

The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation
Proposal Information Form

I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Organization name: Providence St. Mel School

Project/Program title: Early Children Education Program (Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten)

Program/Project Start Date: August 2011 Program/Project End Date: May 2012

Proposed Funding: First Year: \$50,000 Total: \$ 150,000 (over 3 years)

Grant Administrator:

Name & Title: F. Martin Glynn, Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations

Address: Providence St. Mel School

119 South Central Park Boulevard

Chicago, IL 60624

Telephone: 773.265.2219 Fax: 773.722.6032

Email: glynnm@psmnow.com

Signature:  Date: October 7, 2011

Program Director/Project Manager/Principal Investigator (if different above):

Name/Position: Julie Jovan, Lower/Middle School Department Chair

Address: Providence St. Mel School

119 South Central Park Boulevard

Chicago, IL 60624

Email: jovanj@psmnow.com

Telephone: 773.722.4600, ext. 1104 Fax: 773.722.6032

II. PROPOSAL STATEMENT

Please describe the program/project that you propose for our Foundation to fund. Please mention the overall size of the program/project, how many children, by age range, and how many caregivers, it serves, studies, or supports, and what you know about their socio-economic characteristics and that of the community in which they live.

Providence St. Mel School respectfully requests from *The Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation* a grant of \$150,000 (over three years) to help support our early childhood education program, which includes our pre-kindergarten and also our new pre-school, which just opened in August 2011. One pre-school and two pre-kindergarten teachers, assisted by two teaching aides, provide the instruction. Our social worker conducts the Providence St. Mel Parent Enrichment Program, in which all parents new to our school must participate. Overseeing our early childhood education program is the lower and middle school department chair. Overall, our program currently serves 30 children, ranging in ages from

three to four. Currently, for the 2011-2012 academic year, we have 12 children in the pre-school and 18 in the pre-kindergarten. Over the next couple of years, we anticipate an expansion of the program to accommodate 60-70 children. The majority of our students — as is the case with all students who attend our school — live in or near the immediate area, Garfield Park, an economically distressed community of about 45,000 residents, the vast majority of whom are African-American.

III. PROPOSAL ATTRIBUTES

Please provide and discuss the following information for the type of program/project you propose:

A. Direct Service Programs:

1. The location, size and socio-economic characteristics of the community served by your proposed program.

Providence St. Mel School stands in the Garfield Park neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. This predominantly African-American, inner-city community of about 45,000 residents still struggles with some of the highest rates of crime, violence, unemployment, poverty, and illicit drug use in Chicago and in the nation. In 2009, towards the beginning of this economic crisis which the nation is still facing, the median household income in the Garfield Park community was \$29,052. For Chicago overall, the median household income was \$45,734. Just over a third of the population (35.3%) was under the poverty level, whereas in Chicago overall, only 19.6% was under this level. The percentage of single-mother households in the community was 31.2%, whereas in Chicago overall, this percentage was 12.7% in 2009. At about this same time, the *Chicago Tribune* noted that our police district was the "most violent," leading the city in murders and sporting "the most lucrative drug-dealing turf in the city." In short, our urban community offers few opportunities and many dangers.

2. The unmet needs of the community that your proposed program addresses, and how you identified those needs.

The Need for Quality Early Childhood Education in Our Community. In the fall of 2000, we opened our kindergarten, and in the fall of 2008, we opened our pre-kindergarten, which *The Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation* generously supported during the 2009-2010 academic year, the second year of its operation. To reach children even sooner, we this fall began offering a special pre-school program for three-year-olds. An expansion of and enhancement to this important early childhood education program, our new pre-school marks a significant new phase in our development as a quality college-preparatory school, one that begins even earlier in children's lives to prepare them to undertake a rich and rewarding education.

For families in this underserved community, an academic-based pre-kindergarten is seldom available. Most in this community must rely on a pre-school that offers little

more than babysitting and play-based activities. Too often, such activities will do little to prepare children for school, especially a college-preparatory school.

Our young families recognize and value the proven instructional model that our school has developed over thirty years of teaching at-risk children and preparing students for success in higher education and in life. They appreciate the need and desirability to begin their children's education in a learning environment that is safe, nurturing, but also productive.

3. The research findings, best practices and/or curriculum models on which the following program elements are based.
 - i. the choice of format or setting (*e.g.*, home visits, center-based, office visits).
 - ii. the duration (the overall length of time it serves a given participant).
 - iii. the intensity (how many hours each day and days each week a participant receives services).

