



Education—Counseling—Spiritual Development

Josefina S. Castillo Literacy Coordinator/Grant Writer
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October 31, 2011

Texas Rural Communities, Inc.
Attn: Sandra Tenorio
168 Cimarron Park Loop
Buda, Texas 78610

Dear Ms. Tenorio:

The St. Henry de Osso Family Project has been serving families in Uvalde for the past 18 years. We are at our core a family literacy program and see our mission as one of empowerment. Through our diverse programs of education, counseling, and spiritual support, we aim at breaking through the cycle of illiteracy, poverty, and violence that is so prevalent in the border regions of Southwest Texas. The Project transforms the lives of men, women, and children by allowing them to grow as individuals and become contributing members of their community.

Ms. Tenorio and TRC Board, it is our intent to reapply for granting from TRC. Upon looking through your grant guidelines, we did not find any restrictions stating that a grantee cannot reply until their previous grant year is over or after 12 months after their previous grant period. In light of this, we would like to apply for an impact grant of \$25,000 that will be allocated towards the new *iCAN* Program, an at-risk youth program. The *iCAN* program is aimed at breaking the dropout cycle of students in junior high and high school. Funding will be allocated towards the salary of the At-Risk Youth Coordinator and the startup expenses of beginning the new program. We plan to have the pilot program in place by February and then continue growing the program in the next fiscal year.

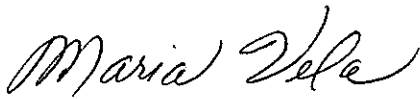
The 42% dropout rate in Uvalde and the surrounding areas continues to be of critical importance, and it is our intent that the *iCAN* program can reach those teens that are on the verge of becoming the next drop out statistic. Through our intervention of empowerment, we plan to reduce the dropout rate and school retention by 15% in our pilot phase and to grow these numbers with every consecutive year.

The needs of Uvalde are still great, and the Project is continuously looking for new, innovative ways to help families realize their own potential to break out of the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that entraps them. Please consider the St. Henry de Osso Family Project for the TRC Grant, for it is only with the aid of generous contributions that we can continue our mission to affirm the power and worth inherent in every human being and enable families and individuals to discover and achieve their own potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josefina Castillo".

Josefina Castillo
Literacy Coordinator/Grant Writer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria Vela".

Maria Vela
President, Board of Directors

Program Summary:

The St. Henry de Osso Family Project has been serving families in the small community of Uvalde Texas for over 18 years. The Project is at its core a literacy program aimed at breaking the cycle of illiteracy, poverty, and violence that is prevalent in the border counties of Southwest Texas.

In 1992, a study done by the Renew Program of the Archdiocese of San Antonio identified many of the urgent needs of families in Southwest Texas. One of these pressing needs was a prevalent cycle of illiteracy. The Project began in 1993 as an adult literacy program. The philosophy was that by helping the parents, they could in turn help their children. After the Project's first year, founder and first project director Sr. Hortensia Coloma, STJ surveyed the participants and discovered they preferred a literacy program geared towards helping their children. It was after this that the home-based tutoring program was initiated. This philosophy of tutoring the children at home with the parents present and actively participating became the core of the Project. Over the years, the Project grew and deepened in scope as it became apparent that families needed other services. Other services offered through the Project include adult literacy, parenting classes (both in English and Spanish), anger-management classes, counseling (both English and Spanish), support groups, and our free-bread program. The new *iCAN* at-risk youth program is the newest addition to the Project's list of services aimed at targeting the at-risk youth in our area.

The youth program is aimed at reaching at-risk youth who exist on the fringes of acceptable school behavior, who have lost school credit, and who are on the verge of dropping out of school and joining the already large school dropout population in Uvalde county and the surrounding area. By targeting the at-risk youth, the Project hopes to stem the ever-increasing dropout rate and break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty that is prevalent in the border counties of southwest Texas.

We see the *iCAN* program as unique because it targets a population that may otherwise be overlooked until it is too late. The program will give these troubled youth tools to help them make good decisions and to build-up character and habits; tools that will enable them to create a better future for themselves. Through the program modules, these young people will learn to discover their talents and gifts and become self-confident and empowered to be the best that they are meant to be for their own sake and for the sake of the community.

Section I: Contact Information

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- b. St. Henry de Osso Family Project
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Section II: Organizational Description

- a. The St. Henry de Osso Family Project's mission is to affirm the power and worth inherent in every human being. It is our purpose to utilize a community web of volunteers and partners to enable families and individuals to discover and achieve their own potential. We are committed to creating a better future for our community. The Project began in 1993 as an adult literacy program. The philosophy was that by helping the parents, they could in turn help their children. After the Project's first year, founder and first project director Sr. Hortensia Coloma, STJ surveyed the participants and discovered they preferred a literacy program geared towards helping their children. It was after this that the home-based tutoring program was initiated. This philosophy of tutoring the children at home with the parents present and actively participating became the core of the Project. Over the years, the Project grew and deepened in scope as it became apparent that families needed other services. To further empower our families, the Project introduced parenting classes taught both in English and Spanish. Along with parenting classes, we have also put in place a counseling program offering family counseling, individual counseling, and anger-management classes for both adults and teens. We also offer support groups like the Ray of Hope group which aims to empower people with disabilities and their families. Last year, the Project came full circle by reintroducing the adult literacy component to the services offered. The adult literacy component is comprised of English as a Second Language classes, Adult Basic Education classes, and GED tutorials. To further reach the at-risk population of our community the Project is developing its *iCAN* pilot program intended to serve youth in grades 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grades who are attending or have attended the alternative school setting. Program participants will receive the tools needed to discover their gifts and talents and to become self-confident and empowered to be the best that they can be for their sake and for the sake of the community.

