A community that must see to it, that the least of us have access to a higher standard and quality of life. To that end, the project outcomes of Chapter 4.0 are substantial and will be used to measure the success of our program. Our goal is to support the academic achievement and enhancement of the basic skills- reading, writing, problem solving skills etc. for academic and workforce success of students by implementing a community-based non-remedial literacy program. We will work with community stakeholders to develop opportunities for career advancement, educational and financial success. We are assured that this collaborative will produce students with character, hope and resiliency.

5. Please describe the specific activities your program will conduct.

ACE innovative Book Club, model, Chapter: 4.0, provides unique literacy experiences that afford access to award winning literature, while allowing participants an opportunity to build home libraries. Students are able to take home each of the books they read, thereby allowing them to share intergenerational literacy experiences with family members. Students receive distinctive incentive items, which contribute to each member's sense of belonging. Chapters: 4.0 is an innovative literacy program that provides a student-driven multicultural curriculum aligned with state and national English Language arts and current Common Core standards in addition to providing arts-integrated activities that encourage students to read, discuss literature and interact with each other. The program engages participants in discussions that develop critical thinking skills and encourage reading for pleasure. ACE's book club model helps students stretch as they read, while avoiding struggle, frustration and the stigma of ability grouping. Club members, in groups of 30, meet twice a week for 40 minutes to read and explore a variety of culturally relevant literature in diverse genres. Students read books that are accessible for all and peer modeling and support are available for struggling readers. Chapters: 4.0 takes place during the academic day from September to May. Book Club members begin their journey analyzing and discussing picture books and move forward to high-level discussions of novels and chapter books as the year progresses. Participants engage in prediction activities during the first session of the Book Club. Next, the "Reader Leader" a trained adult facilitator, reads the book aloud with students preceded by member discussion in sharing circle, which affords members time to share with one another in a nonjudgmental environment. Book club members reread the book and participate in the interpretive discussions and writing activities during the second and third sessions. An art project begins during the fourth session and extends throughout the duration of the book reading. ACE recruits teachers, media specialists, community member and other volunteers for the program to serve as Reader Leaders prior to the program's implementation. Reader Leaders receive two days of intensive training throughout the school year in addition to curriculum handouts, art materials, books and supplies required to facilitate book club meeting effectively. Chapters 4.0 emphasizes a strong school to home family literacy component. ACE teaches parent techniques that facilitate parent and child engagement during regular reading sessions with their children at home. The advent of a parent book club strengthens the ability of parents to communicate with their children at home, effectively by giving parents the opportunity to explore, discuss and practice strategies and activities for engaging their children in literacy conversations. ACE provides ongoing monitoring and technical assistance to schools, while utilizing continuous improvement strategies to ensure program outcomes. Chapters: 4.0 has been a valued part of every school where it has been implemented. We have identified East Cleveland City Schools District as the district where we would like to bring those benefits to for this grant's purpose. The district failed to meet state academic indicators and have district grades of a "D" or "F".

6. Discuss how the program will utilize [best practices](#) to ensure program success. Are there successful mentor programs after which you will model your program? Please name the program and describe what makes it successful.

ACE will infuse its own unique brand of expertise to create a mentoring program based on the criteria that constitutes a quality mentoring program. ACE will incorporate its award-winning Book Club model that promotes reading for pleasure and involves high-level discussions among mentors and mentees that builds long-term positive relationships. Chapters: 4.0 will be molded into a unique program model that features mentors and mentees in one-on-one interactions and allows for the inclusion of the mentee's parent whenever plausible to bring the relationship full circle. This powerful combination through the use of high-quality multicultural literature, brilliant illustrations and authentic content, will be the thread that ties and consequently binds the participants together for a meaningful experience.

Best practices for the Chapters 4.0 program will be in accordance with the guidelines that constitute a successful mentoring program. ACE will:

- Create a solid mentor-mentee program that assesses the needs of the program's targeted population and community resources.
- Develop relationships with stakeholders, i.e. schools, churches, local government department, community resource and social services agencies to work together to implement the Chapters 4.0 program.
- Create a plan for identifying, recruiting and enrolling participants; initially 120 mentors paired with 120 boys ages 9-16.
- Design training-supported program activities that are geared toward specific interests determined on a case-by-case basis, and are comprehensive, multicultural, multi-faceted, non-curricular yet literacy-based.
- Provide 10-15 new books for each mentor and mentee to read, discuss, share and enjoy, which is the impetus for building a home library, an evidence-based component that leads to building self-worth and self-esteem for young people.
- Provide information for a series of "make-it-take-it" art projects that promote teamwork, togetherness and friendship.
- Connect mentors and mentees with parents, caregivers, other family members and other mentor-mentee pairs. Parents

will be involved whenever possible by developing a mutually-agreeable plan with the mentors, faith-based representatives, school administrators and mentees. Mentors will have monthly in-service meetings designed to provide them with ongoing support.

