‘Cooking up Confidence’: Nutrition Education for Girls to Develop Healthy Habits and Self-Esteem

Submitted to: The XYZ Foundation*

Submitted by: The ABC Organization*

*Both the foundation name and the organization name have been changed.
December 4, 2010

XXXX XXXXXXX
Executive Director
The XYZ Foundation
123 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10006

Dear Ms. XXXXXXX,

I am pleased to submit this proposal from The ABC Organization to request a grant of $7,000 for our new nutrition education course, “Cooking up Confidence.” This program will tackle many current issues that girls face regarding healthy habits and self-esteem. As a consistent grantor of our programming and other organizations promoting the well-being of girls and women, The XYZ Foundation is a vital part of our past and future success.

The ABC National Research Center has found that low self-esteem, eating disorders, and childhood obesity are some of the most pressing issues for girls today. Our program uniquely addresses all of these issues in order to raise nutritional knowledge among girls and help them to gain a strong sense of self. We are requesting a grant to fund salaries for a program coordinator, nutritionist, and guest speakers for the course. Funds will also go toward costs for room rental, healthy food ingredients, and personal workbooks. Our request will cover the first session of this program for 15 middle school girls whom are either already a part of the ABC Organization or have been identified by school administrators and family members as someone who would greatly benefit from our program.

Thank you for your years of support to ABC of New York City and other local councils. Since our 1995 grant for the XX New York program, your generous grants for the XX and XX programs as well as start up fees and general program expansion has helped us stay a leader in providing programs that better the lives of girls.

Your continued support will help ABC to create this unique course to help girls develop healthy habits and self-respect, which are essential for them to become strong and confident future leaders. I will follow up with you next week to make sure you received the proposal, but please do not hesitate to call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to continuing ABC’s mutually beneficial partnership with The XYZ Foundation.

Sincerely,

XXXX XXXXXXXXX
Executive Director
ABC of New York City
789 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABC of New York City seeks $7,000 to fund our nutrition education course for 15 middle school girls. We are the oldest nonprofit organization in the country focused on issues that affect girls. Our mission is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Since 1864, ABC has addressed the unique needs of girls through research-based programs as well as public education efforts that empower girls to become self-respecting, capable women.

In our current society, girls are facing pressures to fit into a certain mold and this prevents them from developing a strong sense of self and healthy habits. Issues such as eating disorders, childhood obesity, and lack of self-respect are now pervasive in the country among girls. “Cooking up Confidence,” the first nutrition education program of its kind, tackles the many issues that girls are facing today to strengthen their self-esteem and nutritional knowledge in order for them to become healthy and confident future leaders.

Our nutrition and self-esteem education course addresses many of the issues that girls face and therefore will become a model for similar courses in the future. The main goals of the course are to teach girls to value their own judgment, develop healthy and sustainable habits, and respect themselves through making positive choices. Girls will learn specific ways to tackle the personal issues that they face and get support from a nutritionist, guest speakers, and other girls in the program.

ABC of New York City invites The XYZ Foundation to consider a grant of $7,000 to support the implementation of our nutrition education program. The results of this program will be life-changing for the participating girls and your generosity would inspire future program expansion to reach even more girls throughout the city and the nation.
INTRODUCTION

The ABC Organization is the oldest girl-centered nonprofit organization in the country. Since 1864, ABC has responded to the changing needs of girls through research-based programs and public education efforts that empower girls to understand, value, and assert their rights. Our mission is simple: to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

Our organization strives to address pressing issues that girls face and we have shown our expertise in many areas affecting girls through the success of our programs. Research gathered at the ABC National Research Center informs the content of our programming which encourages girls to take risks and master physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges. An example of one of our programs is the XX program where girls learn to become leaders to create lasting social change through projects in their community. Another example is the XX program which teaches girls to manage money, invest, and develop an overall understanding and appreciation of the global economic market. This specific program received a grant from The XYZ Foundation in 2007, which made it possible to reach out to many girls and teach them valuable life-skills. Our goal for each program is to better the lives of girls by providing innovative social and educational programming. From your gracious support of ABC and other similar organizations over the years, we know that your foundation understands the importance of meeting the changing needs of girls.

Our Board of Directors includes experts in many fields, all of whom are extremely dedicated to ABC’s mission. In March, XX became our Honorary Board Chair, lending her support to furthering our programming and advocacy efforts. She is a strong advocate for girl’s empowerment and understands the importance of instilling healthy habits and self-confidence from a young age. For a full list of our current Board of Directors, refer to the Appendix at the end of the proposal.

