

**Helena Education Foundation  
Great Ideas Grant Program  
2008 – 2009 Application  
APPLICATION AND SUMMARY PAGE**

Please complete responses to all questions.

Voices! \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 772.94  
Project Title (This name will be used in publicity so be creative!) Funds Requested

Number of Students to be served: 24 Grade Level(s): 5

Number of Schools to be served: 1

Type Grant: X Individual (funded up to \$1000)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Group (funded up to \$3000)

(ALL applicants must sign signature page.)

Subject(s) impacted by this project:

\_\_\_\_\_ Arts \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Science \_\_\_\_\_ Speech  
\_\_\_\_\_ Foreign Language X Social Studies \_\_\_\_\_ Library \_\_\_\_\_ PE/Health  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special Education \_\_\_\_\_ Business X Reading/Language Arts  
\_\_\_\_\_ Career/Technical X Counseling & Guidance  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Using ONLY the space below, please provide a summary of the program in 50 words or less. We will be using your summary for publicity about the grant recipients, so please try to explain the purpose, proposed impact and how our project meets our creativity and collaboration goals.

“Voices” provides elementary students an opportunity to connect with members of the Helena community, share life experiences, histories and hobbies. Students will experience the importance and benefits of being connected to their community, while developing their writing and publishing skills.”

## **Section 1: Justification**

A. Students who early on become disengaged from learning are less likely to reach their full potential and more likely to drop-out of school. For some students taking a different approach, like having them connect with an adult outside of school, can help them become interested and engaged in both learning and in their community.

Research from The Search Institute demonstrates that students who have more developmental assets, which include Service to Others and Other Adult Relationships, are less likely to engage in high-risk behavior. Additionally, The Search Institute found that students who reported serving others at least one hour in an average week were significantly less likely to report school problems (poor attendance and below average grades).

“Voices” would give students an opportunity to find their internal desire to learn and explore from traditional and non-traditional classroom experiences, while at the same time give back to their community and form a connection with a new adult.

B. Providing students with service learning opportunities, to step outside their classroom into their community, can help them find their passion for engagement and learning, leading them to become life-long learners. Students participating in “Voices” will be paired with senior citizens in their community and together both child and adult can discover their voices.

Specifically, through guided activities, the student-senior citizen partners will explore their life histories and experiences. As a culminating event students will use their writing and publishing skills as they prepare a biography of their senior citizen match. The individual activities and production of the biographies link with our curriculum in the

areas of technology, communication arts, and social studies. Specifically, students will build on their listening, synthesizing, composition and technology skills. They will also be developing their understanding of timelines and history. Additionally, this project's goals of engaging students in life-long learning and in their community align with our school mission:

In concert with families and the community, XYZ Elementary School provides a safe, enriched environment that nurtures and inspires respectful, informed, and compassionate life-long learners.

## **Section 2: Relevance to Great Ideas Grant Program Goals**

A. At its core, the approach for this grant differs from the usual classroom. The community and its members, with their wealth of experience, become the classroom for these students. The adult/student partners will be engaging in and completing activities that facilitate their individual exploration of life experiences, careers and histories.

The ultimate creativity of this project comes from within the students and their senior citizen partners, with whom they will be employing their creativity as they prepare (compose, edit and present) both a written and oral biography of their partner to their peers and the senior citizens.

B. Students will be learning about their community, country and world from a different perspective. Additionally students will have the opportunity to relate what they learn to their own lives, dreams and aspirations.

C. The "Voices" project will partner our elementary school with the Waterford, a local active retirement community. The Waterford was selected for their diverse population of retirees with a wealth of experience to share with students.

D. The following in kind donations will be used to help with the costs involved in this project. The Waterford will provide transportation for their residents to our school. Our school will contribute computer time, use of digital cameras and games (including a Wii). A donation will cover the cost of snacks for the culminating event.

**Section 3: Project Description**

A. Through this project students will be involved in an intergenerational connection with a retired community member in which they will utilize their writing skills to produce a biography of their senior partner. Partners will utilize guided activities, such as comparison of life- timelines and families, during each meeting to direct exploration of participants’ life experiences. Students will use digital voice recorders during their interactions for later use in composing the biography of their senior partner. Classroom teachers will support students in the drafting and editing of these biographies. This project will be connected to the curriculum in the areas of Communication Arts, Social Studies and Technology. The Social Service Coordinator, who brings strengths in the areas of 40 Asset development and Moodle technology (an online learning community), will be partnering with a classroom teacher, whose strengths include composition editing and historical perspective.

Students will present a completed biography to their senior partner and classmates during a culminating celebration. In addition, each student will create an original piece of art relating to this project. This artwork will be framed and presented to each senior partner during the celebration. The following is a schedule of events for this project.

Month	Activities
January	Prepare activities, finalize participating Waterford adults, match students with Waterford adults
February	Day 1: Meet/greet activity Day 2: Explore hobbies activity

March	Day 3: Explore family activity Day 4: Explore careers activity
April	Day 5: Share life-timelines Day 6: Review and check facts
May	Day 7: Share biographies and artwork with match and group as a whole

B. Please see attached form.

#### **Section 4: Evaluation, Dissemination and Future Plans**

A. Each student's work on this project and final biography will be evaluated by the classroom teacher. Students and retired adults will have the opportunity to complete an evaluation of the project and to write a letter to their partner about what the project meant to them.

B. The biographies created through this project will be shared with and presented to each participating adult during the final meeting time. Additionally, copies of these biographies in book form will be housed in our school library, the Lewis and Clark library and the Waterford. It is our hope that other classrooms could use this project as a model to promote intergenerational community interactions. Students, classrooms and schools can be inspired through reading about the interesting voices captured by the students in this project.

C. Future plans might include other students/classrooms completing this type of project with adults currently in their lives (grandparents). Students could record their written biographies and have them catalogued in the "Kids for Kids" audio book section of school and public library (funded through a HEF grant).