Section III. Program Description

- a. The Family Project serves the families Uvalde, Texas and the surrounding areas. In the past the literacy program has been reproduced in Batesville, Brackettville, Camp Wood, Del Rio and Eagle Pass. In 1992, a study done by the Renew Program of the Archdiocese of San Antonio identified many of the urgent needs of families in Southwest Texas. One of these pressing needs was a prevalent cycle of illiteracy. The Project aims to break the cycle of illiteracy

and poverty that is widespread in the border counties of Southwest Texas. By targeting at-risk families, the literacy program helps at-risk children in grades K-3rd who are at risk of failure, who read below grade level, and who in the near future could become the next generation of school dropouts. The *iCAN* program continues this mission of empowerment into the secondary grades of junior high and high school where the danger of dropping out is most prevalent. The nine county area of southwest Texas including Uvalde County averages a dropout rate of 52%. In fact, 85% of single mothers in Texas are illiterate making it difficult for them to support their children, and one of five of America's children lives in poverty. According to the January 2009 National Center for Education Statistics, 27% of people living in Uvalde County are illiterate, and on the average, 19% of adult Texans cannot read a newspaper. Because the needs are tremendous, the Project continues to seek ways to help families realize their own potential to break out of the cycle of illiteracy that entraps them, but we cannot do this alone. It is only with the help of others who consider literacy to be a priority that we can continue in our mission.

- b. The SHDO Family Project is at its core a literacy program, yet we believe in helping or reaching the 'whole' person which means offering services like counseling, anger-management, and personal skills that can help empower every individual to reach their inherent worth. The *iCAN* program targets at-risk youth in grades 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th who are experiencing problems in school. Project goals include: putting a youth coordinator in place to begin the process of reaching out into the community and partnering with other agencies to identify the at-risk students and their needs. A second goal includes the development of programs – one targeting 7th and 8th grades and another to target the 9th and 10th grade students. A third goal will be the implementation of the tools for program evaluation and measurement. The *iCAN* program aims at reaching between 25 to 50 students during its initial pilot year. The projected organizational goals include reaching over 1,500 families through our other services and to serve over 25 students through the *iCAN* program.
- c. Program participants include at-risk youth in junior high – 7th and 8th grades—and freshmen and sophomore students in high school. Participants will be students who are in the alternative school setting due to behavior problems in the regular school environment. Also targeted will be students enrolled in Excel Academy. A majority of these students are young mothers who have lost course credit due to pregnancy issues and male students who have lost course credits as a result of excessive absences or class failure. Ninety percent of the students fitting the *iCAN* target population are Hispanic and live in households that fall under the poverty line. The pilot program hopes to serve between 25 to 50 students during its pilot year.
- d. We see our program as unique because unlike many other programs we strive to help the individual as a whole by targeting the many areas of need including scholastic improvement through tutoring but also by targeting the root of the problems through programs aimed at helping each student identify

their strengths and weakness through counseling and behavior interventions. The successful implementation of the Uvalde program would allow for continued growth in this area and for possible program replication in the surrounding communities of Pearsall, Cotulla, Crystal City, Carrizo Springs, and possibly Eagle Pass and Del Rio.

- e. We are requesting an impact grant of \$25,000 but would accept a smaller amount.

2012 Proposed Budget
Program Title: iCAN At-Risk Youth Program

<u>Income</u>	<u>Dollar Amount</u>
Donated Materials & Services (In-Kind Contributions)	
Sisters' Labor	\$10,000
Volunteers' Labor	\$ 3,000
Food	\$ 5,000
Classroom	\$ 5,000
Donated Materials & Services subtotal	\$23,000
Cash Income	\$ 5,000
Total Income	<u>\$28,000</u>
<u>Expenses</u>	
(Donated in-kind Contributions)	
Sisters' Labor	\$10,000
Volunteers' Labor	\$ 3,000
Food	\$ 5,000
Classroom	\$ 5,000
Donated Materials & Services subtotal	\$23,000
Cash Expenses	
At-Risk Youth Coordinator salary	\$15,000
Utilities	\$ 1,000
Teaching Supplies	\$ 2,000
Cash Expense Subtotal	\$18,000
Total Expenses	<u>\$41,000</u>
Balance (Loss)	(<u>\$13,000</u>)

- f. Program expected outcomes include serving over 25 at-risk youth through the iCAN pilot program. Projected outcomes will include an increase of students staying in school with a drop in the expected dropout rate and a 90% student attitude and grade improvement. These outcomes will be measured by collecting report cards after each grading period and keeping a track of grade improvements and promotions. In conjunction with this tracking, we will

conduct surveys with the families and teachers of the participating students to measure the students' improved attitude towards school and life in general.

- g. Our fiscal year runs from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011. The Project is an ongoing program with services running all fiscal year. The iCAN program will begin gathering at-risk student data through surveys, questionnaires, and interviews of school personnel in January 2012. After the needs analysis has been created, recognized, and agreed upon by the Uvalde CISD, the School Board of Directors, and the St. Henry de Osso Family Project Board of Directors then the program will begin a pilot phase of the program. A tentative start date is scheduled for February 2012 and will run through the end of the Project's fiscal year in June. The iCAN program will begin its first year in August 2012. Funds will be used throughout the year to allow for the continuation of the iCAN at-risk youth program.