



St. Croix Valley Foundation Proposal Narrative

Please answer these questions in your narrative.

Include any other pertinent information that you deem important.

Please limit your narrative to three pages total.

I. Organization Overview

Provide your mission statement and a brief history of your organization.

Our mission statement reads: To serve all families by providing opportunities and activities that promote healthy families and safe communities.

The FRC recently celebrated 10 years of serving our community. Although our programs may have changed a bit over the years, our commitment to helping families and reduce child abuse have not. We continue to work closely with Burnett County Health and Human Services and Child Protection as well as our local WIC office, schools, Early Head Start and more. Our collaborations with local nonprofit and government agencies help ensure the best services for the families we all serve.

II. Project Description

What is your project? Discuss the specific activities. Our project for 2018 is to continue and expand our Family Fun Activities. The planned activities include: Bi-weekly playgroups – a chance for caregivers to play with their children, meet other families, learn something new with our education topics, be active outside (summer months at our local park) and some kids are able to begin to learn to play with others. 'Lil Chefs Program – an opportunity for families to learn through cooking together, eating foods they may not eat at home, and learning recipes that they can easily make together. Fun and Fit Families – this is an opportunity for families to learn to kayak, camp, hike in different areas of our county and participate in other outdoor activities. We partner with National Park Service Rangers and Crex Meadows Wildlife Center educators to add to the experience of the activity. Last year, participating kids received pedometers and had a contest to see who had the most steps over the length of the program (summer into fall). We had some kids log over 1,000,000 steps! We also host many

family fun nights which might be anything from sledding and snowshoeing, to movie nights, crafts, tours of local farms and orchards and holiday parties. Again, the purpose is to get families playing, learning and being active together.

What is the plan and the timeline of the project? Our project will go throughout 2018.

What are the goals you hope to achieve? Our goals include reducing child abuse by strengthening family bonds and connecting them to their community, peers, and/or other service agencies. We do everything we can to remove barriers so families can participate. That might include giving a gas card, preparing snacks and meals during activities, paying for any river transport fees or any other trail fees that might be incurred. We also have a Baby Go Round program that gives gently used baby clothes and diapers to those that need as well as a car seat safety program that gives car seats to families if needed. These are all potential barriers to families that are removed so they can simply enjoy being together as a family and enjoying the activity.

Who is involved in this project (leadership/consultants/volunteer)? Why are their qualifications right for this project? Annie Lupo-Gondwe (a former Peace Corp volunteer) is the FRC Program Coordinator and the Leader on this project. She has developed the individual programs and coordinates the volunteers. She works with educators from the Crex Meadows Wildlife Center and Rangers from the National Park Service as well as other volunteers to make our programs be the best they can be.

III. *Need, Impact, Evaluation*

Why is this project needed? The FRC is the only agency in the county that provides the types of free, family activities that we do. In addition to trying to reduce child abuse, we also get kids learning about their natural environment and help them develop skills to become productive members of society.

How many participants are involved in the project? In 2017, about 800 individuals (parents/caregivers and kids) participated in our activities. Our goal is to increase that number this year as well as provide new activities for our families to enjoy.

How will the participants and the larger community benefit from the project activities? Our programs include varying education topics including car seat safety, age appropriate discipline, water and outdoor safety, stress management and more. Participating kids learn about their community, interacting with others in positive and meaningful ways as well as learning to be good stewards of our natural environment.

What methods will you use to determine whether you have met your project goals? We spend a lot of time with our staff, board of directors, area partners and especially with our families evaluating the effectiveness of our different programs. We conduct many surveys throughout the year asking our families to evaluate our education topics and ask their opinions on what we do well and things we can improve on. We are always looking for ways to improve, expand or change our programs if necessary to meet the needs and expectations of the families and other agencies that we serve.