In order to help girls overcome societal pressures and misinformation concerning healthy habits, we want to provide a program which addresses issues of nutrition and self-esteem. Girls cannot become strong and confident citizens without the knowledge and power to make informed healthy eating choices. Thus, our local council of the national organization has created a healthy cooking class that addresses major issues of eating disorders, obesity and low self-esteem by teaching girls to create healthy habits in addition to showing them the importance of eating well and taking care of themselves.

This course, “Cooking up Confidence,” does so much more than just provide nutrition education. It teaches girls how to take care of themselves mentally, physically, and emotionally by providing them the tools to succeed in every area of their health and consequently their lives. With your continued support, we will be able to address these issues through our new course and make a huge difference in the lives of girls.
PROBLEM STATEMENT

The frequency of eating disorders, the obesity epidemic and pressures from mass media to be thin all signal the urgency of teaching girls the importance of healthy habits. In our current society, alarming numbers of girls have eating disorders and childhood obesity has become a nationwide epidemic.

The numbers of girls engaging in harmful eating behaviors have been on the rise due to misinformation about health that is circulating around and negatively affecting the well-being of girls. These dangerous eating habits are evident from the results of the Center for Disease Control’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance survey, which found that 62% of high school aged girls were using drastic weight loss methods within the 30 days before taking the survey.¹ Girls see images of celebrities in the media and read about the latest diets in beauty magazines. The internet is filled with many websites that promote harmful habits for girls and these messages drive girls to unhealthy extremes. Some websites even advocate for eating disorders, termed “pro-ana” (pro-anorexia) or “pro-mia” (pro-bulimia) sites.² These media sources create negative self-images for young girls and lead to skewed views of healthy habits.

These negative self-images coupled with the ever-increasing availability of cheap and unhealthy foods have contributed greatly to the rise in obesity among girls. According to the U.S. Institute of Medicine, 40% of girls born in the United States in the year 2000 have a lifetime risk of being diagnosed with obesity-related type 2 diabetes.³ This unfortunate statistic reflects the poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyle of children today.

In order to combat the spreading obesity epidemic, serious eating disorders, and self-esteem issues, ABC has developed a course to teach girls about both nutrition and the importance of self-respect and confidence. A course that teaches healthy nutritional habits and self-acceptance serves to fight these large issues that girls are facing today.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

ABC's healthy nutrition course, “Cooking up Confidence,” serves to educate middle school aged girls about healthy eating habits and the importance of self-confidence. This course addresses pressing issues such as eating disorders, obesity and low self-esteem by showing girls the importance of eating well and taking care of themselves. “Cooking up Confidence” uses ABC research and expertise in order to develop a course which enables girls to grow as healthy individuals and consequently succeed in every area of their lives. The course includes weekly cooking lessons followed by a combination of discussions, films, and guest speakers.

Goals/Objectives

The first main goal of the program is to help girls develop realistic and sustainable habits that reflect healthy standards instead of peer pressure. Our second goal is to have the girls respect themselves more and realize the importance of developing good habits for life. Specifically, we aim to meet the following objectives in order to reach these goals:

1. Increase positive self-image in 100% of girls
2. Have 100% of girls be able to recognize a new healthy habit that they developed
3. Have 100% of girls learn how to make at least five healthy meals
4. Have 75% of girls understand that what they read in magazines is not reality
5. Receive positive feedback from parents and teachers about positive changes in the habits and confidence of 75% of girls

Methods

The class is a pilot program open to 15 middle school aged girls in New York City. The participants will be chosen from existing girls in our organization’s programs, as well as girls who would benefit from our program, chosen from East Side Middle School on 91st street. The course will run twelve weeks, with the girls meeting two hours once a week with a female nutritionist with whom they may feel more comfortable. Once the first session of the program runs, it will be evaluated for future programming. Ideally, the program will run twice each year as we expand to older and younger age groups as well.

In the two hour nutrition course each week, girls will learn how to take control of their health with hands-on activities that have been proven to be successful from our substantial research. Through cooking meals themselves and learning from experts in many fields, girls will gain healthy nutrition skills and build their confidence each class.

