

**W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center  
Proposal to General Mills Foundation  
Executive Summary**

**Mission**

***Raise the performance level of underserved communities through educational services and applied state-of-the-art-technology.***

**Programs and Services**

The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center is a not-for-profit 501(c) 3 corporation.

Over the past 30 years, the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center (DLC) has provided free educational services to the inner-city of Kansas City, Missouri.

DLC provides supplementary educational programs and tutorial assistance to students from second grade through secondary school in core areas of reading, math, science, and computer technology.

DLC programs are staffed entirely by volunteers, many of whom have donated several hours each week since the DLC's inception.

DLC volunteers serve as mentors as well as tutors, acting as role models and counselors for students.

DLC telehub initiative serves as community network, providing educational resources through satellite sites and addressing the digital divide.

**Accomplishments**

For the 2002-2003 school year, enrollment in DLC core tutorial programs exceeded 460. Tutorial programs served students from numerous area school districts, and charter and private schools.

DLC "staff" of volunteers provided over 5000 hours of support to DLC programs during the 2002-2003 school year. Over 125 active volunteers serve as the foundation for DLC programs.

DLC telecommunications project extends educational resources to the community. The network has grown to include 13 satellite sites in community institutions and churches with over 145 access points and more than 2,600 registered users.

DLC programs supports after-school and tutorial programs at satellite sites and a free Summer Academic Camp for over 700 children in the summer of 2003. This includes on-line testing and assessment of math and reading development for all program participants.

## **NEED FOR ASSISTANCE**

The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center (DLC) has operated without the benefit of paid staff members or sufficient sources of operating funds. Individual contributions and more recently, funding through a contract for supplemental education services with the Kansas City Missouri School District, have been utilized for operational expenses. As a result of school district budget constraints, continuation of this funding is uncertain.

In order to maintain the DLC's existing facilities and continue to operate existing programs, assistance in meeting operational expenses is imperative. The DLC has grown, both in size and complexity, to the point that personnel to staff support of the various programs, services and initiatives are required.

Grants from corporations to establish and expand the telecommunications initiative (telehub) have been devoted to infrastructure development and network and computer equipment to launch community computer technology centers (satellite sites). The ongoing cost of operating and maintaining this network is borne by the center.

The critical needs and costs associated with operating the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center are addressed in the attached budget request for \$315,000. Support for this budget request will allow the DLC to devote energy and resources to improving and expanding its ability to serve students in the Kansas City area.

*” We hold the possible **Future In Our Hands**, but not by wish and will, only by  
thought, plan, knowledge and organization”*

W.E.B. DuBois

Creating Giant Steps...Together

## W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center

### Proposal to General Mills Foundation

#### **Introduction**

The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center, founded in 1973, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation operating in the inner city of Kansas City, Missouri. The DuBois Learning Center is committed to raising the performance level of underserved communities through educational services and applied state-of-the-art technology. The center has provided free tutorial services and mentoring for elementary and secondary students in reading, mathematics, science, and computer science. The DuBois Learning Center has assembled a dedicated all-volunteer staff that includes many professionals in the community. The center's tutorial programs have grown to an enrollment of over 460 in 2002-2003. (Tables 1 and 2)

Beginning in 1997, the DuBois Learning Center established a Telehub Initiative to address the "digital divide" in the inner city and to provide an additional channel to provide educational services and content to area students. The telehub is a network of community technology centers established in community centers and churches. To date, thirteen computer labs have been developed to support tutorial services, after school programs, a Summer Academic Camp for over 700 students, and student and adult technology training. The network has been built, primarily, through the efforts of students and volunteers to wire the facilities and install equipment. A goal of twenty sites within the next two years is viewed as achievable.

Two web sites, <http://www.duboislc.org> and <http://www.duboislc.net>, contain a wealth of educational material and links supportive of the educational goals of the DuBois Learning Center.

This proposal for funding is for \$315,000 to provide operating funds to support the DuBois Learning Center for 2003-2004. Such funding is vital to the ability of the center to maintain, improve and expand services provided to students in the community.

#### **Organization History**

The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center evolved from the union of a mathematics program sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and a reading program sponsored by the Youth Fellowship Board of the Paseo United Methodist Church. Both efforts were designed to address the languishing educational situation in Greater Kansas City's African American community. In

1973, these two programs joined together to form the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center.

Through the efforts of a few volunteers, the Learning Center began tutorial services in the fall of 1973 serving a small number of students. The services focused on reading, mathematics, and science. The program utilized space in the basement of an area church, and facilitated an enrollment of 40 children per program. As word spread about the program, it attracted additional volunteers and began to receive referrals by parents, teachers and other school officials. As enrollment grew, additional churches and the headquarters of a community political organization were utilized to meet the needs of the students. In 1984, the program had grown to require a "home" and the current location at 5501 Cleveland, a former boys' home, was conveyed to the center. The value of the programs has been recognized and has resulted in an annually increasing enrollment; in the 2002-2003 school year, enrollment in the programs exceeded 460.