Impact of Early Childhood Education. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, high-quality early childhood education programs can increase the likelihood of high school graduation and employment and reduce welfare dependence, school dropout rates, and crime. In an underprivileged community like ours, which few socioeconomic opportunities and many obstacles, including poverty and crime, a proper, effective, and competitive education is the means to break the devastating cycle of poverty, dependence, and disaffection. Our history and our record of success over more than thirty years bear out this transformative power of a rigorous and rewarding college-preparatory education.

Emphasis on Academics. In many other settings, pre-school and pre-kindergarten programs are little more than unstructured, variable activities. At Providence St. Mel, however, both our pre-school and our pre-kindergarten are *academic-based* rather than play-centered. Both our three-year-olds (pre-school) and four-year-olds (pre-kindergarten) participate in a full-day (8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.) program, which allows for optimum instruction. The class size is capped to no more than twenty students to allow for a ten-to-one student-to-teacher ratio. We should note that, to accommodate our new pre-school, we completely remodeled a room on the first floor, adding height-appropriate sinks and fixtures and installing a small private restroom across the hall for use by these children.

Pre-School. In our pre-school program, children work in large or small groups, in partners or individually to engage in cooperative learning ventures, language expansion lessons, imaginative play, and logical and critical thinking opportunities. We believe that our youngest students learn and discover how to relate to the world around them through exploration, creative, inquiry, play, and interactions with others.

We offer a variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment that allow our students to practice developing such additional skills as lacing, tracing, pouring, stacking, counting, comparing, drawing, painting, cutting, pasting, and experimenting. When children

experience success in completing such tasks as these, they gain the self-confidence that encourages them and promotes their readiness to meet new challenges — challenges like our pre-kindergarten.

Research-based, Standards-based Curricula. In our pre-school, project-based activities and theme-related lessons support the integrated curricula. The specific series used throughout our program include *The Wright Skills* (for reading); *Growing with Mathematics* (for hands-on math), and *Handwriting Without Tears* (for development of writing and fine motor skills).

Pre-Kindergarten. Our pre-kindergarten builds upon what our students will have learned in our pre-school. At Providence St. Mel, we teach pre-kindergarten students the core disciplines of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and social skills. As well, we focus on gross and fine motor skill development that will begin their academic foundation. The goals for the pre-kindergarten program are to —

- help children develop language abilities (develop speaking and listening skills);
- promote and encourage literacy development (build emerging reading and writing awareness);
- emphasize the development of critical thinking and reasoning abilities (help students think, experiment, reason, and question);
- develop a respect and concern for others through the development of social skills and knowledge;
- encourage the development of creative expression and appreciation for the arts;
- enhance the physical development and skills of each child; and
- foster an awareness of self-discipline.

Research-based, Standards-based Curricula. The curricula for our pre-kindergarten are *Open Court Reading* and *Real Math*. *Open Court Reading* is a research-based, standards-based curriculum grounded in systematic, explicit instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics and word knowledge, comprehension skills and strategies, inquiry skills and strategies, and writing and language arts skills and strategies. *Real Math* is a research-based, standards-based curriculum that combines instruction in basic skills, conceptual understanding, and real-life problem-solving to engage young learners and help them understand and enjoy mathematics.

Proven and effective, these are concrete-sequential curricula through which each day of learning builds upon the next. Because each curriculum is more structured, our teachers direct learning. Throughout the week, our pre-kindergarteners are introduced to pre-reading skills, socialization practice, hands-on science exploration, and art appreciation. They work on basic math concepts, such as patterning and classifying one-to-one correspondence, as they also develop skills in observation and inquiry.

With such an ambitious program, our students leave pre-kindergarten equipped to become emergent readers. They are able to understand and follow directions, know appropriate classroom behavior, recognize that their actions elicit praise or bring

consequences. Most important, they leave our pre-kindergarten fully prepared to begin kindergarten with ease.

Parent Engagement. Recognizing that many of our students come ill-prepared for school, Providence St. Mel also recognizes that many of our families come ill-prepared for their commitment to the education of their children. Because family involvement is so vice to the success of the child, our school explicitly requires that *all* parents (or guardians) meet participation standards and attend four parent-teacher conferences during the year, one each quarter.