- Provide opportunities for a series of activities, outings, and/or fieldtrips that are both fun and educational. One-on-one activities may include but not be limited to visits to museums and cultural institutions, attendance at plays, sporting events, field trips to youth-oriented events, personal development and shopping experiences to learn about dressing for success and personal hygiene topics. In addition, quarterly group gatherings will be conducted among all mentor-mentee pairs.

With the Chapters 4.0 program, A Cultural Exchange (ACE) will pair 120 9 to 16-year-old boys, whose academic progress is below acceptable standards. We expect that at least 150 of these matches will be retained for 12 months or longer. We expect that mentors will increase time spent with their mentees to at least 4 hours per week. There will be an intensive pre-screening and pre-match process that includes an extensive survey that will ensure that the best mentor/mentee pair is established. ACE will have five staff dedicated exclusively to this project to ensure that the program is maintained at the highest possible level. The project director and program coordinator will be responsible for on-going support and ensuring that consistent monitoring and problem solving occurs. Each week, mentors will be required to respond via a formulaic written questionnaire that will report that week's activities with her mentee. Mentors will be required to attend monthly in-service meetings where they will interact with other mentors and have an opportunity to dialogue about their respective mentor/mentee relationships. A Cultural Exchange is unaware of any other mentoring program that matches our program in scope and outcomes. Each and every adult stakeholder will be responsible for being aware of what protective factors play a role in the resilient outcome for each student.

#### Protective Factors

- Internal protective factors are characteristics or personality traits of the child, such as activity level, disposition, responsiveness to people, social orientation, communication skills, ability to focus, self-concept, internal locus of control, and desire to improve. (Werner and Smith 1993).
- External protective factors are sources of support and structure in the child's environment (parental warmth, presence of non-parental caretakers, informal sources of emotional support, peer relationships, rules in the household, shared values, and access to services). (Werner and Smith 1993).

Participation in Chapters 4.0 will be effective because of the quality of the activity, the quality of Reader Leaders and Literacy Champions who will work in a literacy rich and conducive environment where expectation is high and effective supervision (facilitation) is the norm. A new paradigm shift from traditional methods of learning. Overcoming academic rigor is challenging and helps and to build a child's self-confidence and locos of control, both of which enable them to cope with future challenges. (Gore and Eckenrode 1996).

7. Describe your organization's previous experience with this type of program OR a program of a similar scale, including previous evaluations, size and duration of previously implemented programs, goals, and outcomes.
  1. ACE's Read, Baby, Read! Book Club/(The model for Chapters 4.0) was originally implemented as a volunteer-driven program in 1997 in 40 elementary schools in Cleveland, Ohio at the third-grade level, based on relevant research and supported by the U.S. Dept. of Education. During the three-year grant period, nearly 4,000 students were served. Since that time, ACE has served over 100,000 children through partnerships with numerous school districts and community institutions, including the cities of Cleveland, East Cleveland, Warrensville Heights, Ravenna, South Euclid/Lyndhurst, Rocky River, Euclid, Shaker Heights, Vermilion and Akron. Over a three-year period, nearly 1,500 East Cleveland and Cleveland middle school students participated. In 2003, The U.S. Department of Education, recognized ACE and its literacy model as a "Best Practice" and invited its President and CEO to Washington, D.C. to present to other arts education awardees.
  2. ACE staff has worked as consultants for various community-based organizations such as MyCom, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services to share our expertise and model of success for retention of volunteers. We have also managed a large state-wide program through state and local TANF offices (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Cuyahoga County Department of Employment and Family Services), where we engaged citizens in a 10-county area throughout the State of Ohio with successful wrap-around service delivery. Over the last 13 years, ACE has trained over 26,000 teachers, librarians, principals, parents and community volunteers to improve student appreciation and literacy mastery.
  3. ACE has solid experience providing literacy-based services for nearly 20 years, yielding the expertise and level of professionalism to scale up the Chapters: 4.0 Book Club program across the city, state and nation. Our model brings specific research-based approaches

that meet our objectives to develop positive attitudes toward literacy among children. The model's implementation is supported by five components: program support, program coordination, program implementation, program evaluation and dissemination of project results. ACE has provided its model to over 100,000 students in 15 urban and inner-ring districts in the past 18 years.

4. ACE's track record of success is unparalleled in the State of Ohio, and the resourcefulness and qualifications of our combined staff force reflects our ability to achieve success and in this innovative program. The leadership and vision of ACE's President and CEO, with the support of the organization's Board of Trustees will ensure successful service delivery, allowing all partners to achieve a positive experience while helping to improve the quality of life for our students. ACE is fortunate that our multicultural staff reflects the population of children whom we serve.
8. What will make this collaboration successful? What will the indicator(s) of success be for this collaboration?

A Cultural Exchange believes in and is committed to the power and value of collaboration. Our successful track record bears this out. The quality of our programming easily attracts the kind of quality partners needed to succeed in an endeavor of this magnitude. After years learning from trial and error, we develop a logic model to work from and follow a genuine pathway to success. It is comprehensive in the scope of work to be conducted. We have identified what the (1) working principles should be (2) overall approach (3) process and (4) implementation of design interpretive illustration.

#### **I. Working Principles**

- "Reading is the winning Lotto ticket" for our communities and the key to our children's success.
- When parents, teachers, and community organizations are mobilized to promote children's literacy development through multicultural books and programming, they set children on the path to becoming lifelong readers.

#### **II. Approach**

In accordance with our working principles:

- We build collaborative relationships with churches, public libraries, public housing authorities, schools and a variety of community-based organizations that work directly with vulnerable children.
- We organize book clubs where children read and analyze books together, engage in lively discussions, and respond to multicultural books through their own art and writing.

#### **III. Process**

- We conduct professional development sessions for teachers, librarians, and mentors who will be assuming leadership or support roles in our programs.
- We provide ongoing support, quality control, and assessment of these programs.

#### **IV. Implementation Design Imperatives**

- Provide detailed guidance and establish clear expectations for partner institutions. Cultivate and maintain strong ties with both providers and clients of multicultural literacy programs, so that these programs remain responsive to the needs of children, families, and communities.
- Cultivate and maintain strong ties with both providers and clients of multicultural literacy programs, so that these programs remain responsive to the needs of children, families, and communities.

#### **V. Activities for Students and Adults**

In the *Chapters 4.0 Book Clubs*, students:

- Participate in thoughtful book discussions, facilitated by Reader Leaders.
- Engage in innovative, literature-based visual or performing arts activities.

#### **VI. Desired Change**

- Vulnerable children who otherwise might have felt alienated from books and reading become enthusiastic, lifelong readers, better decision maker, critical thinkers capable participants in society.
- As families, schools, and community-based organizations adopt a shared, multicultural approach to literacy development, children receive a consistent message about the value of reading, and they have more occasions to encounter the best multicultural books.

(See ACE Logic Model Matrix Attachment)

## **Application Section II: Program Management**

9. Leadership Team: The leadership team should be comprised of no less than one member of each partnering organization. Please provide a brief bio of each leadership team member, including a brief description of the team member's passion for the program and interest in working with young people. Bios should also include:
  - Name and title
  - Responsibilities for this grant project. (Percent of time should be included in the budget)

- document.)
- Qualifications
- Prior relevant experience

Lead Applicant

A Cultural Exchange

Chief Executive

Deborah E. McHamm  
 President/Chief Executive Officer

Responsibilities

Provide leadership for overall project success. Oversee the collaborative process for engaging other community partners. Provide professional development to parents, mentors and teachers to establish the students- parent- mentor relationship needed to facilitate the program. Approve all budget expenditures in conjunction with ACE Board of Trustees. Approve the evaluation process in conjunction with approved evaluators.

Qualifications and Prior Relevant Experience

In 1991, Deborah McHamm led a group of African-American women to establish *A Cultural Exchange*, the largest literacy based non-profit multicultural arts organization for children in Northeast Ohio. A nationally renowned expert in children’s literacy, Deborah has propelled *A Cultural Exchange* to the forefront of the multicultural literature movement. The organization’s innovative educational programs, events and exhibits support her commitment to building a nation of readers who celebrate themselves and each other through reading. Deborah’s extensive experience as a consultant and community activist began while she served as Cleveland Director of 9 to 5, a national women’s advocacy organization. Currently, as President and Chief Executive Officer of *A Cultural Exchange*, she advises educational, corporate and arts organizations across the country on methods and materials which help children develop a lifelong passion for learning. Complementing her busy schedule, Deborah serves on several boards, national committees and associations. She currently sits on the board of the Cleveland Orchestra Community Advisory Committee. She is a 1995 graduate of Leadership Cleveland and a member of its Curriculum Committee, as well as a member of the Cleveland Chapter of LINKS, Inc. Deborah is a consultant to the United States Department of Education, as well as the National Arts Education Task Force. She formerly served as a board member of Cleveland Public Radio, Rainbow Babies and Children Hospital, the Virginia Hamilton Conference, Community Advisory Council of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Beechbrook Child Care, Inc., and as a national delegate to Cleveland’s Promise. The recipient of numerous awards, she is currently the first individual to receive the YWCA Eleanor M. Sutler Equality Award, which celebrates the empowerment of women and the elimination of racism, the Black MBA Association Business Achievement Award and many others. She is recognized as a leader in *Building Communities Where Children Read*. Deborah holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cleveland State University and is certified in secondary school reading and history.

**Leadership Team**

**Partner Organization – Faith-Based**

Olivet Institutional Baptist Church Pastor: Reverend Jawanzaa K. Colvin. Responsibilities: (See Olivet Institutional Baptist Church Executive Summary). Qualifications and Prior Relevant Experience: (See Attached Colvin Bio).

**Partner Organization – Business**

Soul Republic United Restaurants: Owner/Executive: Akin Affrica/ Nusurge Electric: Owner/Executive: Joshua McHamm. Responsibilities: (See Nusurge Electric Executive Summary). Qualifications and Prior Relevant Experience: (See Attached Affrica and McHamm Bio).

**Partner Organization- School(s)**

East Cleveland City Schools: Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent: Myrna Loy Corley. Responsibilities: (See East Cleveland City Schools Executive Summary). Qualifications and Prior Relevant Experience: (See Attached Corley Bio)

10. A timeline of all major activities must be provided. Assessment, planning and initial training must be completed by September 7, 2015. Services must begin by September 7, 2015.

Objective	Action Steps	Timeline	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome
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Preprogramming planning: Discuss w/ staff, board of directors and potential community resource partners program plan based on ACE's Book Club model and literacy resources	Apply for Community Connectors Grant	1/2015-3/2015	ACE Staff	Receive notification of grant award- Estimate 4/2015
Recruitment of project staff and volunteers.	1.Contact organizations to assist with disseminating project staff vacancies. 2. Screen and interview applicants. 3. Select and hire new staff members. 4. Work with school principals to interview and select Reader Leaders	4/2015-5/2015	ACE Staff	
Development of program curriculum and project materials.	1. Development the book reading list and curriculum guidelines for the program.		ACE Staff	Culturally competent reading material and curriculum
Identify number of eligible youth and conduct referral outreach	Work with local social service agencies (e.g. Murtis Taylor Social Services Center), schools, churches, local community Centers. Plan events, programs, etc. for Mentors/mentees.	5/2015-6/2015	ACE Staff, Schools, Church Partner	Recruit the number of student participants to be served by grant
Recruit and screen potential mentors, to include peer mentors as well.	Engage local business community educational professionals, churches, institutes of higher education, etc. Plan events, programs, etc. for mentors/mentees.	6/2015	ACE Staff, Church, Schools	Recruit the number of qualified mentors to participate in and sustain program
Enroll eligible youth and families and match mentors.	Based on data collection and screening process results. Purchase materials for successful program implementation.	7/2015	ACE Staff	Establish foundation for mentor/parent/student relationship to meet program goals.
Train mentors and prepare youth and families for process.	Orientation where information is shared regarding incarcerated parents and participating children, book discussion best practices, mentor program responsibilities, etc.	7/2015-8/2015	ACE Staff, Church	Utilization of "best practices" for professional development purposes
Develop the evaluation plan to measure the program's effectiveness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop evaluation tools with independent evaluator for pre- and post-project assessment.</li> <li>2. Collect data to establish pre-project baseline information regarding attitudes toward reading, reading skill and achievement.</li> <li>3. Collect data through questionnaires regarding process effectiveness according to participants.</li> <li>4. Recruit/hire program staff</li> </ol>	8/2015	ACE Staff Project Evaluator(s)	Identify inadequate pre-post survey tools for evaluation
Monitor and provide support to mentor matches and collaboration efforts.	ACE staff and project partners to provide on-going programmatic support as described in proposal.	8/2015	ACE Staff	Establish quality assurance and structure to meet program goals
Further develop collaborative relationships with participating schools, parents and community agencies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct meetings with collaborating organizations to facilitate planning and implementation.</li> <li>2. Explore additional relationships with other collaborating agencies for additional program support.</li> </ol>	On-going	ACE Staff Project Evaluation Team	Strengthen components of school-to home connection with vital mentor support
Establish book clubs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruit Reader Leaders to support book clubs in each identified school.</li> <li>2. Conduct program trainings for Reader Leaders.</li> <li>3. Based on book list and curriculum, order books, t-shirts and book bags.</li> <li>4. Recruit members for book clubs.</li> </ol>	9/2015	ACE Staff	Program implementation
Each book club member will read approximately two books per month, increasing their time spent reading.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on the developed curriculum, Book Club meetings will begin in CMSD, et al schools and books will be distributed to book club members.</li> </ol>	9/2015-5/2015, 9/2015-5/2017, 9/2017-5/2018	ACE Staff, Mentors, Reader Leaders	Facilitate the execution of program elements to support grant core principles

Generate data and develop continuous improvement plan.	1. Collect data at end of each academic year data. 2. Prepare annual project evaluation reports.	On-going as each semester ends, finalized 9/2018	Project Evaluator Project Director	Qualitative and quantitative assessment and dissemination
Promote program in participating schools and in the city at large.	1. Work to promote program locally and regionally as part of dissemination plan and in conjunction with project evaluator.	On-going		Chapters 4.0 recognized as viable literacy, mentor program

11. Describe the implementation process for reaching the following milestones:

- a. Screening, orientation, supporting, and monitoring process for mentors and other personnel working directly with youth;
- b. Identification and intake process for mentees;
- c. The means by which you will involve families of youth in your program; ongoing training of mentors throughout the life of the program, including topics and frequency;
- d. Assessing fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans; and
- e. Any other critical information you would want the Community Connectors team to know.

**Outreach plan to attract eligible participants:**

ACE has developed an outreach plan that will effectively target and attract students and their families to the Chapters 4.0 program. We will target boys' age 9 to 16 with the following outreach plan:

- Conduct research and gather data on demographics of targeted participants, to include but not be limited to socio-economic status, and education levels of children.
- Work with various social service agencies that maintain demographic information pertinent to this program.
- Place announcements and distribute flyers in community service centers, churches recreation centers, etc. by working with city officials.
- Contact school officials with letters introducing the program, requesting referral and administrative support.
- Create a press release announcing program and submit to media outlets in targeted communities throughout the outside of the Greater Cleveland area.

**The recruitment plan for mentors will include the following steps:**

- Coordinate all ACE contacts—professional business groups, fraternities, civic and social activity organizations, United Way, church organizations, etc., organizing information into a database for profiling contacting and following up.
- Send correspondence introducing the Chapters 4.0 literacy and mentoring program to potential mentors, including information that speaks to program requirements: screening/background checks, population to be served, incentives and benefits, volunteer commitment time, level of service, schedule of events and mentoring activities, etc.
- Schedule dates for training and orientation for those volunteers who have cleared the screening process; information will be collected to identify interests, career orientations, hobbies, etc. for mentor-to-mentee matching.
- Match mentors to mentees as appropriate and commence program activities.

**Effective screening of mentors:**

Ohio Revised Code (109.577) urges youth agencies to conduct criminal background checks of mentors/tutors who will regularly be alone with a child, citing such checks as “best practice.” The ACE Book Club model is not set up for mentors to be responsible for the care and custody of mentees in this manner. ACE will work with certified agencies to conduct Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation background and A Cultural Exchange 22 fingerprinting checks to ensure that mentors are fully-qualified. Searches conducted will utilize state and local criminal records, sex offender registries and child abuse central registries.

