



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

Address c/o Cheston Elementary School

723 Coal St.

City Easton State PA Zip 18042

Phone 610-250-2551 x24075 Fax 610-923-6046

Email servac@eastonsd.org

Contact Person Carolyn Serva Title Executive Director

Project Director Maryanne West Title Coordinator

Project Title Kindergarten Connection

Grant Period Sept 1, 2018-June 30, 2019

Total Cost of Project \$77,000 Amount Requested \$5,000

Signature of Approving
Agency Personnel *Carolyn Serva* Date 3/17/18

Name of Approving
Agency Personnel Carolyn Serva Title Executive Director

For use by Easton Rotary Service Foundation

Date Received _____

Action Taken _____ Date _____

Easton Rotary Service Foundation

Grant Application Guidelines

(Please submit electronically if possible to pbraden@rcn.com)

Brief Description of the Organization

Family Connection of Easton is the non-profit family center for the Easton Area School District. We are proud to celebrate our 20th Anniversary in 2018! Our mission is to be a catalyst for change within families, schools and communities. Through a team approach that includes families, the Easton Area School District and community organizations, we improve academic performance, the quality of life, and the 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.

Family Connection was founded in 1998 with support from the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley to be the bridge between families, schools and the community. Initially, services were only offered at one elementary school, but by 2007 we were offering services throughout the district! Family Connection was incorporated and became a 501(c)(3) organization in 2006. Over the years, Family Connection of Easton has expanded its scope of services and currently offers the following programs:

- **Family Support and Case Management** – improves family self-sufficiency and positive school involvement;
- **Parents Who Care** – a family wellness and parenting education program;
- **Backpack Pals** – provides 180 EASD children with tote bags of kid-friendly, nutritious food to take home over long holiday weekends as well as establish and maintain pantries at EAMS and EAHS;
- **Health & Wellness Initiative** – assists families in securing free/low-cost health insurance and school-based preventative health services;
- **The Parent-Child Home Program** – a nationally recognized program to prepare preschool age children and their families for a successful school start through 100 home visits over 2 years with Family Literacy Specialists, who mentor parents on how to work with their children on developmental activities;
- **Afterschool Learning Clubs** – after-school programs at Paxinosa and Cheston Elementary Schools to help students strengthen reading and math skills along with enrichment and character-building activities; 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

Family Connection seeks support from the Easton Rotary Service Foundation for our Kindergarten Connection Program. This initiative began in 2009 and aims to engage preschools, students, parents, businesses, community service organizations and the Easton Area School District to increase school readiness. The main goals of the initiative are to create activities and align systems to ensure a seamless transition for students and families from Pre-K or home to Kindergarten. It is important to note that the programs and activities of Kindergarten Connection serve two distinct populations, each equally important in creating a successful transition program—children and teachers. We feel that we are at the forefront of transition activities in the Lehigh Valley, with new features and activities being added to the calendar each year. We know that a child's level of readiness is influenced by a number of factors, including exposure to learning opportunities, access to resources, family engagement, alignment of the Pre-K to K programs, and a welcoming environment at school. The activities of Kindergarten Connection aim to enhance all of these factors by leveling the playing field with the ultimate result that all children enter the K-12 system ready to learn.

Project Description

Statement of the need

In 2015, the Department of Education released a report stating that 6 out of 10 students are unprepared for Kindergarten. In "A Matter of Equity: Preschool in America," findings show that many children, especially those from low-income homes, are at risk for academic failure as they, "on average, start Kindergarten 12 to 14 months behind their peers in pre-literacy and language skills."

Additional research shows that stability in a child's early school settings and in the relationships with the adults in these settings, equates to improved social and academic outcomes in their school career (Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Tran & Winsler, 2011).

Family Connection's transition work began in 2009 with a needs assessment survey conducted with Pre-K educators, Kindergarten teachers and EASD administrators. The survey results led to the creation of our Transition Plan, which is now the driving document behind all efforts of the Kindergarten Connection initiative. We work to ensure that standards, curriculum, support services and assessments for Pre-K and Kindergarten align in an effort to have ready children, ready families, ready teachers, ready schools and ready communities.

How the proposal addresses the need

Kindergarten Connection develops a series of annual activities managed by our Kindergarten Connection Coordinator. The Coordinator works closely with approximately 30 local Pre-Ks and other key stakeholders to implement this initiative. In 2016-17, we saw 622 incoming Kindergarten students representing all 7 EASD elementary schools participate in at least one transition activity!