Parent Enrichment. Moreover, in addition to these conferences, parents are obliged to participate in *Parent Enrichment*, our special, highly effective program. Ten *Parent Enrichment* classes are offered, and parents and their child are required to attend eight and encouraged to attend all ten. Sessions address the needs and difficulties of our youngest students and their parents, who are often young, sometimes single, sometimes lacking adequate job skills and sufficient social resources. The focus of *Parent Enrichment* is to enable parents to learn those skills and strategies that can help them take greater responsibility for and become more personally involved in the education of their child — and also the education of themselves. *Parent Enrichment* strives to improve the overall academic success of the child and general welfare of the child and the family.

Skills and Strategies. Sessions cover such matters as parenting skills, anger management, conflict resolution, and positive reinforcement strategies. *Orientation, Reading, and Math* are the featured topics for the initial sessions, and for other sessions such topics include *How to Help Your Child Solve Problems; Balancing Nutrition: Making Healthy Food Choices on a Budget; Cultivating Awareness: Effects of Media on Children;* and *Kwanza Celebration: The Art of African Drumming*. As well, these sessions present such special parent-child enrichment activities as reading, storytelling, presenting a variety show, and visiting local museums. *Parent Enrichment* fosters healthy family interaction, encourages utmost parental commitment to the education of their child, and fosters increased family involvement in the school. Leading the *Parent Enrichment Program* is our full-time social worker, who has 25 years of experience working with children and parents.

4. The program director's experience with this and similar services; the preparation or credential requirements of the program staff; and the role of volunteers (if any).

The program director's experience stems from a background primarily in early childhood education and encompasses experience with children from birth through age 18. Major accomplishments such as gaining NAEYC accreditation for two former schools and participating in program start-up situations for three schools provide a multitude of base-knowledge for further advancements within our program. Providence St. Mel continues to strive to provide Professional Development for all of its staff members, including topics specific to the areas of growth found in both informal and formal observations throughout the school year. Our classroom teachers are required to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, certification, and a minimum of two years teaching experience in their

area of concentration. Teacher's aides are required to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree.

5. Your community partners in this program, and the reasons for those partnerships.

For this program, Providence St. Mel does not have community partners. Direct services are provided solely by the school.

6. Laws, regulations and/or policies (*e.g.*, accreditation standards, staffing levels, facilities availability, *etc.*) applicable to the proposed program, and measures you take to comply with them.

Providence St. Mel School is accredited by AdvanceEd; The Commission of Accreditation and School Improvement. We are in compliance with the policies and procedures, as well as regulations and guidelines for Private Independent Schools within the state of Illinois.

7. Evidence you use to determine the at-risk status of participants in the proposed program.

Our program is concerned about the whole child. We have what we refer to as the "trifecta of accountability" in place, enabling students, parents and faculty to focus on one objective; the advancement of their child towards a four-year college experience. We realize the families we serve come from various backgrounds and needs. Our students, families, faculty/staff work with our school social worker to address needs as they occur or devise plans to create different paths towards objective positive outcomes.

8. Evidence you use to determine the school readiness at kindergarten of children in the program.

Both Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten programs provide children with age-appropriate baseline assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the program as well as on a quarterly basis. Most of the assessments are given one-on-one or with a hands-on/demonstration approach. We uphold high standards for our students in preparing them for every milestone they will need to jump towards as they progress in years. We have had the opportunity to see firsthand what level of progression our classes make when they reach the kindergarten level and take the norm-referenced, TerraNova national standardized achievement test. We use test data to drive our program's goals and course offerings in creating School Improvement Plans each year. This strategy affords us the opportunity to focus on the goals of each class, one of the ways we raise the bar on student achievement each and every year.

At Providence St. Mel, we are committed to evaluating the performance of all our students, even our youngest ones. To measure the progress of our pre-kindergarteners, we monitor their performance throughout the academic year, at the end of which, we conduct an inventory of their developed skills and learned information.

The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation
 Proposal Information Form

IV. OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

Please complete the following table detailing desired outcomes and measures of progress for the program/project that is proposed for funding. Add rows as necessary. Include information for the entire period you are seeking funding. See examples for further information.

