



P.O. Box 14567 Madison, WI. 53708 (608) 819-6200 www.mentoringpositives.org

July 23, 2012

City of Madison Community Services Committee
Attn: Jennifer Stoiber, Program Assistant II
Re: 2013-2014 Funding

Dear Committee Members,

It is with utmost respect that Mentoring Positives, Inc. (MP) would like to express that the committee has a difficult job in making decisions on funding that will affect our community and appreciate the numerous hours you dedicate to working through this funding process.

Since 2004, Mentoring Positives, Inc. has been working "on the streets" in the late evening hours when programming is most needed with many at-risk and disadvantaged youth in Dane County, specifically in the Darbo/Worthington Park neighborhood. Programming is offered to this neighborhood at no cost to approximately 50-65 participants, each and every month, for free. In addition, Mentoring Positives' mentors do not get paid for their countless hours of advocacy and specialized mentoring support offered to the Darbo youth and families. Myself, as Executive Director, and my wife, Assistant Director, Becky Green, have not had a salary since Mentoring Positives' inception 8 years ago. (All income received has been through direct service mentoring cases from fee-for-service contracts from various non-profit and county/state youth agencies.) These contracts are for mentoring youth, outside of the numerous hours put into the 4 days a week programming with the Darbo youth programs.

Providing direct care as the Executive Director and Assistant Director clearly takes away from the duties that are essential to sustaining the programming of Mentoring Positives. MP is a small agency that does a great deal for the community. It is unfortunate that we as an agency do not have a grant writer to assist with writing grants which is evident in MP's overall committee rating of our recent grant applications. While attending one of your committee hearings, it was brought up to the committee, by one of its own members, that organizations doing good work in the community could get overlooked for funding due to low application scores. Mentoring Positives is one of those agencies that is doing great work, but did not relate that in our grant application.

MP is in the heart of one the Mayor's designated troubled neighborhoods. The City has provided some support to MP for other MP programming and MP is very thankful for that support. MP has solicited funding from this committee for the past three funding cycles. It was recommended that MP become a "stand alone" agency in the last funding cycle thus we became a non-profit and 501 (c)3 entity. Due to our agency's small capacity, my wife and I generally do all direct service, administrative, fundraising, marketing, and leadership duties. In addition, MP has been highlighted for numerous awards in the last 2 years, specifically, the Madison Police Department's "Outstanding Support Award" and I was humbled to be chosen as one of Madison People of the Year recipients. Again, highlighting the many job duties of my wife and I, we are proud to note that we work extremely hard to develop community collaborations and strategically use many wonderful "in kind" supports. For instance, MP saves a great deal of money on utilizing space in Darbo Worthington Park for programming thus no large over head building costs or rent.

Mentoring Positives works with a large minority population, particularly African American youth and families. MP is one of the leading organizations who are providing culturally specific staff of color to work with these youth and families. This is extremely important due to the fact that often our African American youth lack the African American positive role models needed in their lives.

We are requesting funding for our salaries, as well as advocating for employment for other specialized mentors. It takes dedicated, consistent and committed people to build positive connections and relationships with the mentally ill and delinquent youth MP serves.

Please consider our recent funding proposals for the Mentoring Positives' Leader Academy and the Madison Urban Agriculture Enterprise. We are hopeful that the committee will see the passion of the work we do and recognize the leadership and commitment we have for the Darbo neighborhood youth and families, and the greater community.

Sincerely,

Will Green
Founder/Executive Director
Mentoring Positives, Inc.