Transition activities include:

- Little Red Wagon traveling story times through select neighborhoods in Easton;
- Visits to the Easton Area Public Library to gain exposure to their services as well as to participate in story time and musical and kinesthetic activities;

- Provision of themed CD's, videos and books to Pre-Ks for year-long transition conversations;
- Promotion of on-time registration including dissemination of information at events and with community partners. "Branding" efforts include a Ready Rover mascot and t-shirts for all incoming Kindergarten students;
- Preparing and distributing "Summer Fun Bags" at Kindergarten Registration that include academic supplies and resource materials;
- Hosting Spring readiness sessions for incoming Paxinosa and Cheston students and their families to bridge the time between registration (March) and summer EASD programming. Sessions include tips and strategies for academic and social success as well as materials for use at home;
- Operating "Spring to Kindergarten" festivals at all 7 EASD elementary schools each May to welcome families, create connections and have fun;
- Preparing and distributing "Welcome Backpacks" to students on the 1st day of school;
- Hosting educational professional development forums for Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers to build relationships and share best practices; and
- Surveying of parents, administrators and teachers in an effort to assess the effectiveness of this work and provide Kindergarten teachers valuable data on transitioning students

Population to be served

Any child in EASD's catchment area can attend events. Recruitment is mainly done in partnership with Easton's many PreK centers. In an effort to find those children not in PreK, we "hit the streets" with fliers and information for businesses, bodegas, clinics, etc. and partners like the local community center, housing authority and more. Parent liaisons are recruited at elementary schools to spread the word. In addition, we promote through mailings, our website and social media. The "Reddy Rover" mascot created specifically for Kindergarten in the Easton Area School District is used on materials as our symbol of transition.

While Kindergarten Connection is a district-wide initiative, a more intense focus is largely on students entering Paxinosa and Cheston Elementary Schools. Both of these schools are classified as Title I schools for Reading and Math, meaning that they have been recognized by the Department of Education as having a significant population 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

According to research compiled in a brief entitled, "Four Important Things to Know About the Transition to School" by the Harvard Family Research Project, "when children are part of a quality transition process, they have an easier time and enjoy improved academic achievement, more positive social and emotional competencies and fewer problem behaviors as well as rapidly developing skills. Quality transitions are those in

which families, schools, and communities have opportunities to work together as a team, to share information, and to create continuity in curriculum, assessments, and relationship quality across learning settings."

The objectives of Kindergarten Connection are to:

- Provide a variety of activities for children and their families held at EASD schools to better familiarize them with the school setting and school staff;
- Supply children in need with improved access to books and other educational materials in an effort to promote early literacy at home;
- Facilitate opportunities for joint professional development for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers and administrators; and
- Develop methods for data sharing between parents, Pre-Ks and the EASD on a child's level of readiness

The overall goal is to align systems and implement activities based on research to improve a family's comfort level when entering school and create a network of community where all stakeholders understand that they have a role in ensuring a child's successful entry into school.

We have collected a variety of data on our transition efforts over the past several years. EASD prefers to evaluate readiness in the following ways:

- Cohort (year-to-year) review of the number of students with on-time registration;
- Cohort (year-to-year) review of incoming standardized assessment (STARS) data once they enter their Kindergarten year; and
- Developmental Checklists

Developmental Checklists are completed by both parents and Pre-K centers to measure students' capacity in the categories of Language & Communication, Cognitive Development and Social-Emotional Competency. These forms are analyzed and passed on to each student's incoming Kindergarten teacher for their use at the start of the school year. The data helps us look at overall trends in student competencies, which in turn dictates what areas of development we focus on in our transition events.

Other funding sources

Family Connection of Easton seeks support in the amount of \$5,000 from the Easton Rotary Service Foundation for our Kindergarten Connection Program. A projected Kindergarten Connection 2018-19 budget is included as an attachment to this application. Funds will be used in part to support the salary of our Kindergarten Connection Coordinator. The Coordinator is a full-year position at 32 hours/week. Job duties include management of the day-to-day program operation, establishing and maintaining relationships with Pre-K and EASD personnel, data collection and entry, volunteer management, purchasing of readiness materials and supplies, budget management and more.

Funds will also be used for program materials and supplies that are distributed to incoming Kindergarten

students and their families across EASD. Some examples of materials and supplies include flash cards, puzzles, books, math manipulatives, crayons, markers, scissors, activities to strengthen fine and gross motor skills and more! A small amount will be spent on food for our joint educators professional development series.

Funding would ideally be needed by June 2018 for use in our 2018-19 program year. We thank the Easton Rotary Service Foundation for its past support of Family Connection and hope that you once again find us worthy of consideration.

Financial Information

- Project budget—See Attached
- Most recent year end financial statement—See Attached

Other Information

- IRS letter re 501 (c) (3) status—See Attached
(If first time application)
- Board of Directors—See Attached
- Any other supporting material



Family Connection of Easton, Inc.

