

Inter-Faith Food Shuttle: Application to ConAgra Food Feeding Children Better

Proposal Narrative (85 points) - not to exceed 3 pages.

Please include the following in your narrative:

Addressing Child Hunger (10 points) Please provide a summary of your organization's efforts in addressing child hunger in your community. Include accomplishments, child hunger initiatives, and your existing child feeding programs including number of sites, overall initiatives, and any program accomplishments.

The Inter-Faith Food Shuttle (Shuttle) believes that hunger in our land of plenty is unacceptable, and since 1989 we have rescued tens of millions of pounds of high quality fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products, cereals, and juices for distribution to the hungry. Through partnerships with hundreds of food donors – including North Carolina's State Farmers Market which is adjacent to our headquarters – the Shuttle truly strives to rescue and distribute the best and most nutritious foods available.

Since starting nearly 20 years ago as a simple agency that recovered and distributed as much perishable food as we could carry in our personal vehicles, the Shuttle has developed into a major human service organization with volunteers donating over 38,000 hours each year and over 220 food donors contributing over 5 million pounds of food annually. Today, the Shuttle serves as the North Carolina Research Triangle's # 1 provider of the high quality foods listed in the opening sentence.

In all seven of our service counties, an alarming **53,538 children live in absolute poverty** – a state that always involves hunger and food insecurity. (U.S. Census "Small Area Income and Poverty Statistics"). In our area, 81,000 children are eligible for free or subsidized meals at school. While school meals are clearly an effective hunger safety net, we know of thousands of children who still do not receive enough personal food to thrive. To be blunt, these children are in a mess – nutritionally, emotionally, academically, and socially.

To aggressively fight childhood hunger in the Triangle, the Shuttle operates several highly acclaimed programs designed to feed children who are routinely hungry. Through our **Summer Food Service Program**, the Shuttle provides a balanced cold lunch, breakfast, and/or snack to children who receive free and reduced lunches during the academic year, but "fall through the cracks" during the summer months. The Shuttle is the state's largest non-governmental vendor of summer meals and we often provide as many as 2,800 meals in a single day. The meals are prepared in our state-of-the-art kitchen by trainees and graduates of our **Culinary Job Training Program**, and are delivered on Shuttle trucks. In collaboration with the local food bank, the Shuttle currently supplies healthy dinners and snacks to 550 children participating in seven evening **Kids Cafe Programs**. Again, balanced meals are prepared by our Culinary Job Training Program, the meals are blast-frozen, and re-heated on site. Through our committed **Healthy Snacks Program**, regular deliveries of fresh fruit, granola bars, peanut butter crackers and 100% fruit juice are made to established tutoring programs across our service area. It was through that program that we came to serve three Community Learning Centers in the poorest and highest crime urban areas of our service counties. It is at these Centers that we will establish our newest Kids Cafe Programs. The additional bonus is that we will be able to serve the 155 children at these sites in a much needed holistic fashion- combining all of our Childhood Nutrition Programs - Kids Cafes, SFSP, Backpack Buddies, and Healthy Snacks with bi-weekly grocery bags to their families to supplement food stamp purchases, moving them from USDA food insecure status to true food security. These three programs thoroughly compliment our **Backpack Buddies** program which targets kids who access free and reduced-price meals at school, but need other nutritional support over the weekends. Presently, over 500 children from targeted neighborhoods and schools are handed backpacks each Friday loaded with appetizing, healthy foods to feed them over the weekend and holidays.

Program Description (25 points) Describe the child feeding program your requested grant will support. Please include number of site/s your project will reach, type of service provided (snacks, meals, etc.), frequency of service or distribution, information regarding a site's affiliation (Boys & Girls Club, church, etc.). Will your program be serving children during the school year as well as in the summer? If you are not applying for SFSP, explain the difference between food service during the school year and summer program.

