



"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."
– Frederick Douglas

Ms. Cronk and students;

Thank you for extending an invitation to Smart from the Start to apply to the Nonprofit Giving course at Framingham State University and for support the of our work with young children and families in the communities of Boston.

Smart from the Start (Smart) is a family support, community engagement and school readiness organization with a mission to prevent the achievement gap among children living in Boston's lowest income, most underserved communities. Smart exclusively serves the lowest 10 percent income families in the city, who struggle with a host of challenges, and many of whom traditional social services have had difficulty engaging. Our strengths-based approach reaches out to the city's most vulnerable families and empowers them with the tools, resources, and support they need to break cycles of generational poverty and chronic school underachievement. Smart from the Start's innovative and progressive approach has shown remarkable early success, and earned the program Root Cause's "2011 Social Innovator of the Year" Award, and has been widely recognized as a new, effective, and evidence-based success story, in the mission to promote school readiness in urban communities.

Having myself been raised in an inner city Boston housing project, in the Roxbury neighborhood, I have the unique experience of walking in the very same shoes as the young children we serve. As the founding executive director, my team and I have a very special commitment to and passion for the work we do to uplift and encourage the families in our program. We stand as proof that despite their challenges, they can achieve their goals and their children can achieve school and subsequent life success.

Founded in 2008 with the support of former Mayor Tom Menino, Smart envisions a world where every young child feels safe, secure and loved; has their basic needs for healthy food, warm clothing, secure housing and safe neighborhoods met. We work toward a day where every child regardless of who their parents are or where they live, has access to high quality, fun, enriching education that honors and celebrates their diversity, making it possible for them to fulfill their greatest potential and to realize their dreams. We work to prevent the achievement gap by preparing the young children whose lives we touch for school success, empowering families and communities to provide the stable and supportive living conditions necessary to nurture strong, confident and well-balanced children. The final piece of the puzzle is to partner closely with school communities to smooth transitions and build better family/school relationships, and to work with traditional and non-traditional stakeholders and partners to embrace their role and do a better job of supporting young children and families by infusing neighborhoods with consistent messages and strengths-based services encouraging school readiness and self-sufficiency.

Smart from the Start's program model is ecological and holistic, recognizing that in order to ensure long lasting and sustainable change, we must address issues within communities and families, while promoting the healthy development of young children. Smart creates opportunities for young children, who are not in formal childcare settings, to gain the developmental skills necessary to be "school ready".

In the six short years since its founding, Smart has grown from 3 pilot sites in 3 communities, to 21 program sites across 7 communities. We are currently serving families in the Boston neighborhoods of Charlestown, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Lower Roxbury/Mission Hill, Mattapan, Roslindale and the South End. Our growth plan has focused on expanding to multiple sites within the same neighborhood, deepening and broadening our engagement within these communities.

Smart serves well over 1000 families, in seven Boston neighborhoods. With family size averaging 4-5 people, we are currently providing comprehensive programming and support to close to 5,000 low-income children and adult caregivers. In addition we are providing thousands more with access to early learning resources through our “Community Unity Partnership Initiative” which places “play-to-learn” spaces and book giveaway stations in businesses frequented by low-income families.

Smart offers prenatal programs, Welcome Baby home visits, baby basics classes, play-to-learn groups, young learners socialization groups, adult education classes, financial literacy, counseling, family leadership programs, fatherhood programs, counseling, and parenting classes. Crisis intervention and family stabilization services are provided to all families and referrals are made to partner agencies for additional support services as deemed necessary. Programs are located in and around low-income housing developments, homeless shelters, residential substance abuse treatment facilities and BCYF community centers.

Program Highlights and Achievements: *Smart from the Start is honored to have been selected to present our program at the State of the Sector, Early Childhood Summit at the Boston Federal Reserve Bank in April 2013 and then featured on an episode of WCVB-ABC Channel 5’s “Cityline” on April 28, 2013. Smart was also invited to present at the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse Neglect, European Regional Conference in Dublin, Ireland, in September and the National Training Institute of Zero to Three in San Antonio, TX in December. We were also thrilled to participate in a forum at the annual conference of The National Center for Black Child Development Institute in New Orleans in October and featured in their State of the Black Child report as a “Point of Proof” – an example of a program successfully improving outcomes for low-income children of color.*

Children’s programming Highlights: *Our early education programs have a specially designed curriculum that includes activities, learning tools, literacy materials and experiences that honor, and speak directly to the urban, culturally diverse population of the little ones Smart from the Start serves. This is what distinguishes our baby basics, toddler, preschool and kindergarten playgroups, and learning and literacy programs from others. Additionally, through our partnership with MathPOWER, we have infused our toddler and preschool curriculum with beginning mathematics, including basic algebraic and geometric skills building. This does more than simply level the playing field for our children – it actually puts them ahead of children in other play-to-learn and early education programs.*