Since 1973, the Learning Center has operated with an all-volunteer staff. The classroom and training volunteer staff includes certified teachers, medical professionals, scientists, accountants, engineers, mathematicians, computer technologists, chemists and business professionals. These dedicated individuals donate their time and talent to support the educational aspirations of the youth in the community. Computer technologists are heavily involved in the development and operation of the Telehub project and also teach computer classes offered to students and adult members of the community. Over 125 active volunteers support the center and its programs, and during the 2002-2003 school year donated well over 5,000 hours to the center and its students.

In the beginning, the center concentrated efforts on recruiting volunteers who were proficient in their respective fields and who were also willing to donate a few hours a week to work with the students. Before acquiring the building, only a meager operating budget was required. However, with a building to maintain, and a need to raise funds, it also became necessary to recruit additional volunteers with skills in areas such as public relations, fund raising, management, and business management.

The center sought and received grants from organizations such as the Oppenstein Brothers Foundation, the United Methodist Church and others that enabled the center to remain open. In 1987, the center's Parents Auxiliary decided to assess themselves a small registration fee (\$45 per family per year) and remains the only cost asked of participants in the tutorial programs. The center was also able to obtain a bingo permit, which helped it to hold on during the late 1980's. The center also began to acquire funds from individual donors who designated the Learning Center to receive their United Way contributions, even though the DuBois Learning Center is not a United Way agency.

In the late 1980s the U.S. Department of Energy gave the center a \$10,000 grant to obtain science equipment and the Allied Signal Corporation (now Honeywell) awarded the center grants totaling \$65,000 to initiate a computer science program.

The mid-nineties witnessed the emerging significance of the Internet and information technology (IT), but with a dearth of technology in the inner city. The DuBois Learning Center wanted to address the growing problem of the community and its youth falling behind in acquiring important telecommunication and IT skills, and in access to and use of the Internet.

The DLC was privileged to have, among its volunteers, leading computer technologists in the area. These volunteers offered the first IT course, "Introduction to Computers, Maintenance and Repair". Students enrolled in the class built the Learning Center's first web server, a 486-100. It is still in use today. The Learning Center slowly began to acquire the capability to offer website hosting for various community institutions, and began to offer training to young people on how to write and maintain websites.

The next stage in the development of the DuBois Learning Center was establishing a telecommunications initiative (telehub) to extend educational resources to the community. The objective of the DLC Telehub was to provide access to state-of-the-art technology to underserved communities. DLC began to build a wireless computer network by establishing five satellite sites, or community technology centers, at neighborhood centers and churches located close to the DLC. These institutions sought to avail themselves of the technology but they did not have access to the technical expertise. DLC developed a computer network to deliver computer technology to these sites, with the required technical computer skills housed at the DLC to serve as the hub, or center. Once the network was established, the DLC and the satellite centers began to construct a youth education curriculum that incorporated computer assistance for instruction, evaluation, and administration.

The telehub development provided an excellent opportunity to train area students on wiring and networking, and to utilize their training in wiring the satellite facilities. The telehub has benefited from the support and contributions of corporations such as Microsoft, Cisco Systems, Oracle, Sprint, General Electric, and SBC that have provided for much of the software and hardware required to develop the network infrastructure. (exhibit 1)

The telehub model was considered very successful, and replicable. The DLC began to receive requests for services and expansion from other parts of the urban core. With financial resources provided through a grant from the Department of Education and corporations such as General Electric, the capability to accommodate these requests was accomplished by erecting a 190 ft. tower to transmit over longer distances. The second phase of the telehub

development was completed in October of 2002, and the network has grown to include computer technology labs in thirteen area satellite sites with over 145 access points. The registered user base experienced a 21.6% increase in the eight month period ending in May of 2003. The base has continued to grow and currently is over 2,600. Two additional sites are under development during the summer of 2003.

There are a substantial number of additional requests from other churches and centers in the community, and funding to develop the infrastructure needed for additional expansion is sought on an ongoing basis. Word of this success has also reached other cities, generating additional interest. In 2003, the DLC established a network link to Detroit, Michigan, demonstrating that the Telehub can be replicated and grow to accommodate satellites locally and throughout the country.