To our Network's credit, there is no doubt that Backpack, Kids Cafe, Summer Feeding, and other childhood hunger programs are now performing miracles for tens of thousands of hungry children. **Indeed, the Shuttle itself operates four such programs serving approximately 4,000 children at over thirty sites** (Backpack, Kids Cafe, Summer Feeding, and Healthy Snacks Program). Even with these effective programs, the Shuttle believes we are at a time when the Network – including the Shuttle – can collectively do better on the matter of childhood hunger. It is through the model program we are proposing here – a model of innovation and collaboration – that we believe we can show a path to higher performance levels in fighting childhood hunger.

Using our Kids Cafe Program as our leading initiative, the Shuttle intends to conduct an intensive “holistic” model program for feeding 155 exceptionally at-risk children in three of the poorest areas of North Carolina, if not the nation. The locations for the Shuttle’s proposed project are three existing, high activity entities known as **Community Learning Centers**, located in distressed complexes operated by the Durham Housing Authority. Community Learning Centers provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, **particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools**. The federally subsidized program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

Evolving these three targeted Community Learning Centers from Healthy Snack Program recipients to more traditional Kids Cafe models will allow us to conduct this intensive holistic feeding program for 155 exceptionally at-risk children. We will offer these children a full “portfolio” of childhood hunger programs and targeted services. What’s more, the Shuttle, in collaboration with its listed partner organizations, will track and evaluate the nutritional, academic, and social growth of the 155 targeted children in a manner that has not yet been achieved in the Food Bank Network. Our model program will include **daily and enthusiastic** involvement of such unique partners as Womble Carlyle Sandridge and Rice (a large law firm with offices in six states and the District of Columbia), Durham County Parks and Recreation, the Durham Public School System, the Durham YMCA, the YMCA of the Triangle, North Carolina Central University, and the Durham Housing Authority, one of our nation’s most challenged entities of this kind. The Shuttle’s newest staff member – our first Registered Dietitian – will also play a major role in this project. It is for this holistic approach to feeding and developing extremely vulnerable children (including the adoption of what can only be called state-of-the-art evaluation tools) that the Shuttle is seeking \$50,000 from this wonderful ConAgra opportunity.

While the Shuttle has long provided food inside Durham Housing Authority sites through grocery bags for seniors, mobile pantry units, Summer Food Service, afterschool snacks, and Backpack Buddies, we have not to date provided food to the exceptionally at-risk children who attend these Community Learning Centers. They are perfect locations for expanding our Kids Cafe Program as well as the “portfolio” of other programs we plan.

At our three new Kids Cafe sites, located in our absolute poorest urban areas, 155 new children will receive:

- Complete, hot meals prepared by chefs in our Culinary Jobs Training Program. Meals will be served three days per week and will be served all year round.
- Backpacks loaded with appetizing, healthy foods to feed them over weekends and holidays.
- Healthy snacks including fruits, cheeses, and juices served three days per week, all year round.
- Fitness activities to combat obesity.
- Nutrition education for the children and families including cooking and eating healthy foods.
- Anti-gang counseling.
- Academic tutoring and testing.
- Activities involving parents.
- State-of-the-art evaluation study and manual to be published by our cooperating law firm and North Carolina Central University.

We consider this program to be worthy and innovative because of 1) the deep commitment of resources and volunteers from a major Law firm including the execution and printing of a comprehensive evaluation report and “how-to” manual, 2) the participation of student tutors from North Carolina State University, 3) the introduction and use of a full-time, professional Registered Dietitian, 4) the zealous participation of our largest housing authority, school system, and recreation oriented organizations, and 5) an intensive focus upon the “life” of each child including regular interaction with parents. It goes without saying that the barrage of Shuttle feeding programs directed at these very needy children will also be of great value. There will be no difference between the nutritional quality of food service during the school year and the summer program food service during the school year and summer program.

[Budget Justification/Narrative \(10 points\)](#) Please explain how grant funds will be utilized and allocated. Where applicable, please include an explanation of why funds are needed in the particular areas.

