

## **Proposal details/Comments**

### *Matching the ING Foundation's Goals*

The ING Foundation “awards grants to non-profit organizations addressing a variety of community needs and resources,” including programs aimed at child education. According to the Foundation’s website, “ING is committed to supporting and improving education for youth in grades K-12, especially children in underserved areas or facing economic disadvantages.”

The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children’s Bright Spaces program emphasizes the education and development of children in crisis, one of the most underserved and disadvantaged populations when it comes to education. This grant request is targeted to support the Bright Space at the Agapé Corner School in Durham, NC. A traditionally underserved and disadvantaged group, the children at the Agapé Corner School come from a variety of backgrounds. Many are victims of multiple, devastating setbacks in their homes and families, and they may struggle emotionally, exhibiting behavioral and learning problems. By exposing the children at the Agapé Corner School to materials that will further enrich their educational experience as well as their emotional and social development, the Bright Space will give them the opportunity to develop the cognitive and relational skills needed to succeed in their academic educations.

Encouraging the education and development of children at the Agapé Corner School addresses the ING Foundation’s goal of supporting and improving education for children facing disadvantages. The following sections identify how the Bright Space at Agapé Corner School in Durham meets this goal.

Through a review of the Bright Spaces program’s goals and accomplishments, the Agapé Corner School target funding program, the target audience, the program impact, and the measures of progress, these comments will illustrate why the grant request is exceptional in how it addresses the focus of the ING Foundation grants.

### *Bright Spaces Program Goals and Accomplishments*

Founded in 1999, the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children supports nonprofit organizations through programs to help children in crisis learn. The mission statement reflects this goal:

The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children is a nonprofit organization focused on brightening the lives of children, youth, and families in crisis. The Foundation believes that we can make the world a better place by engaging Bright Horizons’ employees, clients, families, friends, and community partners, and their passion for meeting the needs of all children. We do this by creating comforting places for children in crisis to grow and play, strengthening their families, supporting our communities, sharing our knowledge, and encouraging others to join us in making a difference.

Through the program “Bright Spaces,” Bright Horizons Foundation for Children develops places for children to learn and play in community agencies and homeless shelters. Individual Bright Spaces vary in content and might include language and music centers with children’s music and books, toys, building blocks, arts supplies, or computers. All Bright Spaces are designed to achieve the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children’s mission to give children in crisis the opportunity to learn and play.

Through funders like the ING Foundation, Bright Spaces projects have been successful in reaching more than 7,000 homeless children and youth each month. In the past 10 years, Bright

Horizons Foundation for Children has established more than 200 Bright Spaces in 38 states as well as the District of Columbia, Canada, England, Ireland, and Scotland. By funding a Bright Space at the Agapé Corner School in Durham, the ING Foundation will support a commitment to provide underserved children and youth with desperately needed education resources.

*Target Funding Program: Bright Space at Agapé Corner School in Durham, NC*

The funds requested from the ING Foundation are targeted for one specific Bright Space located at the Agapé Corner School, a non-profit organization located in Durham, NC. A boarding school for children from Kindergarten to 12th grade, the Agapé Corner School educates and houses children free of charge. The children at the Agapé Corner School come from a variety of backgrounds, most from crisis situations including violence, the loss of a parent, or a chaotic home environment. An estimated 35 boys and girls reside at Agapé Corner School at any given time.

One room in the Agapé Corner School will be dedicated to the Bright Space program. The Bright Space will contain materials to further enrich their educational experience in their new school as well as their emotional and social development.

A key component of the Agapé Corner School Bright Space will be materials designed to encourage children to pursue higher education goals, including college degrees. Through the College Coach program, educators will lead college readiness workshops for the teens at the Agapé Corner School Bright Space. Our goal is to help homeless teens get into college, share expertise with Bright Space Agency Staff, and engage College Coach educators who wish to volunteer for project.

The Bright Spaces project in Durham is intended to encourage healthy development in children who might otherwise be prevented by traumatic circumstances of their lives. By exposing children to additional educational materials, the Bright Spaces in Durham will give Agapé Corner School children the opportunity to develop the skills needed not only for academic success, but also for life-long coping and communication.

*Target Audience*

Some of the data provided in the grant application form illustrate the demographics of the audience who will benefit from the Bright Space at the Agapé Corner School, all of whom will be children:

- 75% are boys; 25% are girls
- 50% are between the ages of 9 and 12; 25% are between the ages of 1 and 8; 25% are between the ages of 13 and 17
- 83% are African-American; 11% are Caucasian; 6% are Hispanic/Latino
- 75% of the children are working toward completing an elementary education; 25% are working toward completing a high school education

Agapé Corner House provides education free of charge to children in crisis, and does not request information about education levels, employment status, or household income from parents when accepting children in the school. As a result, data provided in these sections of the grant application form have been estimated by Agapé Corner School based on interactions with the parents of students.

It is estimated that 83% of Agapé Corner School parents are unemployed. Without access to the income guaranteed by steady employment, the children of these parents are at a disadvantage

when it comes to many areas, but especially learning. Without regular household income, children will not have the resources for the clothes, calculators, or even pencils that other students have. This lack of resources puts these students with families in crisis at a distinct disadvantage. The children in these circumstances are desperately in need of the educationally-supportive environment provided by both the Bright Space and Agapé Corner House.

### *Program Impact*

Significant life crises can be disruptive to individuals, with drug addictions and unemployment having a long-term impact on people involved. The disruptive nature of family crises can impact the cognitive development of children—an impact that can ripple through the child’s adult life. Many studies have shown that children who are exposed to early education, books, music, and developmentally appropriate toys and games are far more likely to succeed in life than those who do not have access to educational opportunities.

The reality for the millions of children experiencing the repercussions of drug abuse, mental illness, or other trauma is that there are few opportunities to develop the cognitive, language, social, and gross motor skills they need. This has serious and long-lasting developmental outcomes, contributing to a cycle of instability that is difficult to break.

The Bright Spaces program at the Agapé Corner School is designed to break that cycle and counter the disruptive factors of significant life crises. By giving the Durham children access to a safe environment in which they can learn and play, the Bright Space provides an opportunity to break cycles of instability, insecurity, and anti-social behavior. Without these cycles, children will grow into adults capable of communicating effectively and contributing to society through their own work efforts.

In addition, the College Coach program at the Agapé Corner School Bright Space will encourage children to pursue higher education and give them the resources to do so.

### *Measures of Progress*

By summer of 2010, the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children will have opened the Bright Space at the Agapé Corner School in Durham. Enrollment numbers at the school will be used to identify how many children have been impacted by the Bright Space. A copy of the Assessment Tool that is completed by Bright Horizons center faculty at the end of the first and second years of operation will also be available for review.

### **Attachments**

Logo attached:



**Bright Horizons**  
**FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN**