



EASTON ROTARY SERVICE FOUNDATION

Rotary Club of Easton
Easton, Pennsylvania

2886 Hope Ridge Drive, Easton, PA 18045-8144

GRANT APPLICATION

Organization Name Family Connection of Easton

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City Easton State PA Zip 18042

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Email servac@eastonsd.org

Contact Person Carolyn Serva Title Executive Director

Project Director Lisa Bedoya Title Family Support Coord.

Project Title Family Support & Case Management

Grant Period 2021

Total Cost of Project \$131,286 Amount Requested \$5,000

Signature of Approving

Agency Personnel Carolyn Serva Date 9/25/20

Name of Approving

Agency Personnel Carolyn Serva Title Executive Director

For use by Easton Rotary Service Foundation

Date Received _____

Action Taken _____ Date _____

Brief Description of the Organization

Family Connection is the nonprofit family center for the Easton Area School District. Our mission is to be a catalyst for change within families, schools and the community. Through a team approach, we strive to improve academic performance, the quality of life for the children and families we serve, and the overall strength of our community. Our vision is to create a compassionate community where all children and families have the opportunity to achieve academic and personal success.

The programs offered through Family Connection are designed to serve pre-school and school-aged children and their parents or guardians who face multiple academic and economic challenges including lack of English-speaking skills, poverty, lack of access to or understanding of available resources, unemployment or underemployment, incomplete formal education and developmental disabilities. All programs and services are provided at no cost to families.

Family Connection currently offers the following programs to children and families in Easton:

- Family Support and Case Management - designed to improve family self-sufficiency and positive school involvement;
- Parents Who Care - a family wellness and parenting education program;
- Health & Wellness Initiative - an initiative to provide families with access to free or low-cost health insurance and school-based preventative health services;
- Backpack Pals - a program to provide food to EASD children at-risk of hunger and establish school-based pantries at EAHS, EAMS, and Paxinosa and March Elementary Schools;
- The ParentChild+ Program - a nationally recognized program designed to prepare preschool age children and their families for a successful school start through 100 home visits over 2 years with Home Visitors who mentor parents on how to work with their children on developmental activities;
- After-School Learning Clubs -after-school programs with activities to help students strengthen literacy and math skills and participate in enrichment and character education at both Paxinosa & Cheston Elementary Schools; and
- Kindergarten Connection - a community-wide initiative designed to engage preschools, students, parents, businesses, community service organizations and the Easton Area School District to increase school readiness

Summary of the Proposal

The Family Support & Case Management Program builds self-sufficiency skills in parents, helping their children succeed in school through improved academics, behaviors and attendance. Staff work with families to develop goals and provide information and support so they are able to access resources, coach them as they utilize said resources, monitor progress of their goals, and reassess goals if needed. Case Managers also

facilitate parenting support groups, health & wellness initiatives and operate the Backpack Pals program to distribute food to at-risk children and manage and maintain 4 school-based food pantries.

We respectfully request a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from The Easton Rotary Service Foundation to help support the salaries of our direct program staff as well as other program costs as outlined in the attached program budget. Funds would be used in 2021-2022 program year and would be expended no later than June 2022.

Project Description

Family Connection has a proven track record of success in Easton, serving families through our case management program for over 20 years. We pride ourselves on our ability to nurture positive working relationships with EASD personnel and provide a seamless network of services to families. What started in one school grew over the years to a district-wide service. Being located directly in schools allows for interactions with counselors, nurses, teachers and principals on a daily basis. Indeed, our staff are considered part of the EASD school community itself. Our team of three case managers serve 500-600 EASD families annually throughout the entire school district and focus on:

- Identifying needs while at the prevention level
- Improving levels of school engagement & self-sufficiency
- Removing barriers to family & student success

Staff assist families in developing goal plans and identifying community resources that will help them to achieve those goals. Because every family is unique, their needs vary. The amount and duration of support provided to each family depends on the severity of their need. All programs and services are provided at no cost to families. Family Connection employs a bilingual case manager so the needs of our ELL Spanish-speaking families are being met. In addition to on-site staff, we have storage space at several schools where we keep clothes, coats, books, school supplies, toiletries and other supplies so they are readily at hand whenever they are needed by families.

Family Support staff follow up with families weekly, either in person or by phone, to review their progress and to offer additional resources and support. Staff maintain open contact with a family for as long as they request our support.

Support and assistance may include: attending school meetings, researching jobs, housing, or other community resources, or simply providing extra support or resources during a difficult time. We assist families with household needs, food, healthcare, mental health referrals, academic support, employment, housing, utility assistance, adult basic education, childcare, legal assistance, parenting education and domestic violence prevention.

During the COVID school closures, Family Support staff remained active, continuing to work creatively to support families. All staff established Google Voice numbers that allowed them to remain in constant contact with families via text or phone calls from home. We worked closely with our priority schools, as well as district-wide, to send a flyer to all families to provide them with our updated contact information, encouraging them to reach out if needed. In addition, staff met with parents via Google Meet and Zoom. The primary goal was to ensure the safety and well-being of all families.

At Paxinosa, under the direction of the principal, our Family Support Staff attended weekly grade level Zoom meetings with teachers to review each student's level of engagement and address any concerns. Those meetings resulted in parent contacts to provide food resources, internet and virtual learning connections, along with other basic needs. Staff attended weekly Child Study team meetings at most of our elementary schools to address basic needs and virtual school connections. We also received approval to send our needs assessment survey to all parents district-wide via a Google Form. 88 families completed this survey, allowing us to provide outreach to families we may not have known otherwise.

Our staff worked closely with the district's food service company to clear out our all of our school-based food pantries and pack the items into 'weekend food bags' to be given out to families in need every Friday. These bags were available to families district-wide and could be picked up at either Cheston or Paxinosa. An average of 10-15 bags were given out each week. We also helped the district by promoting their Grab-N-Go breakfast-lunch bags available each school morning. In addition, we connected with Project Hope, in sponsoring up to 65 families each week during school closure with free dinners from 7 local restaurants.

Statement of need

The Easton Area School District serves approximately 9,000 students in grades K-12. There has been a changing demographic in recent years with a change from a predominantly middle class population to one that is more diverse across all socio-economic designations. The student population ranges from low economic status to upper class with 48% qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

According to the latest 2016 Census data, in the City of Easton, only 82% of people (aged 25 or older) are high school graduates compared to the county average of 90%. In addition, only 20% have Bachelor's degrees or higher, compared to 28% county-wide. Mean household income over 2012-16 (in 2016 dollars) was \$45,361 in the City of Easton compared to \$62,753 county-wide, while 19% of people reside in poverty in the City compared to 9% county-wide.

(<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/eastoncitypennsylvania,northamptoncountypennsylvania/PST045216>)

And while poverty and educational attainment may be signs of increased need, the truth is, that any family can be in need of additional supports. Our program aims to lend that helping hand—anything from a family new to the district up through and including homelessness and involvement with the County Children and Youth Office. We've assisted families affected by house fires, COVID-19 and other illnesses, unemployment, alcohol/drug addition, grandparents as primary caregivers and more.

How the proposal addresses the need

The Family Support and Case Management Program builds self-sufficiency skills in families, helping children succeed in school through improved academics, behaviors and attendance. Staff work with families to develop goals and provide information and support so they are able to *access* resources, *coach* them as they utilize said resources, *monitor* progress of their goals, and *reassess* goals if needed.

On a school-wide basis, staff are part of the attendance team and are a strategy in the system of tiered interventions. Our staff also are part of the school's SAIP (Student Assistance Improvement Plan) and Child Study teams and work closely with the Truant Officer and the IU's Truancy Intervention staff. On an individual basis, our staff work with parents on a host of issues, all of which affect attendance at the elementary level. Conversations with parents on attendance have led to the completion of EASD's Homeless Youth Data Form, which leads to securing alternative bussing, which leads to improved attendance. We contact parents of at-risk

children and complete reviews of the district's attendance policy and laws. Additionally, we help parents in securing housing, child care, legal assistance and basic needs support. We also offer group parenting sessions and assist with follow-up after failed health/vision screenings, lice identification or lack of health insurance.

In addition to our core Case Management services, staff operate parenting classes several times per year as well as health and wellness programming and outreach. We also coordinate the Backpack Pals program, which provides EASD students with food to us establishing pantries at Easton Area HS, Easton Area MS, and Paxinosa and March Elementary Schools.

Our work allows classroom teachers to focus on academics while our staff can focus on the nutritional, emotional and social needs that will aid in school success and developing a well-rounded, healthy child.

Population to be served

As the family center for the Easton Area School District, Family Connection serves any child or family in need in any EASD school as well as any future students from the district's sending area. Much of our efforts are focused on Cheston and Paxinosa Elementary Schools, neighborhood schools from the South Side and West Ward sections of the City of Easton, respectively. Both of these schools are classified as Title I schools for Reading and Math, due to their significant populations of low-income, high-risk students. Both schools qualify to receive daily free breakfast and lunch to 100% of their students and both have highly transient populations and truancy issues.

Goals and measurable outcomes

The main goals of the Family Support and Case Management program are to:

- Establish meaningful, trusted relationships with parents/guardians of at-risk families in order to increase their level of engagement in their child's education;
- Secure basic needs for at-risk families; and
- Refer families to support services outside of school as needed (medical home, counseling, child care, etc.) and support them in securing said services to remove barriers to school attendance and success

Outcomes are tracked in several ways:

- Case managers set goals with families and track their progress throughout the year, noting the number of goals 'set' and 'met' by each family. Goals are tracked in the areas of Finance (e.g. Secure Food Stamps or SSI), Health (e.g. Find a Family Doctor), Education (e.g. Help Child with Homework), Parenting (e.g. Coordination with CYF, Attend Parenting Classes) and Life Skills (e.g. Secure Basic Needs).
- Family Connection staff have access to EASD's PowerSchool data and can review attendance on a school-wide or individual student basis at any time to track improvements in this area (reports are typically run weekly)
- Staff are members of school's Attendance Teams and Child Study Teams where at-risk students are monitored

Other funding sources

Traditionally, additional funding sources for the Family Support & Case Management Program include the Easton Area School District, Northampton County Children, Youth & Families, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Two Rivers Health & Wellness Foundation and other corporate and foundation grants. In addition, funds from individual donations and agency special events are also incorporated into the annual budget.

Additional Information

- Project budget—See Attached
- Most recent year-end financial statement—See Attached
- IRS letter re 501 (c) (3) status—See Attached
- Board of Directors—See Attached

Family Connection of Easton

Family Support Budget

	Total	Rotary
Income		
EASD	13578	
United Way	45000	
Northampton County	31944	
Foundation Grants	9820	5000
Donations/Events	6500	
Other/Misc	24444	
Total Income	131286	5000
Expenses		
Executive Director	8363	
Finance and Administration Coord.	6602	
Associate Director	3042	500
Family Support Coordinator	44180	1000
Family Support Specialists (2)	38373	1000
Translator Stipend	2500	250
Admin Asst	1728	
Total Salaries and Wages	104788	2750
Fringe Benefits & Payroll Taxes		
Payroll taxes	12615	250
Health insurance	562	
Pension	900	
Workers Comp	205	
Professional Services		
Payroll expenses	1463	250
Clearances	100	
Insurance	800	
Program Supplies		
Family Assistance	2253	500
Educational Materials	500	
Food	500	
Dues and Subscriptions	150	
Office Supplies	1000	250
Printing	1000	250
Communications		
Telephone	900	250
Technology	1500	250
Postage and Delivery	100	
Advertising and Promotion	300	
Other/Misc	100	
Travel Expenses		
Transportation	1000	250
Meals	100	
Professional Development		
Training	450	
Total Expenses	131286	5000
Net Profit/Loss	0	0



Family Connection of Easton, Inc.

Your Partner for School Success

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