

A REAL DESIRE



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Do You Have It?!

It takes a village to raise a child? We'll be that village for both child and adult.

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DO YOU HAVE IT?!

DETERMINATION

I personally know too well how it feels to be overlooked, rejected, and neglected because of abandonment, but I refuse to allow that to stop me with what I am doing. I pray that you will assist me to help grow this vision so that those who want to be involved can be helped in many ways without worry of financial burdens. As a person I want to do my part for the community, and as a humanitarian I want to do my part with LOVE for the world.

HOPE

I share my story to help others dealing with HIV and other challenges they may face. I have been attacked several times, and many attempts to take my life have been made. I survived the beatings only to contract HIV from someone I loved, but neglected to tell me their status. I asked for death, but it didn't come. My curse became my blessing, and I decided to start a nonprofit to inspire others. Our talents can become the foundation that not only heals us, but others as well in many ways. We just need the right cultivation to ensure the talent grows into a positive light that can brighten any night. I'm here to do just that.

"I will do what I can, when I can, while I can, until God calls me home."

LIGHT

I do enjoy helping others who have the desire to be a positive light in the community they reside, and I am doing all I can to make that happen. I know that with the right people in my corner many lives will be changed in a positive way. Children need guidance, and guidance needs direction. A Real Desire will be that light to direct in the name of love.

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Executive Summary

A Real Desire requests support of our Phoenix Ash–Fire Fund through a \$50,000 grant for our School Workshop Program which will serve an average of 9,000 students on an annual basis.

A Real Desire’s work began eleven years ago to help artist in Atlanta, GA who lacked the knowledge and support on how to improve their talents, while providing for their families and communities, through creative techniques. A Real Desire uses trained, working, industry professionals to lead classroom–based activities and special exercises that enable individuals to recognize, reflect on, and regulate their personal emotions, behavior, spiritual, and mental development. As we build, A Real Desire will annually serve nearly 16,000 students, staff, and parents through long–term and short–term partnerships, workshops, year–round performances, and programming.

We can ensure that with funding:

- A Real Desire staff and instructors will be highly effective at engaging students.
- Students will learn how to respect each other’s differences and work together effectively.
- Improvement in students’ behavior and respect for one another.
- A Real Desire’s instructors will engage students who are initially misguided. Students will begin to better understand their emotions, express themselves and take ownership of their behavior.

The core of A Real Desire’s programming is a powerful School Workshop Program which will partner with other community organizations to provide workshops. As funding allows, A Real Desire also provides workshops for teachers and parents to ensure a greater impact. During a time when the struggles of undeserved communities are increasing, the support and funding will ensure our ability to continue to serve thousands in the next year.

NEED ADDRESSED AND POPULATION SERVED

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The crime rate in the United States has been called a silent epidemic. Overall, nearly one-third of all high school students in the nation drop-out of school and many turn into criminals. When looking at Atlanta specifically, that rate climbs up to the top 50 worst cities. Even worse, when the data is disaggregated to account for ethnicity, statistics show that approximately 40 percent of Black and Latino students in Atlanta do not graduate. The stated reasons for why these students do not complete high school are various and complex.

A Real Desire serves students who are at the greatest risk of turning to crime or becoming broken. Across the board, our workshop will educate students, while building their talents, who live in economically depressed communities where poverty has brought high rates of violence, crime, drug, and alcohol abuse, and teen pregnancy. Many of the young people served by A Real Desire lack positive role models, family and community supports, and even a basic sense of physical security. A significant number of youth are also victims of abuse and neglect, live in foster care settings, or have a history of homelessness. The school environment exacerbates the situation in which overcrowded classrooms, high teacher turnover, violence, gang activity, and negative peer pressure are the norm rather than the exception. As a result of such hopelessness environments, students are unmotivated to learn, apathetic, and disconnected from the world.

A Real Desire's research-based method teaches at-risk students six core skills of positive social/emotional behavior: focus, engagement, reflection, self-management, self-discipline and self-awareness. It is widely documented that social-emotional education has a strong impact on positive growth and academic achievement. A Real Desire's proven method has also been recognized as a powerful dropout prevention tool.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our renowned School Workshop Program helps students build the skill they need to make positive life choices. The program operates annually from July to June. The timeframe and length of individual partnerships vary depending on each school's needs and the availability of funding.

In each workshop, a team of professionally trained actor–instructors will be overseen by our drama therapist and mental health professionals to provide direct services to students in a classroom setting. A Real Desire’s teaching artists build scenes that parallel students’ issues and concerns drawing from their toolkit of activities. The teaching artists then engage students in reflective discussions about conflict depicted in the scene. In the process of engaging the students, the teaching artist focuses on topics such as managing emotions, communicating effectively, and making responsible decisions. Students then reconstruct the scene with alternate outcomes to practice the skills they are learning, and rehearse for the situations they face in real life. Each partnership includes:

Advance Planning/Curriculum Design: A Real Desire meets with school administrators to gain an understanding of the needs of students, teachers, and families. A Real Desire then meets with classroom teachers to discuss the students’ interests and needs. The curriculum is then adapted accordingly.

The Right Team of Teaching Artists: Teaching artists are selected based on expertise, experience, ethnicity, and languages spoken. A Real Desire has a fully–trained cadre of 50 acting professionals.

Supervision: All teaching artists and A Real Desire staff will receive ongoing training and support from social workers, psychologist, psychiatrist, and educational specialist. To ensure that students receive the proper care, staff members are trained to identify children whose issues require special attention, and make referrals to the appropriate clinical staff.

Counseling Support: When students are disruptive to the safe environment or when they demonstrate issues that are beyond the role of teaching artists, they are referred to the social worker, who determines the appropriate form of counseling. This strategy has proven highly effective in helping students identify their core issues and in reintegrating them into the classroom as soon as they are ready.