In short, we envision the following costs for our Kids Cafe expansion project which totals \$96,153 for the 2008 program year (52 weeks). For food purchase (foods that we cannot predictably recover), our total budget is \$33,971. We are asking ConAgra for \$25,000 toward food. For staff that is requisite to the success of this project, our total budget is \$59,378. We are asking ConAgra for \$25,000 toward staff salaries. From ConAgra, we are seeking 40% of the salary of our RD, 20% of our driver, 40% of our cook, 10% of our Executive Chef, and 100% of our on-site coordinators. For equipment and renovation, we envision no funds needed. For supplies and disposables, our total budget is \$2,804. We are asking ConAgra for no funds here. **It is important to note that we have not included the significant costs or revenues of the other programs that are part of the portfolio of childhood hunger programs envisioned in this model expansion project. Only the Kids Cafe costs and revenues are included here.**

Goals, Objectives, Evaluation (20 points) What are your goals/objectives and anticipated outcomes for this child feeding program? How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your program and determine that your goals and objectives have been met? Please be specific and include the measurable indicators of your success.

Our rationale for expanding our Kids Cafe Program into the three Community Learning Centers (Cornwallis – 50 children, McDougald Terrace – 40 children, and Oxford Manor – 65 children) is simple – overwhelming need! Again, an alarming 53,538 children in the Shuttle’s service area live in absolute poverty – a state that always involves hunger and food insecurity. The children we are targeting with this project are the absolute poorest and neediest of this large number of impoverished children, living in urban areas where the quality of life is compromised even more by gang crime and violence.

Our goals and objectives with this project are extremely aggressive. **Simply put, we want to alter the course of 155 young lives that are presently headed in directions of disaster.**

- we plan to positively change the nutrition health/condition of our 155 target children
- we plan to teach our 155 children life-long habits of nutrition and physical activity
- we plan to improve our children’s academic test scores and attitude toward gang involvement

The effectiveness of our first bullet above will be measured by tracking the delivery of significant amounts of high quality, nutritious food to our target children. Did we indeed feed all 155 children three days per week all year round through our Kids Cafe Program? Did we supply each child with 8-12 pound Backpacks each Friday, year round? For our second bullet, our new Registered Dietitian in conjunction with our partners will be conducting regular and aggressive nutrition education and physical education sessions. Retention of taught material, weight and body mass measurements, and other tests will be conducted to evaluate progress. For our third bullet, project partners including North Carolina State University and the Durham Public School will assist in tutoring and regular testing to evaluate academic growth. Finally, our very active volunteer law firm has pledged to publish our evaluation reports for Network distribution.

Sustainability (15 points) Please describe your plans for finding funds/resources to support your child feeding program beyond *ConAgra Foods Feeding Children Better Foundation* funding. Discuss any additional partnerships and/or collaborations and their contributions (financial or in-kind) that will help the project (i.e. affiliation with local restaurant or dietetic association; support by local philanthropic organizations, restaurants, civic groups).

The Shuttle Development Team is increasingly using a full spectrum of effective fundraising tactics including aggressive grant writing, direct mail, events of all sizes, and corporate contributions. Using these techniques, the Shuttle is on a solid course for meeting this year’s Kids Cafe expansion budget of \$96,153, as well as our over-all Kids Cafe budget. For example, using our Kids Cafe Program as our “ask”, this year the Shuttle has strengthened existing relationships and even forged new ones with area foundations. Many more applications and foundations are in various states of consideration at this time.

Relationship with ConAgra Foods, Inc. (5 points) If applicable, please describe any existing relationships with local ConAgra Foods, Inc. plants and offices, and relationships with local and regional grocery and prepared food suppliers, especially as they pertain to food for your child feeding program.

While the Shuttle enjoys wonderful donor relationships with all area supermarkets and many distributors and wholesalers, we do not presently have a ConAgra facility in our service area. We did enjoy a wonderful relationship with the Triangle-based GoodMark Foods, a former ConAgra brand/division before they were sold. Many foods derived through our relationships with area donors are essential to keeping our warehouse adequately stocked. We do use such foods (including ConAgra products) in our Kids Cafe Program.