



Gheens Building Bridges to Tomorrow – A Success By 6 Initiative **An example of a summary presentation of investment options.**

Issue:

The future success of our community requires a capable, educated workforce. Recent national studies show that on average 46% of the children who arrive at kindergarten each year come to school ill-prepared to succeed. In addition, children from low wage families often begin school 1-2 years behind their counterparts.

What we know:

- Over 90% of brain development occurs before age six.
- Children in low wage families are at greatest risk of not being prepared to succeed in school.
- The 40-years of High/Scope Perry Preschool research demonstrates that investing \$1 in a child's pre-school success saves \$17 down the road.
- Quality early learning reduces: crime rates, teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency, job training cost, grade repetition.
- Quality early learning increases: success in school, graduation rates, workforce readiness, job productivity and community engagement

Solution:

Metro United Way Success By 6 is committed to ensuring that all children are safe, healthy, nurtured and prepared to succeed in kindergarten. And now, thanks to a bold and generous commitment of \$2,000,000 over the next four years by the **Gheens Foundation**, we are embarking on work that will measurably improve the school readiness of the participating children and the financial stability of their families.

Our Success By 6 Gheens Bridges to Tomorrow Initiative is a powerful collaborative approach to providing the support and education that families need to prepare their children for success in school. Since a family's financial stability has a tremendous impact on how prepared children are for school, the initiative also works with families to set and achieve goals that lead to financial stability, and ultimately, financial independence. Four neighborhood centers (Neighborhood House in Portland, Louisville Central Community Center in Russell, Presbyterian Community Center in Smoketown and the Americana Community Center in South Louisville) will be the focus for the initiative. Efforts will include quality curricula in the centers' childcare classrooms, assessment for the children in order to set school readiness goals and measure progress, and financial education and coaches for the parents. New Directions Housing Corporation, with its wealth of experience with neighborhood residents, will serve as the intermediary agency coordinating efforts across the four neighborhoods.

Early initiative performance benchmarks will include a school readiness baseline established by childhood development assessments for the three year-olds from each of the centers, as well as a comprehensive family financial stability assessment of their families. Evidence-based curricula will be selected to move children and their families toward the goals of school readiness and financial stability.

We will be utilizing a proven approach by employing family coaches at each participating center to work with and on behalf of the families. The work of the Casey Foundation across the USA has demonstrated that such para-professionals are very effective in helping to overcome one of the greatest barriers typically encountered in working with low wage families – a profound lack of trust in

“established” agencies and a correlating lack of credibility. These family coaches will be individuals who have demonstrated, in their own life experiences, the ability to face and overcome challenges akin to those faced by the participating families.

In addition, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has agreed to assist in the ongoing training of these coaches. Their assistance is representative of the willingness to help that we are encountering across the community. The National Center for Family Literacy and many other expert organizations have expressed enthusiasm for the initiative and offered their capable assistance.

How you can help:

Investing in high-quality early care and education for all children is proven to pay huge dividends for the individual child and for society as a whole. Not only does it build a strong foundation from which all children can pursue their full potential, but it increases the likelihood of educational success and success in life. Metro United Way is committed, but we need the support of the entire community to achieve such ambitious goals.

The Gheens Foundation has generously pledged \$500,000 a year for four years and Metro United Way has committed to seek to match that gift each year. To date we have secured two major partners, **Humana** and **PNC Bank**, and are currently seeking support for four important additional aspects of the initiative. **Humana** has agreed to be our health partner, bringing a wellness center and trained wellness coaches to each of the centers, along with targeted health education initiatives. **PNC** is our financial literacy partner and will work closely with us to address the financial planning and asset management issues faced by the participating families. Both **Humana** and **PNC** have committed \$100,000 in new funding for each of the next four years.

We respectfully ask you to consider becoming a partner in this exciting initiative by contributing an additional \$25,000 for each of the next four years. Your gift may be directed to initiative work at a specific center or to one of the program components described below.

1. *Volunteer Enrichment and Parental Involvement*

\$100,000 a year for four years (\$25,000 per center per year)

The Volunteer Enrichment effort engages corporate and community volunteers to help the centers meet the needs of their families and children. Volunteer activities will range from being a supporting a family through mentoring to working at a health fair or serving as a trained reader. Your support would provide quality screening for volunteers, books for children, additional educational outings and other much needed materials and activities.

The Parent Involvement effort will help parents understand how to better fulfill their role as the child's first and most important teacher. A parent's role in preparing a child for success in school is critical. Your support will underwrite the cost of parent involvement trainings and events designed to attract and engage parents in their child's early learning.

2. *Individual Development Accounts Fund*

\$100,000 a year for four years

Your gift would help to establish a fund that will act an incentive for families who are working towards financial independence. Your support will allow us to help families increase their education level, get job skills training, or build assets like home ownership to ensure they continue their path to financial independence. The core concept involves the provision of a match of dollars saved for these specific purposes by participating families. Match funds may not be spent for any other purposes than those mutually agreed to by the initiative and the families.

3. *Creative Use of Applied Technology*

\$75,000 a year for four years

With the use of applied technology we can be more efficient and better prepare our children and their parents for school and the workplace and therefore we looking for a *Technology and Innovations* partner. This partnership will help create wireless centers where families can use wireless laptop computers for training, education and finding a job. And through the use of streaming video we can link parents quickly and directly to the agency resources they need.

4. *Micro Enterprise Loan Fund*

\$25,000 a year for four years

Micro Enterprise grants help parents achieve financial success by leveraging their talents and knowledge to build a small business. There are many parents with the drive and talent to succeed if only they had the resources. With financial literacy training and the necessary funds to get started many of these families can realize their dreams at the same time locating businesses in their neighborhoods.

Metro United Way's President and CEO, Joe Tolan, would be delighted to discuss this proposal with you at your convenience. He may be reached on his direct line at 502-292-6232, on his cell phone at 502-777-3723, or via e-mail at joe.tolan@metrounitedway.org

Thank you for your consideration of this request.