Family Programming Highlights: *Smart from the Start’s Family Leadership Team, a source of great pride for Smart, is a cohort of parents and caregivers with amazing strengths and resiliencies who have demonstrated outstanding personal achievement, participation in the program, and leadership in their communities, despite personal struggles and challenges. Leaders attend workshops and trainings on a variety of topics to learn more about issues families and children in their community face, and to build on their skills as advocates, trainers and leaders. They have traveled to places like New Orleans, Washington, DC, and New Hampshire to participate in and lead discussions, conferences and trainings to advance the causes that concern them and the families they proudly represent.*

We also have begun a new “Address the Stress” program led by licensed, multi-cultural clinicians, that includes summer camp, group and individual therapy to help children and families cope with, and build resiliencies to, everyday stress and to address challenges with post-traumatic and toxic stress. While traditional therapy carries a great deal of stigma and many families won’t engage for various reasons, we have had a remarkable success in enrolling families in this program.

Smart has developed new relationships that enable us to engage and serve other very-high risk populations. The Boston Public Health Commission has enlisted the help of Smart to provide support to gang involved young fathers ages 16- 24. We reach out to these fathers and enroll them, their babies and partners in programming and services. We also are working closely with the Department of Youth services to enroll teen parents involved with the juvenile justice system.

Community Programming Highlights: *Our Community Unity Initiative takes an innovative approach to mobilizing community businesses, stakeholders and families around Greater Boston to promote the importance of early childhood education. Smart’s business partners have signed a pledge to help promote early learning and to support families raising young children by allowing Smart to make their businesses early learning hubs for young children in their neighborhoods. By developing relationships with community businesses, Smart aims to make everywhere low-income families do business, places that young children can learn and grow, while parents and caregivers receive consistent messages about the importance of early education.*

In 2012-2103, we invested close to \$100,000 in an independent professional evaluation. The studies included assessments focused on Smart's impact on children's development, parenting, and family and caregiver functioning. We also collected data on the level of stress and trauma our families have experienced in an effort to gauge our efficacy as well as to inform future programming and planning. The evaluation team has recently completed a comprehensive assessment measuring the school-readiness of our first cohort of new kindergarteners. The assessment tool they used was the widely utilized and highly respected "Ages and Stages Questionnaire." The children were five years of age and had consistently participated in Smart play-to-learn and early education programs for a period of two or more years. The evaluation team measured "school-readiness" in our first cohort of new kindergarteners by assessing the following skills: communication, gross and fine motor, problem-solving, personal-social, and social-emotional. The results demonstrated that after five years of Smart programming, between 78% and 100% of the children were "developmentally on schedule" across six categories.

By far, Smart's greatest challenge is that our early success and growth demands an increase in organizational capacity that keeps at pace with the need for our services. Our "No Waitlist Policy" means we are committed to serving every child and family who comes to us for programming and support in our target neighborhoods. We thus must stretch our current capacity to serve these families, becoming increasingly creative with the same level of staffing and budget resources to ensure we continue delivering the highest quality programming. Similarly, Smart's operational infrastructure is affected by our rapid growth. It is crucial that we upgrade our technology, such as our database and computer networking systems, to track data accurately, improve personnel efficiencies, and streamline communications within and across program sites. Therefore, we are respectfully requesting \$10,000 from the Nonprofit Giving course at Framingham State University to increase our operating budget to meet organizational capacity needs.

As Smart continues to demonstrate our program effectiveness and build strong relationships with local, regional and national stakeholders and the Boston public, our goals going forward include diversify our funding sources to sustain and grow our work. We are working with the Departments of Public Health, Youth Services, Early Education and Care and Mental Health in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to increase the level of government funding we receive, and have been meeting with officials at the federal level, including HUD, HHS, ACF and DOE to find avenues to new federal funding, as well.

The contributions of our dedicated team of corporate and community volunteers have also been invaluable in helping to close the gap in capacity. We have recruited them with the help of local universities, middle and high schools, businesses, donors and "friends of Smart". Volunteers provide support in planning and hosting special events, facilitating programs and classes, providing child care, tutoring adult education students and school aged siblings, raising funds and soliciting donations of books, toys, layette items, electronics and clothing for our programs and families.

In conclusion, Smart from the Start is making significant progress in preventing the achievement gap in children who are born "Smart from the Start", but our work is far from done. As we continue on our mission to ensure the best outcomes for our children, we are grateful for having been invited to apply to the Nonprofit Giving course at Framingham State University and thank you in advance for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,



Cherie Craft, M.Ed.

