Social Business Plan Competition Submission

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Institution: Western Oregon University  
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Social Business Problem Addressed

Across the nation, and especially in Oregon, schools are losing arts programs. This is the direct result of pressures brought on by budget reductions and public policy initiatives such as Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The budget for the 2011-2013 school year approved by the Oregon Legislature was $1.65 million, which is a drop of 11.7% from 2009-2011. According to a recent article on OregonLive.com, Oregon is ranked 49th in the nation for its student to teacher ratio. Under pressure to comply with educational standards that emphasize core competencies in reading, writing and math, school administrators have had little choice but to cut arts teachers and classes. Yet, research shows that involvement in the arts can contribute to improved educational outcomes, such as better scores on standardized tests and decreased dropout rates. Art Smarts seeks to provide leadership and resources that will enable schools to retain the benefits of arts education and involvement by integrating the arts into the core curriculum.

Social Business Opportunity

The state of Oregon and 24 other states have recognized that there needs to be flexibility in how students receive their education to meet assessment standards set by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Art Smarts will take advantage of this flexibility to demonstrate the educational benefits of the arts. Art Smarts will collaborate with schools to analyze educational requirements and help design ways to integrate the arts into core subjects. Art Smarts will collaborate with schools throughout the course of the academic year to develop and produce a theatrical production. Along with organizing showcase events and fundraising throughout the academic year, Art Smarts will help keep the arts alive in schools and help schools find ways to generate funds to supplement their regular budgets.

Social Business Model, Products and Programs

Arts Smarts program that specializes in assisting schools who are struggling to keep creative arts programs in their curriculum. Art Smarts is essentially a team that will work with the school to design an end of the year production in the form of a play. Art Smarts will provide ongoing support throughout the year to the school until the end of the production. The support offered would be bringing in additional help through interns who will work with teachers and administration and provide help to promote and facilitate community involvement. Art Smarts will help create a budget for the production and work side by side with grant writers to seek additional funds for start-up, if needed. This production will generate funds that will be retained by the school to help support art programs, supplementing inadequate state and federal budget allocations.

Organizational Structure

Administrators will work with the school to create an appropriate budget for the production, recruit and supervise interns from local colleges, and recruit a grant writer. The interns will take responsibility for reaching out the community to recruit volunteers, coordinating events and organizing fundraisers. The grant writer will research funding sources and prepare grant proposals to fund Art Smarts start-up costs.

Art Smarts administrators will meet with schools to analyze what they are required to teach and then put together a rubric of how to design the production incorporating subjects students are required to learn. Each aspect of the play will be incorporated into a correlating subject. For example, set design would be incorporated into math class where the students can apply their math skills in designing plans for building the set. While students will apply science skills towards sound and special effects. Art Smarts will also help to establish appropriate goals for fundraising and support the school's fundraising efforts. This
would include when to start, how to go about getting funds, and how to promote the show in the broader community in order to achieve the best possible attendance at the end of the year production.

**Market Analysis**

Art Smarts uses a new way to help structure the way children learn, making learning more interactive and fun, while teaching required material through multiple learning styles. The initial target market for Art Smarts includes middle and high schools in Polk County. The state of Oregon does not have anything similar to Art Smarts, but there have been successful examples of schools elsewhere in the country integrating arts into the core curriculum.

Our organization's main goal is to help schools generate funds to maintain arts in the curriculum. We will accomplish this by working with the resources the schools already have access to in their budget. Any additional costs will be minimal and can be offset through the funds generated from the year end production. Schools will retain all proceeds from their productions. We estimate that it will cost of $13,280 to start Art Smarts, which will be mostly to pay wages of the administrators, interns and grant writer. Our start up costs can be covered by grants, donations and partnerships with community organizations.

**Launch Strategy Requirements**

- **Phase I:** Recruit interns from local university who have a focus in theater, business and/or education; prepare for marketing approach; find grant writer to write grant(s) to cover start up costs (incorporate their fees as part of the grant funding).
- **Phase II:** Select and meet with selected participating schools to set up an budget and develop plans for integrating aspects of the play production into the school's regular curriculum.
- **Phase III:** Actively work with the school throughout the academic year to implement the production plan, culminating in a successful end of the year production.
- **Phase IV:** Reinvest proceeds from final production into the school’s budget, providing funds to supplement the regular budget and preserve arts programs in the school.

**Financial Plan and Stability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labor Costs</th>
<th>Start-Up Cost for Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Writer</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional labor costs</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intern Budget (Sept-June)</td>
<td>$6,480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Start Up Cost For Organization</td>
<td>$13,280</td>
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**Impact Summary – The Social Benefits**

By incorporating the arts into the core curriculum, students will have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in real life experiences. The end of year production gives relevance to what they have learned while giving them a goal to achieve. Students will benefit from being a part of something to help their school while being encouraged to engage in creative activities. Students will also develop leadership and teamwork skills, and learn about entrepreneurship through fundraising activities. In addition, the Arts Smarts program creates a positive environment for parents and families, supports development of teaching skills, and engages all learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, tactile, and auditory) while encouraging community involvement in local schools.
Sources


