Sri Sarada Niketan School/Bright Life Foundation Proposal to ASHA, St. Louis Chapter for Development of an Innovative Teaching Curriculum for HIV positive and HIV negative Impoverished Children in Andhra Pradesh, India:

**AGENCY INFORMATION**

**MISSION**: The Bright Life Foundation is a non-profit organization with IRS 501C status registered in St. Louis, Missouri USA and is dedicated to improving the lives of impoverished children and HIV positive orphans in India by providing free education with room and board, basic health care and mental health counseling services.

**OVERALL GOALS**

1.To provide quality education from 1st through 12th standard (high school) in an environment that nurtures intellectual curiosity, stimulates personal growth and encourages critical thinking.

2.To provide an environment that fosters students’ personal and social growth and civic conscience. Provide students with extra-curricular opportunities in arts and athletics and forums that encourage school leadership experiences

3. To ensure that each child’s nutritional needs are met with access to clean water and food.

4. To ensure that HIV positive children are able to access appropriate medications including HAART(anti-retroviral therapy) and receive appropriate medical evaluations and routine laboratory testing per standard of care.

5. To ensure that each child’s health care needs are met with access to immunizations and pediatrician/school nurse

**OVERALL OBJECTIVES**

1. To provide Central Government of India-English medium (highest standard) education free of cost to qualified children/orphans/HIV positive children

from primary to secondary school age with free room and board.

2. To engage children in curriculum that stimulates intellectual thinking and encourages personal growth and curiosity- to go beyond the basics of rote memorization.

3. To address the emotional and physical health needs of children by providing free health care and counseling through pediatrician/nurse/psychologist.

4. To ensure that children receive good nutrition with three meals a day and snacks in addition to access to clean water.

5. To maintain confidentiality of HIV positive children enrolled in the school and tailor counseling services/medication adherence accordingly for management of chronic illness. Ensure timely laboratory testing, access to HAART and necessary medications and referral to specialist as needed.

6. To provide age appropriate recreational and cultural programs for children and encourage physical activity/development.

**HISTORY**:

The Bright Life Foundation was founded with the Polineni Chinammai Trust in November 2008 with the goal to provide the highest quality education to impoverished children living in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, who would not otherwise have access to such resources.

In January 2009, the Sri Sarada Niketan school infrastructure development was initiated with the mission to provide free room and board to children in need regardless of religion, caste and gender. A brief review of our important milestones is as follow:

Nov 2008 -PCM trust formed in Marturu, A.P. INDIA

Feb 2009 - Ground Breaking ceremony

Apr 2009 - Enrolled students Grade 4 to 6 with standard CBSE Curriculum

Aug 2009 - Permission for Grades 1-7 was approved by Govt. of Andhra Pradesh

June 2010- Enrolled first class of girls grades 3-7

June 2011- Enrolled first cohort of HIV positive orphans

The school, which is an undertaking of the trust, has an enrollment of 300 boys and girls and enrolled the first group of HIV positive children in 2011. According to UNICEF: India has an estimated 220,000 children infected by HIV. It is estimated that 55,000 to 60,000 children are born every year to mothers who are HIV-positive. The southern state of Andhra Pradesh currently has one of the highest prevalence rates of HIV and continues to report significant numbers of newly infected women and children every year.

We aim to distinguish ourselves as an independent school that nurtures not just students’ intellectual ability and curiosity but also their personal and social growth and civic conscience. We provide our students with opportunities that extend well beyond the classroom to athletic competitions, artistic pursuits, and school leadership experiences. In the last year alone, we have been recognized at the regional level with distinction in fine arts and athletics.

**CURRENT PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

1. Primary and secondary education: The school is committed to providing the highest quality of education for under-priveleged children by employing the Central Board curriculum of the Government of India in English medium. Text-books and school supplies are provided to the students at no cost. The school is also working with Scholastic India to build a library accessible to children and faculty.

Food and Clothing: Uniforms including shoes are provided for enrolled children. The school has a self-sustaining food supply with on- site gardens for produce/vegetables and cows for milk and dairy products. Children are provided nutritious meals three times daily in addition to 2 snacks per day.

2. Youth Programs: Sri Sarada Niketan School (SSNS) provides extracurricular opportunities for children including physical education programs with athletic activities, art programs, and a homework help program.

3. Health Programs: SSNS currently employs a school nurse and has recently employed a part time pediatrician to care for health needs of enrolled student including both HIV infected and affected children as well as HIV negative children. A dedicated psychologist has also been employed to provide counseling to children and identify/address individual mental health needs.

**PURPOSE OF GRANT**

**ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED/TARGET GROUP**

**The purpose of this grant is to seek funding for development of an innovative curriculum which will challenge our students with special educational needs to reach their full potential. We will also seek funding for educational materials including workbooks, maps and computers/software to implement these methods. Lastly, we ask for funding to help those HIV positive students obtain proper nutritional support and medical care.**

Our mission is to also provide free access to quality education for the poorest children. According to the most recent census data for the state of Andhra Pradesh, the female literacy rate was only 59.7% in 2011 compared to >70% for males (census2011.co.in).