The first hour will consist of healthy cooking lessons, during which the nutritionist will teach girls about proper portion sizes, what kinds of food they should be eating,
and how they can make healthy meals on a budget. Throughout this hour, the girls will make different healthy meals, measure out the right amounts of foods, and get excited about what healthy nutrition can do for them.

The second hour will consist of a discussion session during which the girls will speak about eating and self-esteem issues with the nutritionist. Girls will ask questions about habits that they have, how to change unhealthy habits, and whether or not they have a good sense of realistic personal goals that they set. This portion of the program also will include videos and guest speakers to help the girls to further understand the importance of healthy nutrition and sustainable eating habits. During the twelve weeks of the course, there will be four guest speakers and two films shown in order to enhance the learning experience for the girls.

Every week, the girls will be assigned different learning exercises from personal workbooks. Examples of these exercises are making sample healthy meal plans for themselves and comparing suggestions in popular magazines with healthy, realistic eating habits. They will complete these exercises before the next class meeting to help them to assess their habits and their goals and then create healthy and sustainable eating habits for life. They will also be provided with personal journals in which they will write new recipes, goals for themselves and other notes they want to take pertaining to the program and their personal progress. By keeping themselves accountable, girls will be able to set goals and achieve them.

**Evaluation**

The program will be measured by evaluations that girls will take at the beginning and the end of the course, in order to test their nutritional knowledge and self-image before and after participating in the class. We will be in constant contact with school administrators, psychiatrists, and parents to assess the improvement of the girls’ eating habits and self-esteem. With our proven research and program experience, the girls who participate in our programs always have tremendous success within the programs and beyond. The ultimate test of our program is whether or not the girls see themselves in a healthier way and feel that they are worth taking care of. This is where feedback from the participants themselves is very important and will allow us to evaluate how the program is succeeding or what needs to be changed.
FUTURE FUNDING

After the successful completion of the first twelve-week session of “Cooking up Confidence,” ABC of New York City will submit evaluations of the course to the Board of Directors in order to plan a fundraising event to secure donations to help finance the next session of the course. We will seek grants in order to obtain the remainder of the funds needed. Additionally, many donors of our current programs have expressed interest in supporting the program once it is established in the next year.

CONCLUSION

Girls today are facing great pressures, preventing them from developing a strong sense of self and healthy habits. Issues such as eating disorders, childhood obesity, and lack of self-respect are affecting girls in unprecedented numbers. Our unique program, “Cooking up Confidence,” addresses all of these issues to strengthen girls’ self-esteem and nutritional knowledge in order for them to go on to become healthy and confident citizens who make a difference in the world. A $7,000 grant from The XYZ Foundation will allow The ABC Organization to carry out this life-changing program and give you the satisfaction of making a significant contribution to providing our girls with a new, healthy outlook on life.
BUDGET

In order to carry out our nutrition education program, we will need funding for the expenses represented in the chart below. These are all current estimations, and there is also a miscellaneous section in order to account for price changes or events such as a potential party or field trip at the end of the course for the girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Quantity/Frequency</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Coordinator salary(^4)</td>
<td>$1,615</td>
<td>20% of salary for 12 weeks/1 time</td>
<td>$1,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritionist salary(^5)</td>
<td>$50.00/hour</td>
<td>2 hours per week/12 weeks</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Rental(^6)</td>
<td>$70.00/hour</td>
<td>2 hours per week/12 weeks</td>
<td>$1,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food ingredients(^7)</td>
<td>$5.00/person</td>
<td>15 girls/12 weeks</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workbooks(^8)</td>
<td>$20.00/person</td>
<td>15 girls/1 time</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Journals(^9)</td>
<td>$3.29/person</td>
<td>15 girls/1 time</td>
<td>$49.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Speakers</td>
<td>$250/person</td>
<td>4 women/once every 3 weeks</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous costs such as special events, potential field trips, and price inflation</td>
<td>$255.65</td>
<td>1 time</td>
<td>$255.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $7,000

APPENDIX

Board of Directors*

*The names of the organization’s board members have been removed.

\(^4\) Cost of 20% of 12 weeks of $35,000 annual salary
\(^5\) Average wage for nutritionist in New York City- http://www.payscale.com
\(^6\) YMCA room rental rates- http://www.ymcanyc.org
\(^7\) Average cost of meal per person- http://www.peapod.com
\(^8\) Cost of workbook printing- http://www.staples.com
\(^9\) Cost of staples journals- http://www.staples.com