### **Program Needs Assessment (Capacity Building)**

The DLC targets students from the Kansas City, Missouri School District (KCMSD) who are below grade level in achievement. Free lunch program participation indicates that a majority of the students represent a poorer section of the urban community. School data indicates that better than 67.7% of students from the KCMSD receive free lunch. Over 13,000 students in the KCMSD are from families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children with over thirty of the districts 43 elementary schools being eligible for Title 1 services. Eighty-seven (87%) of all public housing units are in the African American predominated census tract located in the area of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 77<sup>th</sup> Street, and Troost to Elmwood The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center is within these census tracts. Students from schools in the targeted census tracts are demonstrating high degrees of low academic achievement and high suspension rates which can lead to underachievement, increased dropout rates, and unemployment.

There are few supplementary programs to meet the demand of the growing number of parents seeking tutorial assistance for their children. Consulting with principals, counselors and teachers in the Kansas City Missouri School District, they invariably concurred with the need for individualized tutorial assistance and have developed a collaborative relationship with the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center for the past thirty years.

The DuBois Learning Center has traditionally served this community by supplying a high quality and high volume of educational assistance. With the current state of the economy, many parents cannot afford private education or pay for tutorial services, therefore our program serves as an obvious alternative for those economically disadvantaged parents who want a quality education for children.

## **Overview of DLC Services**

The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center has become a cornerstone for education in the community since 1973. The center was founded as a supplemental educational program with specific goals designed to provide general instructional assistance to students' grades 2-12 in core content areas of Reading, Mathematics, Science and Computer Technology. Urban school districts typically face certain socio-economic disadvantages and conditions that limit the ability of parents to access supplemental educational services. The Learning Center has proven itself to be a viable solution to the unique needs of the children of this community. The Learning Center's instruction focuses on remediation, enrichment and acceleration.

The center's general objectives support and assist students towards improved academic achievement and meeting or exceeding grade level standards. This is accomplished by stressing organizational goals in:

### ***Reading***

To increase the reading performance of students who are experiencing difficulty with word recognition, pronunciation, comprehension and composition skills. An important component of the reading and literacy program is remedial and designed to meet the specific needs of students who are performing below grade level.

### ***Mathematics***

To increase the performance level of students who need assistance in basic Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Fractions and General Math. Pattern recognition, higher order thinking skills and problem solving are emphasized. Assistance is also provided to students in Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus and Calculus.

### ***Science***

To increase performance of students who need assistance in logical reasoning, problem solving and fundamental skill building. Assistance is provided with homework assignments, examinations, experiments and class projects. The goal is to prepare students for high school academic success in Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Life, Earth and Physical Science.

### ***Computer Technology***

To increase performance levels of students by utilizing computer technology and to introduce students to computer science by utilizing self-pace and user-friendly software. The program parallels the mathematics program in that it offers courses that build upon each other. In addition, the computer technology program offers training to adults and students through instruction which includes HTML, Computer Graphics, Microsoft Office, Fundamentals of PC Maintenance and Repair, and a Cisco Certified Network Academy.

## **Program Structure**

The W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center extends students' learning opportunities beyond the normal school day with sessions in the evenings and on weekends. Students are placed in appropriate skill level classes, rather than at grade level. Services are provided in the core content areas as follows:

- ◆ Monday – Reading 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday – Computer Technology 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday – Computer Technology 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday – Science & Computer Technology 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday – Math & Computer Technology 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The DuBois Learning Center uses several methods to assess and determine student placement and progress:

- ◆ Star Reading and Math Assessment – Star assessments are quick, easy to administer and accurate. The students are tested in the DLC computer labs. Questions continually adjust to each student's response. The assessment can provide up to 16 different reports that include the identification of the student's grade level and recommended range. Based on the results, we are able to place the student accordingly.
- ◆ Wide Range Achievement (WRAT) is used to evaluate and determine word identification and pronunciation skills.
- ◆ Classroom Reading Inventory (CRI) is used to evaluate and assess basic comprehension skills.
- ◆ Math Assessment – an internal assessment to determine basic skill and proficiency levels.

In addition to on going testing, we rely on feedback from parents, volunteers and students, as well as teacher monitoring systems, observation periods and attendance tracking.

## **EXTENDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

The DLC's primary focus is to assist students in achieving academic success by supplementing and extending the learning opportunities. Our instructional focus supports, maintains and enhances the core curriculum content of area school districts.

In addition, the development of the DLC's telehub project provides opportunities to extend educational resources to other organizations and institutions in underserved communities. These on-line resources are utilized to support after-school programs, tutorial initiatives, and summer academic programs through the satellite computer technology centers.

### **GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

A ten member Board of Directors governs the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center:

Lester L. Dixon, Jr. Chairman  
Overnice Glover, Vice Chairman  
Revonia Elston, Secretary  
Leah R. Suttington, Chief Financial Officer  
Cornell Perry  
Linda Watkins  
Robert McKinnie  
Kim Edwards  
Keith King  
Harrison May

The DLC provides its tutorial services with an all-volunteer staff. A list of volunteers along with credentials is available. The leadership structure of the center also includes volunteers as department heads of the various tutorial programs.

