

OUTREACH INCENTIVE GRANT FUNDING: END-OF-YEAR PROJECT REPORT

Title of Proposal: **Research to successfully expand services provided to children in the community coping with grief, loss, or trauma**

Your Name: **Dr. Tricia McClam & Mary Alice Varga**

Project Date: **December 2010 – April 2011**

Additional project support received from other university or external sources:

Source	Amount	Title
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please use this sheet to answer each of the following questions about your project (1-2 pp total)

1. **ASSESSMENT:** How did this project document or assess its engagement with the community?

The project documented and assessed its engagement with the community by the number of referrals received, feedback from referral sources, interviews with student participants, and document analysis.

PARTNERSHIP/RECIPROCITY: How did the university and community work together?

The project is a community-based initiative so there were multiple forms of partnerships and interactions. The project coordinator communicates with all school administrators who submit referrals and additional community partnerships with Child and Family Services and Helen Ross McNabb were established for individuals requiring more extensive services.

2. **BENEFITS:** What were the benefits (University/community) of this partnership?

The benefits of this partnership are two-fold. Grieving children in the community benefit from the project as well as school and community organizations needing assistance working with these children. University students also benefit by gaining real-world experience through working in the schools with these children.

3. **SHARED DECISION-MAKING:** Did the community have a “voice” or role for input into this project?

The community is the source and clientele for this project. Working with schools and community organizations closely to provide assistance to the children is at the forefront of this initiative. The Grief Outreach Initiative also has an Advisory Board and the Program Coordinator serves as a Board Member of Bereavement Services of East Tennessee. Hospice social workers, chaplains, the cancer support community, school personnel, and mortuaries also provide input.

4. **SCHOLARSHIP:** Are there any examples of faculty scholarship that will be informed by this project?

Publications of research findings are in progress. Past and future presentations at professional conference informed by this project include the following:

Developing multimedia applications to engage grieving children. Presented at the 2011 Teachers College Educational Technology Conference in New York, NY.

Connecting college students and grieving kids. Presented at the 2011 International Conference on Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society and the Association for Death Education and Counseling in Miami, FL.

Aiding mentors in shaping the futures of grieving at-risk youth. Accepted to present at the 2011 Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Annual Conference in Nashville, TN.

5. **CONCLUSIONS:** What conclusions and best practices can be drawn from the partnership?

Partnership between the community and the university can be exceptionally powerful and beneficial. Continued communication with community partners is crucial to meet the needs of the community. In the case of this project, it resulted in the expansion of our initiative.

6. **FUTURE PLANS:** What are the future plans for this partnership?

The research generated by this project informed future plans to be implemented beginning academic year 2011-2012. These future plans will expand our initiative from working with children in the community to working with and educating families in the community. An initiative was funded to begin developing a series of workshops for families needing assistance and education on helping grieving children.

The Grief Outreach Initiative is also currently pursuing a grant-funded project to incorporate technology into grief mentoring. The project, prompted by a student mentor's experience, focuses on the use of incorporating iPads into the Initiative in various aspects including the development of iPad apps for grief mentors to use as a communication medium with grieving children having difficulty expressing their feelings and emotions.