



St. Croix Valley Foundation Proposal Narrative

I. Organization Overview

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

History: Canvas Health incorporated in 1969 as a community mental health center—part of President Kennedy’s “bold new approach” to care. Since its inception, the agency has been a safety net for the community, serving those with complex needs who may otherwise not be able to afford care. We offer services across 11 counties in homes, schools, community spaces, and our eight clinics in the Twin Cities metro. Canvas Health also operates a statewide phone crisis call center, Crisis Connection.

Our Mission: To bring hope, healing, and recovery to the people we serve.

Current Programs: We direct our mission and deliver results through 33 programs in *Crisis Services, Psychiatry, Counseling, Chemical Health, and Specialty Programs* ranging from services for seniors to employment support to supportive housing. Our services create a coordinated system of care for children, adolescents, adults, the elderly, and families who struggle with aging, transportation, chemical and mental health, and domestic and sexual abuse.

II. Project Description

What is your project? Discuss the specific activities.

A thirteen week pilot of trauma-informed yoga for 12-16 young people, ages 8-12, who attend the Harmony Learning Center in ISD 622 and are in our Therapeutic Assistance Program (TAP) there. The pilot will take place in the fall semester. The instructor will be Canvas Health’s Chief Development Officer, Angie Lien—who also teaches yoga. Angie will consult with a trauma-informed yoga specialist to ensure her sessions follow cutting-edge best practices.

This pilot yoga intervention will serve to improve participants’ immediate outcomes, as well as, their long term life prospects, which includes a disproportionately high likelihood of obesity (Fuemmler, et al).

Canvas Health’s TAP is a school-based program providing mental health services, including diagnostic assessments and therapy services, to eligible students and their families. Offered at a variety of schools in Washington County, the program is a collaborative effort between school psychologists, school social workers, teachers and multiple mental health providers.

The yoga instructor who teaches this research-based yoga intervention will teach these young people tools to increase their ability to self-regulate. Self-regulation is the ability for these children to tackle the range of emotions (spontaneous and otherwise) in a way that allows them integrate in a successful and happy way

into social situations. The ability to self-regulate is a key tool for current and future healthy outcomes (Epstein and Gonzalez, Cohen et al., Streeter et al.)

This is particularly important, because Harmony Learning Center is a level four school, which is a more restrictive environment for young people who at this point find it extremely difficult to integrate into a traditional school because of the significant trauma they've suffered in childhood. And as a result of the trauma they've suffered, their futures include a disproportionate likelihood of being obese (Felitti, et al).

Students will participate in 13 half-hour-long classes over 13 weeks in the fall semester. In class they will be introduced to and practice the "flow" and its breathing, while also learning how to continue their practice at home and its techniques in social situations to aid in self-regulation. Students' success will be judged not only by their growth as practitioners of yoga forms and breathing, but also by how this practice promotes mindfulness and new techniques for self-regulation.

Cohen, DL, et al. "Cerebral blood flow effects of yoga training: preliminary evaluation of 4 cases." *Altern Complement Medicine*. 2009 Jan; 15(1): 9-14.

Streeter, CC, et al. "Yoga Asana sessions increase brain GABA levels: a pilot study." *Altern Complement Medicine*. 2007 May; 13(4): 419-26.

Epstein, Rebecca and Thalia Gonzalez. "Gender & Trauma." Center on Poverty and Inequality, Georgetown Law.

Felitti, et al. "Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults (The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study)." *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*. 1998. 14. 245-258.

Fuemmler, et al. "Adverse childhood events are associated with obesity and disordered eating: Results from a U.S. population-based survey of young adults." *Trauma Stress*. 2009 Aug. 22(4): 329-333.

What is the plan and the timeline of the project?

13 classes over 13 weeks in the fall. The class will take place in large room of Harmony Learning Center.

What are the goals you hope to achieve?

Qualitative goals: 1) Students will feel "better," 2) Students will know new methods of reducing stress and anxiety through movement, breathing, and focus.

Quantitative: 1) Students will grow in proficiency of movement and breath control, 2) Students will reduce time out of class due to inability to self-regulate.

Who is involved in this project (leadership/consultants/volunteer)? Why are their qualifications right for this project?

Leadership:

Katie Pape, MSW, LICSW: Katie is Director of the Child and Family Services Division. Katie has her Masters of Social Work from the University of St. Thomas and the College of St. Catherine as

well as a Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Work and Human Relations from St. Cloud State University. In her early career, Katie has worked as a Social Worker, a Counselor, and a Therapist. Katie has been with Canvas Health since 2005, most recently as the Program Manager for our Child and Adult Mental Health Case Management program and the former MCHN Blue program.

Jennifer O'Connor, MA, LMFT: Jenny is a licensed Marriage and Family therapist that specializes in working with kids (5-18) and their families who have experienced attachment disruptions and trauma. In addition, she consults with schools to understand and meet their needs.

Instructor:

Angie Lien, CDO: Chief Development Officer. Prior to joining Canvas Health in January 2016, Angie was Executive Director of United Way of Washington County East based in Stillwater. She has an extensive background in fundraising, marketing, and communications in non-profit social service and health related organizations. As Chief Development Officer, she is responsible for individual and corporate donor development, marketing, communications, grants, events, and volunteer recruitment and management. Angie is a yoga instructor, including for Canvas Health programs. She has a B.S. degree from Mankato State.

III. Need, Impact, Evaluation

Why is this project needed?

The young people in TAP at Harmony school face significant struggles with childhood trauma. To increase their chances of success now and in the future, the research-based intervention of yoga will serve as a research-based way for them to learn and practice how to self-regulate and make healthy choices.

How many participants are involved in the project?

16. Half in each half-hour session.

How will the participants and the larger community benefit from the project activities?

Participants: Yoga promotes self-regulation, which has immediate benefits as well as warding off a disproportionately high likelihood of obesity in adult life.

Larger Community: The success of this pilot will not only inject research-based practices into the homes of our participants. It will also serve as a template for the possible inclusion of yoga in any of the other 25 schools where Canvas Health provides TAP services.

What methods will you use to determine whether you have met your project goals?

Qualitative Goals: Student surveys

Quantitative Goals: Behavior tracker, instructor evaluation on a Likert scale