**Mentor training and support:**

ACE will provide regularly scheduled on-going mentor training, follow-up and guidance during monthly in-service meetings. Mentors will gather to discuss with each other and experts in the field successes and challenges that they are facing with their specific one-on-one matches. Mentors will be supported by information and presentations that address increasing their knowledge and expertise in working with this targeted population of at-risk young women. ACE staff will have weekly contact with mentors to ensure that program objectives are maintained and will offer support as necessary. Topics that will be addressed in monthly in-services include but are not limited to cultural competency, the impact of one or more parent's incarceration on youth development, family dynamics, the value of mentoring and the importance of positive youth development. Also paramount in these discussions will be the value of the one-on-one mentoring relationship and the importance of developing and sustaining a match that endures longer than a 12-month period.

**Duration and frequency of mentoring activities:**

It is the explicit goal of ACE that at least 150 of the 200 mentor/mentee matches will be retained for 12 months or longer. This will be achieved through the following project design components:

- Weekly one-on-one mentor/mentee meetings, supported by mentoring kits, provided arts activities, cultural, social and arts-based outings, Book Club interactions, etc.
- Quarterly special events where mentors and mentees come together to interact with one another and participate in live arts-related and storytelling presentations.
- Quarterly out-of-town youth leadership conference activities where mentors and mentees travel for the day to engage in positive development activities.
- Monthly in-service meetings for mentors.
- Annual awards recognition banquet.

**Mentee training and support:**

ACE staff will work closely with mentees and their caregivers to ensure that program objectives are maintained at the highest extent. With the goal of maintaining matched mentor/mentee relationships that last longer than 12 months, ACE staff will stand ready to intervene as necessary should any issues occur. In-depth problem-solving techniques will be followed so that these matches may be maintained as circumstances warrant. The mentee recruitment/retention specialist shall be the primary ACE staff person responsible for problem-solving; however, all Chapters 4.0 staff will work together to ensure that issues are addressed adequately. In particular, ACE's relationship with local social service agencies will allow for appropriate referrals as necessary should unexpected issues come to light that may suggest abuse or neglect threatens the mentee. This will be an additional topic covered during mentor's monthly in-services so that they have the appropriate resources to respond in a timely and effective manner.

**Plan for collaborations with community entities:**

At a time when drastic budget cuts are resulting in the elimination of innovative programming, ACE will work with a variety of community and social service agencies in the area to address this great need. By providing participants with access to ACE's literacy services while surrounding them with community service providers, mentors and caregivers equipped with additional tools to help them succeed, our youngest citizens will be comprehensively supported as they work to improve their quality of life. Focusing on reading and literacy positively influences *all* aspects of these students' ability to compete academically and socially. This innovative proposal will impact young women at a critical age as we work to close the achievement gap and support students in achieving successful matriculation. There are few other programs across the State of Ohio and nation that mimic ACE's culturally-relevant approach which is aimed, at its most basic level, at raising students' appreciation for reading. A partnership with social service agencies that make up ACE's broad network of collaborative partners will provide these students and their families with unprecedented wrap-around services that will comprehensively address their social and educational needs.

**12.** Describe how each applicant partner plans to contribute to the overall program plan including, but not limited to, time contribution, personnel contribution, monetary contribution, shared responsibilities, use of facilities, etc. Complete the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet attachment.

**Application Section III: Evaluation Plan**

- 13.** The evaluation plan is intended to provide lead organizations with a framework that will ensure the program is on track to positively impact the lives of students and identify needs for additional support when challenges arise. Each evaluation plan must list the scope of work and describe the following:
- a. Plans for keeping records of mentor contact hours, unduplicated count of students served each month, mentor training hours, etc. for ongoing reporting;
  - b. Gathering of data to measure progress of program towards meeting the selected goals;
  - c. Projected indicators of success; and
  - d. Anticipated barriers to successful evaluation including data collection and measurement of progress toward outcomes.

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the book club structure and offerings affect the following:

- Quality, types and quantity of books in students' homes
- Student school attendance and student retention in school
- Student attitudes toward reading and student enjoyment of books
- Exposure to and use of multicultural books by teachers (in classrooms)

- Parent/caregiver and family involvement in literacy activities

Students, Reader Leaders, and parents/caregivers will be the major subjects of the evaluation. Unique methodologies will be employed to gather data needed from each source to assess the impact of this intervention. The evaluation will consist of formative and summative components. The formative aspect will focus on the implementation of the program and provide ongoing feedback to the grantee. The evaluator will participate in regular planning and review meetings to present findings to the program staff. The summative element will synthesize the findings for inclusion in reports at the end of each term and each academic year. These results will also contribute to the continuous improvement of the project.