Desired Outcome(s)	Action Steps to Achieve Outcome	Indicators of Progress/Results (interim benchmarks)	Timeline for Activities / Estimated Completion	Evaluation and Measurement Methods *
Help children develop language abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilize or incorporate comprehensive, concrete and sequential Reading, Language Arts, and Phonics Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> informal/formal assessments done one-on-one, small and large group samples taken at beginning, middle, and end prior to new concepts and content introduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> goals set based on children's needs benchmark assessments given in August, January and May 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental checklists/rubrics written and oral samples
Promote and encourage literacy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on sound recognition, print/text awareness, retelling and role playing story concepts, and sequencing stories utilize reading strategies: visualizing, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> letter to sound to print identification, discrimination and acquisition execute attentive listening without interruptions or disruptions identify characters and their roles in a story and sequence events; retell and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum implement Reading curriculum cross-curricularize concepts throughout theme-based learning opportunities during daily Social Studies, Science, and Math explorations as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental checklists/rubrics written and oral samples informal/formal assessments done one-on-one, small and large group demonstrate listening and speaking skills to ask and answer appropriate questions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> predicting, compare/contrast, making connections, asking questions, monitor and clarify related arts class connections extended in Music and Physical Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recall specific details demonstrate pre-blending skills explain knowledge about the author and illustrator 	as music and movement experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> language games, rhymes, and songs
Develop critical thinking and reasoning abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilize reading strategies: visualizing, predicting, compare/contrast, making connections, asking questions, monitor and clarify Bloom's Taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) is utilized in formulating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> children will display abilities to not only apply the acquired information but be able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate it by working on a quarterly research project that accompanies acquired information and allows children to display their knowledge on the chosen topic(s) initial, beginning, middle, and ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on daily implementation of reading strategies throughout all areas of study including learning areas/centers, discussions, and project-based learning opportunities develop leveled questions geared towards reaching higher levels of understanding including applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental checklists/rubrics written and oral samples informal/formal assessments done one-on-one, small and large group demonstrate listening and public speaking skills while presenting acquired information. reciting of book predications and how it relates to their lives (participation checklist)

	<p>specific tiered questions based on desired optimum outcomes (objective focus) and maximum understanding and application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ children will be exposed to visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile experiences, allowing for all types of learners to achieve ▪ partner with Kindergarten to help set the example Pre-Kindergarten (common recess, bathroom breaks, field trips, and assemblies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sound discriminations children will display the ability to make and use real-life connections within past, present, or future experiences and what effect the experiences have on the outcome or understanding of the concept/content focus 	<p>throughout all curricular goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ incorporate daily and at times theme-based experiences addressing the preferred learning styles of each student during, whole and small group activities, partnered work (think, pair, and share opportunities), or individually depending on needs build community within the early child classes by exposing them to combined activities daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly 	
--	--	---	---	--

* Describe internal or external procedures used to evaluate the outcomes and the effectiveness of any of the activities listed above.

The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation
Proposal Information Form

V. ADDITIONAL PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Please comment on each of the following points for our consideration in reviewing this proposal and in making our grant award decisions:

- A. Please cite and explain any outcomes that are expected to yield social returns on an investment in this proposal, that is, outcomes leading to specific social benefits or social cost reductions.

At Providence St. Mel we believe — and we have year after year shown — that, in order to break the cycle of financial poverty and intellectual poverty, students *must* receive an education that is highly competitive and truly preparatory if they are ever to participate meaningfully as responsible and productive members of the community. Recognizing the critical role that early childhood education can play in the future success of the student, Providence St. Mel has expanded a program that now includes instruction for three-year-olds. With this enhanced early childhood education program, we seek to instill in at-risk children the right academic discipline and personal values that will carry them through a Providence St. Mel education and beyond. Unlike other schools serving similarly disadvantaged communities, we have a proven track record of high academic excellence and of preparing students for college. It is never too early to start success.

And success is what distinguishes Providence St. Mel. Since our very beginnings in 1978, *100 percent of our graduates have been accepted to four-year colleges and universities.* Further, since 2001, over 50 percent of our graduates have been accepted to colleges and universities rated by *U.S. News & World Report* to be among the “tier one” institutions in the country, including Bates, Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Colgate, Columbia University, University of Chicago, Davidson, Georgetown, Grinnell, Illinois, MIT, Michigan, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Oberlin, Penn, Princeton, Rice, Stanford, Tufts, Vanderbilt, and Washington University in St. Louis. The Class of 2011 is proudly carrying on this tradition of a perfect rate of college acceptance. These newest Providence St. Mel alumni join their recent fellow graduates in receiving *millions of dollars in college scholarships.* In fact, over the past four years, our graduates have received nearly *\$17 million in college scholarships!*

To achieve so much is a tremendous accomplishment for these students, many of whom started their studies at Providence St. Mel with considerable academic deficits and personal obstacles. Their success underscores the effectiveness of our school, which produces measurable results. This performance by these students — all of our students — affirms what we have learned over decades of teaching. If we can reach at-risk children and youth and instill in them the right academic discipline and personal values, these students *will* succeed, advance from one grade level to the next, graduate, and matriculate to university. The social return on investment in a Providence St. Mel education for our students is ultimately productive and contributing members of society.