Previous surveys have shown that there is a disproportionate rate of illiteracy among populations residing in rural regions compared to urban areas. Undoubtedly, orphans are particularly vulnerable population with limited access to resources, forming a large part of the illiteracy demographic. Poverty is the main driving force for illiteracy and child labor throughout India including the state of Andhra Pradesh.

**PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Primary Goals:**

GOAL 1. To provide access to free high quality education for children of elementary and secondary school age who hail from impoverished settings/orphans/HIV infected/affected backgrounds.

OBJECTIVE 1. The school currently has enrolled children in the 1st through 10th grades. SSNS will continue to enroll children in the lower grades kindergarden-2nd grade. The school will also continue to incorporate age appropriate curricula and academic resources for children of this younger age group.

GOAL 2. To build separate dormitories for male and female students with shared rooms including beds/ and desks and access to toilet/shower.

OBJECTIVE 2. Will continue with current fundraising efforts over next two years to complete construction and expand current facilities to accommodate enrolled students.

**GOAL 3. To ensure that students will have adequate access to appropriate teaching material, textbooks, maps, etc to fully implement an innovative curriculum.**

OBJECTIVE 3. . Will continue with fundraising efforts and seek funding from ASHA to acquire necessary workbooks/textbooks and supplemental teaching materials. Will also seek funding from other organizations to acquire a small number of computers to open a computer lab facility to be shared by all students.

**GOAL 4. To help HIV positive orphan students by providing them with supplemental nutrition (high protein drinks, and other high calorie foods etc.) and medication (antibiotics, multivitamins, etc), in addition to the HIV medications they are currently receiving from the government of Andhra Pradesh.**

OBJECTIVE 4. Bright Life Foundation will continue to work with ASHA in fundraising efforts to acquire the necessary funds. These funds will be used to help the children with HIV by establishing the necessary medical equipment for the clinic that is already built on the campus grounds.

**GOAL 5. To run highly intensive special needs classes for those children who came from unique and dire circumstances. To provide additional funding for these kids’ education.**

OBJECTIVE 5. In the 2012 admissions, we experienced an influx of children that came from rural areas and who were out school for a year or two, due to parental loss. These same children also lacked exposure to the English language and CBSE curriculum, resulting in a very a poor education from the rural schools. We have experienced children who finished 4th and 5th grades, but never even exposed to the English alphabet. Their other skills were not indicative of the grade that they graduated from. We need to place these children with special needs in an intense cohort, where a faculty member will be given the responsibility of teaching these kids in a small group (4-5 children). With this kind of 1 year intensive coaching, we are integrating these children back with their respective peers in the grade level they belong. This program is expected to increase the cost of teaching significantly.

**Request for funding to support above Goal #3, Goal #4 & Goal #5: Development of innovative special curriculum, special nutrition for HIV positive children, and curriculum with acquisition of educational material necessary for implementation.**

**Projected Cost of Above Propositions:**

1. **Nutritional Program & Drugs/Medical Equipment for HIV positive children- $3,000**
2. **Workbooks/Textbooks/Maps/ Computer Lab and other supplies- $4,000.00**
3. **Increased Teachers’ salaries for special education classes- $3,000**

**Estimated Total: $10,000.00**

**Itemized PROJECTED COSTS:**

**LONG-TERM SOURCES/STRATEGIES FOR FUNDING**

The Bright Life foundation has generated thousands of dollars of in-kind donations for

its programs, and has sustained program services for education of approximately 300 students over the last two years. The founder of the school and Bright Life foundation, Dr. Subbarao Polineni has donated sufficient funds to secure land and construction of existing buildings along with support of agriculture/dairy assets and provision of clean drinking water supply for children. Dr. Polineni and his wife are also currently funding staff salaries including teaching faculty, nurse and counselor and supporting staff including housekeeping/food services and security. With individual donor support, a principal trust fund has been created to ensure that the daily operations of school can be sustained.

**EVALUATION**

We are happy to partner with ASHA on outcomes or reporting of progress of funding.

1. Students will continue to be evaluated at time of enrollment with age appropriate tests developed to identify intellectual capabilities and assist in appropriate grade-level placement.

*Students will be tested again at end of school year to assess academic progress and advancement to next grade level as appropriate*

2. HIV positive children will undergo evaluation per standard of care to assess medication needs/initiation of HAART as appropriate.

*Students will be monitored quarterly with measurement of standard labs and CD4 counts to monitor progression of disease. Will continue to develop collaborative ties with state HIV program resources and Rajiv Gandhi Medical College pediatric HIV services in nearby city of Ongole*.

3. All enrolled students will undergo comprehensive educational and physical health assessment at time of enrollment. Students will be assessed for immunization status and nutritional status with measurements of height/weight and BMI.

*Students will undergo yearly comprehensive physical exam/assessments to evaluate improvement in growth and development.*