**Students:** The evaluation of student outcomes incorporates a quasi-experimental design and utilizes a longitudinal, pre-post/post-test cohort design with a control group. The pre-tests and post-tests will be administered at the beginning of the intervention each term to the control and experimental groups. Pre-testing both groups will help to determine the groups' similarity at the start and increase post-test findings' validity. The post-tests will assess what changes occur among the participants in the areas of attitudes toward reading and self-perceptions as readers.

#### **Methods for gathering student data:**

- Self-perception: Prior to the start and at the conclusion of each year, students will complete a questionnaire to determine their perceived reading ability and attitudes. Proposed instruments to be used to gather these data include:
  - Estes Reading Attitude Scale
  - Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment
  - Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (grades 1-6)
  - Reader Self-Perception Scale (grades 4-6)
  - Reader Self Perception Scale 2 (grades 7-10)
- Enjoyment of reading: Students will be given a questionnaire that assesses their feelings about reading and the types of materials they read at the start and finish of each session. In addition an assessment of interest and enjoyment will be made using an observation checklist and interview questions.
- Attendance: Attendance records from CMSD and ECCS will be used to determine the attendance or days missed by each student prior to and after participation in this program and over the course of their matriculation after participating.
- Retention: Over the five-year period of this project, the retention or passage of students from one grade to the next will be tracked using data obtained from the various schools.

**Reader Leaders/Literacy Champions:** Reader Leaders/ Literacy Champions will be monitored and evaluated for compliance with the program design, e.g., the conduct of sessions in the times and methods prescribed. Deviation from the expected delivery of the program may affect outcomes.

#### **Methods for gathering data on Reader Leaders/Literacy Champions:**

- Program logs or journals that they keep and submit on a weekly basis documenting days and time spent on the program.
- Interviews of the Reader Leaders midway and at the end of the program to record their observations about the students.
- Periodic observation of book club sessions with standardized form to record observations.
- Initial and final questionnaires completed regarding their use of literacy materials—quantity, type, cultural diversity, authors.

**Parents/caregivers.** Parents/caregivers will provide information about the home environment's literacy materials. The parent/caregivers of students in the experimental and control groups will complete brief surveys at the start of the program and as it ends each semester or academic year.

#### **Methods for gathering data on parents/caregivers:**

- Questionnaire completed at the beginning of the program inquiring about the quantity and type of literacy materials in the home, frequency of use by the child involved and other family members. The Home Literacy Inventory may be used, which is intended to show current and past family interactions with print and print-related experiences.
- Questionnaire completed at the end of the semester or school year in which the program is offered which asks similar questions as those described above.
- Periodic self-reports of parent and family activities that involve reading and literacy activities as well as time spent.

Potential threats to internal validity that the project design and process of the evaluation will take into consideration in assessing outcomes are as follows:

1. *Maturation:* aging/development of students that naturally results in growth of assessed areas.
2. *Testing:* the possibility that repeat exposure to assessment instrument might impact results.
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14. Applicants are to complete the program model.

#### **Application Section IV: Sustainability**

15. Describe how you plan to maintain the program after the grant funding period. Include a discussion about financial sustainability and sustainability of the partnership commitment. Applicants are not required to include cash as part of their local contributions; however, funding sustainability is critical to the Community Connectors program. Applicants that show the potential for funding sustainability will be given preference in application scoring.

ACE has an extensive grant management capacity, having received funding and grant awards in excess of \$7 million since 1995. Partners and funders include the U.S. Dept. of Education, Ohio Dept. of Education, Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services, Cleveland Public Library, Knight Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, Gund Foundation, Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County of Ohio, AT&T Foundation, Target Foundation, Greater Cleveland Growth Association/Leadership Cleveland, and the Center for Economic Opportunities of Greater Cleveland. In addition, ACE has consistently received audit reports without incident that highlight our excellent management capacity. ACE's track record of success is unparalleled in the State of Ohio, and the resourcefulness and qualifications of our combined staff force reflects our ability to achieve success and in this innovative program. The leadership and vision of ACE's President and CEO, with the support of the organization's Board of Trustees will ensure successful service delivery, allowing all partners to achieve a positive experience while helping to turn a school district around to improve the quality of life for our students.

#### **Application Section V: Program Budget**

16. Complete the budget form attachment and justify each of the budget items by creating a budget justification

By clicking this box,  I (Insert Name) deborah McHann agree, on behalf of this applicant, and any or all identified partners, that this application and all supporting documents contain information approved by a relevant executive board or its equivalent.

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