- B. Please indicate whether your organization is proposing a multi-year funding commitment. If you are making such a proposal, please address the following two conditions:
1. The proposed funding may not to exceed three years duration. (Additional funding, even to continue the same work, requires a new application cycle, including new sponsorship by a Foundation Member)
 2. The proposal must show that a multi-year award is an operational necessity (*i.e.*, more than a convenience) for the effective performance of the proposed work. Any second or third year of funding depends on the Foundation's favorable evaluation of a report of satisfactory progress toward the outcomes cited in your proposal.

Recognizing that multiyear support requires compliance with grant reporting and application procedures, Providence St. Mel asks *The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation* to consider supporting our early childhood education program for three years, from the current 2011-2012 to the 2013-2014 academic year. We cannot understate how vital this grant would be to our school and for this program. The sustaining support of this multiyear grant would greatly enhance our ability to carry out our program at a time when our school continues to face considerable fundraising challenges. With this support and with the support from other partners, we hope to grow our new pre-school and also our pre-kindergarten, which began only a couple of years ago. Over the course of the next three years, we intend to measure the academic progress of our youngest students as they transition beyond the pre-school and into our first grade. We anticipate that their academic performance should place them higher and ahead of their peers nationwide. At the end of this grant period, after three years, we would be delighted to share with *The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation* the results that our young students have achieved and the lessons that Providence St. Mel has learned from this young and still growing program.

- C. Please comment on the expected effect of an award for a lesser amount than the full amount of the proposed funding. Please mention any factors of which the Foundation ought to be aware (*e.g.*, any possible segmentation or rescheduling of the work) if it were to reduce the amount of its award compared to the proposed funding.

Were Providence St. Mel to receive a grant of an amount less than that was requested, our school would cover costs through other charitable donations, either from designated contributions or general operating funds. We would and will seek support from individuals, foundations, and organizations to ensure that this program thrives and grows. Given the key role that our early childhood education program serves in fulfilling our mission, we are thoroughly committed to its continuation and success.

D. Please comment on the timing of an award. Please tell us if the timing of its receipt would be significant to your organization or to the proposed program or proposal. In your comment, please address the effect of a delayed award, or of an award that may be divided, for example, between calendar years or fiscal years.

Because our early childhood education program is ongoing, a much-needed, much-appreciated grant divided between calendar years or fiscal years would pose no significant difficulties to Providence St. Mel or to the program itself.

E. Please mention anything else that you would especially like The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation to know about your organization, its work, and/or your proposal.

Because our mission is to offer an exceptional, truly college-preparatory education in an economically distressed community, we each year face a formidable fundraising challenge: to secure support for scholarships and financial aid for our many students who acutely need such assistance, for proper classroom materials and resources, and, moreover, for such programs as early childhood program.

Tuition for 2011-2012 academic year is \$5,400 for both the pre-kindergarten and pre-school student; \$5,700 for the kindergarten; \$5,900 for the lower school; \$6,200 for the middle school; and \$6,700 for the high school student. In fact, the annual true cost to educate a student is now over \$15,000 — an amount that is certainly out of the reach of virtually all of our families. However, with the financial assistance of donors, we are able to underwrite more than half of this cost. In short, *every* student who attends Providence St. Mel does require financial aid.

Even though our tuition is modest, it is still beyond what most of our families can pay. Our families each sacrifice a great deal in order to pay what they can — **and all families must pay something** — towards their child's tuition. Although *our tuition is among the lowest of all independent schools in Chicago*, nearly 70 percent of our students require yet additional aid.

This is why support from *The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation* has been and can again be so very vital to our youngest students. Through this grant, *The Oscar G. & Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation* could help ensure that our early childhood education program can continue and thrive at Providence St. Mel and for our community.

VI. PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS

When you submit your Proposal, please attach

A. A resume, curriculum vita, or biography of the Program Director, Principal Investigator, or Project Manager for the work of this proposal.

Please see attached.

- B. A completed RFP-Proposal Operating Data Form. (Please submit this form in the format of an MS Excel spreadsheet file.)

Please see attached.

- C. A completed RFP-Proposal Budget spreadsheet (also in Excel).

Please see attached.