Collaboration with School–Based Support Staff: To ensure that students receive the necessary support, A Real Desire develops close working relationships with school social

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workers and guidance counselors. All of our staff is trained to maintain the confidentiality of students and their families.

Instructor and Parent Workshops: Instructor workshops introduce A Real Desire's method, as well as to provide additional communication and problem-solving strategies to help instructors offer guidance and support. A Real Desire offers Parent Workshops to best meet the needs of all family members.

Learning Outcome Celebration: During the final week of the program, the team and school staff organizes an event to celebrate the students' new skills. The main feature is a showcase featuring the students.

EVALUATION, OBJECTIVE & PROJECTED OUTCOMES

The School Workshop Program is evaluated by A Real Desire's staff to measure the effectiveness of our school programs and teaching artists using a combination of evaluation methods including:

- Pre-Assessment Interviews that are one-on-one with teachers to assess student behavior, evaluate the overall classroom "climate", and outline student needs and challenges.
- Mid-Program and Final Program Evaluations to compare with initial assessments.
- Program Impact Surveys, Questionnaires and Focus Groups with instructors, students, administrators and Teaching Artists to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, the program's ability to achieve goals and to develop recommendations for strengthening the partnership.
- Rubric for Assessing Group Behavior and Likert Scales are the two major quantitative tools that A Real Desire uses. The Group Rubrics are used by Teaching Artists to measure changes in students' demonstrated respect, behavior, self-control, feelings/emotions, and self-confidence, assessing the change from the beginning of the residency to the end. Classroom Instructors use the Likert Scales to assess student change.

A Real Desire works toward the following annual objectives:

1) Contract at least 450 workshops; 2) Work with approximately 16,000 students to help them develop coping strategies, and communication and problem solving skills; and 3) Provide training to nearly 1,300 staff and 300 parents.

Specific outcomes we will aim to achieve include: 1) 80 percent of participating students will exhibit positive behavioral change through participation in A Real Desire's social-emotional curriculum; and 2) 85 percent of classroom teachers will report improved behavior among students during other classroom activities.

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

The total budget for our School Workshop Program is \$600,000. Although A Real Desire does receive important funding from general admission costs for its workshops, this funding does not cover the true cost of service. The cost of each workshop is \$1,625 which includes high level planning and staff training. A Real Desire is reimbursed at a maximum of \$750 per workshop; in some cases, less. As A Real Desire conducts an estimated 270 workshops annually (including student, parent, and teacher workshops) we need to raise over \$150,000 to cover non-reimbursed costs each year.

For this reason, A Real Desire continually researches and approaches appropriate foundation and corporate prospects to underwrite the cost of our services.

STAFF AND QUALIFICATIONS

Led by founder and Executive Director Matthew Carter, A Real Desire's staff will include a Director of Operations, Director of Research and Programs, Director of Research and Training, and Director of Partnerships. Complementing their expertise will be the members of the Advisory Committee, all of whom have outstanding credentials and extensive experience in psychology, drama therapy, evaluation, and training. Staff members and teaching artist receive in-depth, ongoing training from the clinical staff, Advisory Committee members, and outside experts.

All of A Real Desire's teaching artists who conduct the School Workshop Program are working actors with impressive theatre, film, and television credentials. With masterful improvisational skills and tremendous energy, these individuals create the dynamic

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engagement with students that serves as the foundations for teaching and learning. Currently A Real Desire's founder has demonstrated a high level of commitment to the organization and its mission.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to our School Workshop Program, A Real Desire will provide the following programs and services:

Long-term Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Programming: In partnership with the United Way A Real Desire will develop long-term partnerships in which teaching artists and program coordinators work as full partners with teachers, parents and administrators to provide direct service to students who meet state mandated selection criteria. Many of these partnerships span across a twelve-month or multi-year period and allow A Real Desire to have a greater impact on the school community. Based on the success of this programming, the City Council will renew it. A Real Desire is currently raising funds to make up for this funding gap.

Performances: A Real Desire will offer popular performance pieces which address important issues students face and are used to generate powerful discussions.

A Real Desire's Training Institutes: Over the years, A Real Desire will create Training Institutes which teach other youth service providers the core elements of A Real Desire's method.

CONCLUSION

A Real Desire's School Workshop Program helps students to cope with their chaotic home, school and community environments and learn to manage their behavior while developing their talents. We hope you will partner and support the Phoenix Ash-Fire Fund with a \$10,000 grant as we continue to work toward our mission 'to help needy individuals learn social-emotional skills through creative drama and drama therapy to empower them to make positive life choices.'

**A Real Desire
School Workshop Program**

EXPENSES

Teaching Artist (2 @100%)	\$350
Extra Fees (Travel, meetings, rehearsals, etc.)	\$300
Fringe @15%	\$70
Total Teaching Artist Expenses	\$720
Artistic Director	\$150
Manager of Business Affairs	\$100
Program Manager	\$100
Director of Training	\$100
Program Manager–Parent Services	\$50
Program Assistant/Office Manager	\$30
Assistant Director of Training	\$30
Fringe (@28%)	\$100
Total Administrative Expenses	\$660
Supplies	\$15
Food	\$20
Travel (not travel stipend)	\$30
Training	\$25
Marketing	\$30
Accounting	\$15
Insurance	\$20
Other	\$50
Indirect Costs	\$40
Total Expenses per Workshop	\$1,625
Projected Number of Workshops*	270
Projected Total Expenses	\$438,750

*This number includes students, parent, and teacher workshops and is calculated based on the average number of workshops held in the upcoming year.