Harrison May, Computer Science and TeleHub Project  
Linda Watkins, Reading Program  
Leon Dixon and Overnice Glover, Mathematics Program  
Brandy Lane, Science Program

William (Bill) B. Grace has served as the Executive Director of W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center since its inception. For many years, this has been performed without compensation even while the functions and time requirements of the position have grown to full-time proportions.

Elton Gumbel Jr. became the center's first "employee" in January of 2003 to serve as the Telehub Network Administrator funded by a one-year grant from the Kauffman Foundation. Mr. Gumbel has also been involved with the center as a volunteer instructor in the Reading program for 15 years.

## **STAFF AUGMENTATION**

The foundation of the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center is its volunteer base. It has provided services to the community without benefit of a traditional staff to support its evolution over the past 30 years. It continues to attract talented and dedicated people who share an interest in helping students in the community. However, the time, availability and resources of volunteers to support the ongoing needs of the center are not sufficient. The center has reached a stage in its development that a small staff to support the growth and improvement in services provided to students and to the community is essential. Included in the budget submitted with this proposal are costs associated with four positions:

***Executive Director*** - Although this position is theoretically a part-time, primarily volunteer position, it is in reality a full-time job. In order for the center's programs and services to improve and continue to grow, the demands of the Executive Director's functions require a paid, full-time position. Salary \$60,000

***Administrative Assistant*** - The Learning Center has struggled to manage day-to-day administrative functions on a volunteer basis. The growth of the center's programs requires a full-time position in order to support the Center's current and expanded programs. Salary \$27,000

***Network Director*** - The telehub network has grown beyond the scope that can be effectively managed on a volunteer basis. The addition of a network administrator during 2003 has demonstrated the need for staffing to assist satellite sites during operating hours, provide training for site personnel, and perform network maintenance. However, it has also demonstrated the need for a Network Director to plan, organize and develop resources for network infrastructure improvements, expansion, and program operations. As a small, not-for-profit organization, we will not be able to offer market-level compensation for this position. However, we can employ someone who is willing to fill this position for below-market salary in order to make a difference in the lives of the youth and young adults we will serve. Salary \$75,000

***Program Director*** - This position is important to assist the Executive Director in the administration of current programs and to develop strategies and proposals to obtain additional resources for the center. This position will also assist the telehub program as the community liaison with satellite centers. Salary \$37,000

**W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center  
Operating Budget Proposal**

Staff Augmentation			
	Executive Director	\$60,000	
	Administrative Assistance	\$27,000	
	Network Director	\$75,000	
	Program Director	<u>\$37,000</u>	
			<u>\$199,000</u>
	plus Fringe @ 18%	<u>\$36,000</u>	
			<u>\$36,000</u>
Property - Operations/Maintenance			
	General Liability	\$7,000	
	Misc. Taxes, licensing and permits	\$2,400	
	Maintenance and Repairs	\$21,000	
	Waste Management	<u>\$600</u>	
			<u>\$31,000</u>
Utilities			
	Gas, water, electric	\$17,000	
	Telephone	\$2,400	
	Internet Services (T-1)	<u>\$9,600</u>	
			<u>\$29,000</u>
Office Expenses		<u>\$7,500</u>	
			<u>\$7,500</u>
Other			
	Advertising and Promotions	\$2,000	
	Conferences, training, seminars	\$8,000	
	Meetings	\$1,500	
	Miscellaneous	<u>\$1,000</u>	
			\$12,500
	<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$315,000</b>

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Table 1.0

**W.E.B. DuBois Enrollment Data Term 2002-2003**

<b>Active Enrollment Analysis</b>	
<i>Active Enrollment Analysis</i>	<i>Students Enrolled</i>
Computer Science	44
Mathematics	308
Reading	95
Science	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>463</b>

Table 2.0

**Enrollment Analysis by Student Count and District\***

<i>District</i>	<i>Student Enrolled</i>	<i>Total Class Enrollment</i>
<b>KCMO</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Charter KCMO</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Hickman Mills</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Raytown</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Center</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Grandview</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Lee's Summit</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SM</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Blue Springs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KCKS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Cass R VIII</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Blue Valley</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>313*</b>	<b>440*</b>

\* Totals calculated as of 2-15-2003 for the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center only. Total does not reflect adult enrollment in computer courses.

Exhibit 1

## **List of Corporate/Foundation Donors**

Kauffman Foundation

General Electric – Employers Reinsurance Corporation (ERC)

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas City

Microsoft Corporation

Sprint Corporation

Southwestern Bell Corporation

Cisco Systems

Hallmark Cards

Citrix Corporation

Allied Signal Corporation

Waitt Foundation

TicketMaster Corporation

Oppenstein Brothers Foundation