Your Partner for School Success

723 Coal St., Easton, PA 18042 • 610-250-2551 x24075 • 610-923-6046-fax
servac@eastonsd.org • www.familyconnectionofeaston.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Jeff Carlton

Term Expires: **6/2018**

Committees: Executive/Finance, Personnel

Self-Employed, Environmental/Safety Consultant

Email: jkmdmolly@gmail.com

Home address: 4352 King George Drive, Nazareth, PA 18064

Phone: 610-759-4212 (h); 610-533-2179 (w/c)

Member since: 6/2014

Vice President

Lisa Hand

Term Expires: **12/2018**

Committees: Executive/Finance, Strategic Planning

Program Director, Northampton County Children, Youth & Families

2801 Emrick Blvd., Bethlehem, PA 18020

Phone: 610-829-4614

Email: lhand@northamptoncounty.org

Home address: 623 Chestnut Terrace, Easton, PA 18042

Phone: 610-923-9160

Member since: 9/2012

Secretary

Keela Vincent

Term Expires: **12/2019**

Committees: Executive/Finance, Development; Walk Event

Corporate Communications Lead-Brand Strategy, Victaulic Company

4901 Kesslersville Road, Easton, PA 18040

Phone: 610-559-3380

Email: keela.vincent@victaulic.com

Home Address: 1653 Angela Drive, Bethlehem, PA 18017

Phone: 484-280-5427

Member since: 12/2013

Treasurer

Richard Siegfried

Term Expires: **6/2019**

Committees: Executive/Finance; Personnel

Community Volunteer, Retired, Crayola

Email: richsiegfried@verizon.net

Home Address: 2290 Stonebridge Lane, Easton PA 18040

Phone: 610-252-0586

Member since: 6/2013

Sharon AshtonTerm Expires: **6/2019***Committees: Program*

VP Worldwide Commercial Auto Manager, Chubb Insurance
202 Hall's Mill Road, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889
Phone: 908-572-5124

Email: shashton@chubb.com

Home address: 4144 Bethman Road, Easton, PA 18045

Phone: 610-250-7625 (h); 484-894-3704 (c)

Member since: 6/2015

Paul BarclayTerm Expires: **12/2019***Committees: TBD*

Professor of History, Lafayette College
309 Ramer House, 718 Sullivan Road, Easton, PA 18042
Phone: 610-330-5178

Email: barclayp@lafayette.edu

Home address: 146 E. Wayne Ave., Easton, PA 18042

Phone: 610-923-7429 (h); 610-730-1275 (c)

Member since: 12/2017

Debra BohrTerm Expires: **6/2018***Committees: Personnel*

Director, Center for Civic and Community Engagement, Northampton Community College
3835 Green Pond Road, Bethlehem, PA 18020
Phone: 610-861-5061

Email: dbohr@northampton.edu

Home address: 205 Florentine Drive, Easton, PA 18040

Phone: 610-984-7722

Member since: 11/2010

Candice BoyerTerm Expires: **3/2019***Committees: TBD*

Title I Math Teacher, Easton Area School District
723 Coal St., Easton, PA 18042
Phone: 610-250-2542

Email: boyerc@eastonsd.org

Home address: 2916 Fischer Road, Easton, PA 18042

Phone: 610-905-5425

Member since: 3/2015

Janelle L. HoweyTerm Expires: **6/2018***Committees: Development, Personnel*

Strengthening Families Program Facilitator, Valley Youth House
Director of Residence Life, Northampton Community College
3835 Green Pond Road, Bethlehem, PA 18020

Email: jhowey@northampton.edu

Phone: 610-332-6171 Fax: 610-861-4562

Home address: 2353 Second Street, Easton, PA 18042

Phone: 610-438-2881

Member since: 2/2011

Karen KellyTerm Expires: **9/2019***Committees: Development*

Executive Communications & Employee Engagement Manager, Crayola
1100 Church Lane, PO Box 431, Easton, PA 18040

Email: kkelly2@crayola.com

Phone: 610-253-6272 x 4344 (w); 484-695-1993 (c)

Home address: 3341 Highfield Circle, Bethlehem, PA 18020

Phone: 610-997-7990 (h)

Member since: 9/2017

Tracy PiazzaTerm Expires: **6/2018***Committees: Strategic Planning, Development*

Director of Teaching & Learning, K-4, Easton Area School District
1801 Bushkill Drive, Easton, PA 18040

Phone: 610-250-2400 x35037

Email: piazzat@eastonsd.org

Home Address: 411 Apple Blossom Road, Easton PA 18040

Phone: 610-559-8190

Member since: 7/2006

Amy RaderTerm Expires: **6/2018***Committees: Development*

Kindergarten Teacher, Paxinosa Elementary School
1221 Northampton St., Easton, PA 18042

Email: radera@eastonsd.org

Home Address: 301 Crescent Drive, Easton, PA 18045

Phone: 610-360-3389

Member since: 6/2016

Danielle RinghoffTerm Expires: **6/2018***Committees: Strategic Planning*

Assistant Professor, Northampton Community College
3835 Green Pond Road, Bethlehem, PA 18020

Email: dnringhoff@gmail.com

Home Address: 4080 Tamarack Trail, Bethlehem, PA 18020

Phone: 610-509-0118

Member since: 6/2016

Karley Biggs SebiaTerm Expires: **3/2019***Committees: Personnel*

Attorney, King, Spry, Herman, Freund, & Faul, LLC
1 W. Broad St., Suite 700, Bethlehem, PA 18017

Phone: 610-332-0390

Email: ksebia@kingspry.com

Home Address: 205 Bridle Path Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017

Phone: 610-657-1126

Member since: 3/2015