Founding Executive Director



Smart from the Start, Inc.
 Board of Directors and Affiliations
 FY14

Name	Role	Expertise/ Qualification	Affiliation
Dr. Margot Kaplan-Sanoff	<i>Board President</i> Director	Experience in the field of family support and child development, non-profit management, prior board experience	Boston University Medical Center, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics
Michael Carmen	<i>Board Treasurer</i> Director	Experience in the field of accounting, fiscal management, prior board experience	Senior VP Wellington Intl Management, Inc
Simone Lopez	<i>Board Clerk</i> Director	Experience in the healthcare industry, community organizing and parent activism	Senior Nurse Supervisor Greater Boston Elder Services/Smart Parent
Ken Abrams	Board Director	Experience in finance, investments, IT, accounting and prior board experience	Partner, Wellington Intl Management, Inc
Gary Belis	Board Director	Public Relations Specialist	Retired – Gary Belis PR
Maureen Connor	Board Director	Executive level background in quality improvement, risk management and patient safety.	Claremont Consulting Partners
Karen T. Craddock PH.D	Board Director	Experience in child development, public policy, evaluation and research	Harvard University Graduate School of Education
Cherie Craft	Board Director	Experience in the field of family support and child development, non-profit management, Executive Director/founder of Smart	Executive Director Smart from the Start
Kelly Gaule	Board Director	Development and Strategic Planning Specialist	Principal Promus+ Consulting
Gary Oberstein	Board Director	Experience in legal services, business, and HR law and business management	Managing Partner Nixon-Peabody, LLP Attorneys-At-Law
Carmen Rosa Noroña, Ms.Ed. , MSW	Board Director	Expertise in practice and research on trauma and developmental assessment / intervention with at risk children	Bilingual Clinical Coordinator and ETTN Boston Site Associate Director, Child Witness to Violence Project
Ben Siegel, MD	Board Director	Pediatrician for 40 years	Pediatrician Boston Medical Center
Charles Terrell, Ed.D	Board Director	Expertise in promoting educational access and equity for low-income minority populations	Founder, Cross Creek Associates



Smart from the Start Inc. Fiscal Year 14 Budget

Personnel	
Salary	911,856.00
Taxes/Fringe	203,455.80
Total Personnel	1,115,311.80
Facilities & Related Expenses	
Cable & Internet	1,355.58
Cleaning Services/Maintenance	9,000.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	2,500.00
Total Facilities	12,855.58
Consultants/Training	
Business Manager	19,200.00
Professional Development	12,000.00
Evaluation	10,000.00
Development	13,333.00
Vacation Program Support	5,728.00
Special Projects	10,000.00
GED Instruction/Materials	12,628.80
WE Resources (Financial Literacy)	9,000.00
ESOL Instruction	8,333.00
Computer Classes	6,450.00
Total Consultants/Training	106,672.80
Travel	
Travel	5,400.00
Airfare/Car Rental	5,500.00
Automobile Expenses (Mileage)	3,500.00
Van Insurance/expenses	9,000.00
Total Travel	23,400.00
Direct Program Support	
Direct Client Support/Trans	30,259.08
Program Supplies	24,300.00
Food	30,000.00
Childcare	6,000.00
Family Leader Stipends	7,500.00
Field Trips/Events	14,000.00
Crisis Intervention	10,000.00
Total Program Support	122,059.08
Direct Administrative Support	
Furniture and Equipment	16,000.00
Office Supplies	9,600.00
Printing	2,500.00
Telephone	7,200.00
Auditor	10,000.00
Total Admin. Support	45,300.00
Overall Total Budget:	\$1,425,600.26



**Smart from the Start Income FY14
As of March, 2014**

Anna B. Stearns Charitable Foundation	\$10,000
Children's Hospital	\$85,000
Cox Foundation	\$50,000
Josephine and Louise Crane Foundation	\$4,000
Liberty Mutual	\$20,000
Mailman Foundation	\$10,000
Pierce Charitable Trust	\$35,000
Renaissance Foundation	\$2,000
Riley Foundation	\$100,000
The Black Dog Private Foundation	\$1,500
The Boston Foundation	\$100,000
TPI	\$100,000
United Way	\$28,000
Wellington	\$50,000
Total Foundations	\$595,500
BPHC	\$30,000
BCYF	\$180,000
Total Government	\$210,000
Individual Donors/Board	\$231,546
Total	\$1,037,046

Fundraising Information: A list of companies, foundations and government entities being approached to fund Smart from the Start, including dollar amounts requested.

Foundations

- The Hyams Foundation: \$50K
- Walmart Foundation: \$50K
- Citizens Bank Foundation: \$35K
- Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation: \$100K
- Yawkey Foundation: \$50K
- Mt. Pleasant Fund: \$20K

Government Entities

- Family Resource Center: \$62K/5 years
 - Department of Early Education and Care/ The Children's Trust