

PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

THE "GET TOGETHER" SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

A dream can become a reality, but only with your help. A new kind of school is in the process of being created ... a special place where all children will learn in an environment of love and acceptance. What will be unique about this school is that some of the children have severe handicaps and have been excluded from creative learning environments because of a negative label i.e. (retarded, deaf, slow) ....We believe that children can and should learn together and that every child will benefit both socially and academically from this very special school.

Enclosed you will find:

1. A proposal for funding.
2. An article by Michelle Lansberg about the project.
3. An article from the York University Gazette
4. An article by Dr. Marsha Forest

## HISTORY:

In October 1980, a group of three York University students, one York Faculty member and six children began to get together; there was Margaret, profoundly deaf from birth. She was driving her family crazy and was described as a severe behaviour problem at school. Her brother Gary, was labelled "perceptually handicapped" and had been placed in a special class. Jane and Ivan were two very bright five and six year olds whose parents wanted them to be learning more and Tom was eight; not walking and not yet talking.

The three enthusiastic university students started meeting regularly in a small room at York with about seven children. The word spread and by November there were 25 students - all shapes, sizes, colour. Some came labelled bright and gifted, others mentally retarded, deaf, or learning disabled. But the labels started to disappear as a rich learning community was established each Saturday.

The program flourished and the group decided to run the project as a two month summer school. A grant was obtained from Summer '81 (a Federal project to support students in summer jobs) and the Summer Get-Together ran for two months with 27 students and a waiting list of 14.

## THE PRESENT

Currently there are 32 children (two-thirds "normal" and one-third handicapped) in the 1981-82 Saturday-Get-Together. Plans are underway to run a Summer '82 Get-Together program and we hope

to develop a full year school located on the York University Campus by September 1982. This school will serve as a model of integration and excellence from which others can learn.

### THE FUTURE

The experience of the teachers, the encouragement of the parents, and the enthusiastic involvement of the children has convinced us that there is a real need for this kind of school on a full time basis.

In order to cope with the increasingly complex and diversified society in which children are growing, they must be given the opportunity to learn to live with, and to value, all kinds of people. If children are to grow in accepting one another, environments must be created where this value is actively promoted.

The goal of this project is to create a caring, learning community which values each individual member. Both children and adults will grow in confidence and self-esteem through the support of the rest of the community. Our slogan is "Different not deficient".

The program will emphasize the core academic subjects to the fullest extent of each individual's ability. It will involve individualized instruction and independent learning as well as exposure to a rich and varied cultural curriculum.

The theory upon which the program is founded grows out of certain values and beliefs about education:

- 1) For people to be able to learn, they must possess a certain sense of inner power. They must believe that their actions can have an effect on their environment.

2. Children must participate fully in the process of their own education.
3. Children must develop an ability to question the world around them.
4. Children must develop a respect for logical thought processes. The ability to problem solve is fundamental to intellectual growth.
5. Children need to learn to appreciate and accept differences in individuals. Intolerance stems from ignorance and breeds hostility and violence.
6. Children need to develop, through discussion and personal exploration, their own beliefs and values.

#### SUMMARY

There are four aspects of the "Get-Together" Model:

1. A Saturday programme to run all through the year as an enrichment experience for children.
2. A summer programme to run in July and August.
3. A tutorial and advocacy programme to assist the children and their families.
4. A full year round school to serve as a model of social integration and academic excellence.

PRINCIPLES:

The principles we operate under are clear and are as follows:

- 1) We believe in a small manageable size programme - i.e. quality not quantity.
- 2) We believe in community involvement.
- 3) We believe in pluralism and diversity.
- 4) We believe that schools will grow from strength to strength - in other words we do not operate from a deficit model.
- 5) We believe that schools must change the way they deal with handicapped children.
- 6) We know all children can learn.
- 7) We believe the basic skills of literacy are a key to learning and that they can and must be taught.
- 8) We believe there are many appropriate learning environments and many ways to learn and teach. No one way is good for everyone; hence the need for alternatives.
- 9) We believe in relating school to the real world - i.e. being out of the school and in the community as much as possible.
- 10) We believe educational leadership is necessary.

VALUE BASE

We also operate from a strong value base which states that:

- 1) few aspects of a child's life are more important than sharing normal educational experiences with children of his/her own age;
- 2) if the rights of any are diminished, so are, in the long run, the rights of all;
- 3) new attitudes and values come from action, not from talk; from deeds, not words;
- 4) integration is not possible as long as special schools and special classes exist because these "special" programmes will always try to 'maintain' the handicapped children for funding (economic not educational) purposes;
- 5) integration will cause problems, but not for the children involved. Problems will arise because of an existing system of institutions, special classes, hospitals, clinics, etc. whose purpose will be challenged.

The first step is to act.

Your financial assistance will help develop this model further and will hopefully influence others to take up this type of project in their local communities. If integration is to become a "normal" procedure, people must see it working. Given the progress of the children who have gone through the programme so far, we know it is a worthwhile effort.

BUDGETREVENUE

Tuition (30 Student @ \$200.00)	\$ 6,000.00
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EXPENSES

Start - Up Costs (includes incorporation, furniture, equipment, etc.)	8,000.00
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## Operating Costs:

Salaries (18,000 x2 teachers	36,000	
benefit costs	<u>4,000</u>	40,000.00

Facilities (1 large, 1 small classroom)*		6,000.00
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Transportation - Daily Subsidy	9,000.	
- for field trips	<u>1,200.</u>	10,200.00

Supplies		5,000.00
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Insurance		800.00
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Food - snacks	500	
- once/wk. group lunch	<u>750</u>	1,250.00

Miscellaneous & Contingency (10%)		<u>6,500.00</u>
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TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ <u>77,750.00</u>
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\*Anticipate Classroom space will be contributed at no charge.

**\*Note:**

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