

## Written Request for Grant Funding

April 14, 2015

Ms. Wendy Besmann  
Besmann Family Fund  
c/o Melton Hill Media  
9119 Solway Ferry Road  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Dear Ms. Besmann,

The Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School (KJDS) requests \$600 in funds from the Besmann Family Funds to continue support of the new and innovative science, technology, engineering, art and math (“STEAM”) education program at our school. This program fuses hands-on, project-based learning with a community service component focused on combating hunger in East Tennessee. We appreciate your past support and look forward to partnering with you on this semester’s project. The donation will be used to help establish an urban garden at the school this spring semester, along with service projects to be carried out by the students at local community gardens. Our program blends the charitable priorities of the Besmann Family Funds in both promoting social justice by working toward hunger relief and spiritual enrichment by designing projects to spread the value of Tzedakah among our Jewish youth and throughout the community.

Our new education program (“STEAM Into Service”) that is being piloted this year involves semester-long projects to engage K–5 students in “STEAM” lessons while giving back to the community. With generous support from the Besmann Family Fund last semester, students were able to engage with technical professionals from the community to learn engineering, math and architecture skills while designing their own canned food sculpture. These 1,440 food cans along with items from a food drive were donated to a local food bank. Students visibly gained confidence and a deeper understanding of collaboration as they directed their service project. Based on the success of this project, we have moved forward to design new projects that combine “STEAM” education and community service.

This spring, we are constructing an urban garden at the school, while teaching students lessons in engineering design, horticulture and sustainability. Students will then apply these skills at several community gardens, including planting crops at the Knoxville Botanical Garden and Arboretum with the raised crops donated back to local food banks and painting rain barrels to be donated to a local community farm. Urban gardening is essential to fighting both hunger and childhood obesity issues. The Second Harvest Food Bank estimates that 1 in 5 children in the East Tennessee area are at risk for going hungry each day; yet, childhood obesity remains an epidemic in the state of Tennessee. Thus, our “STEAM into Service” project this semester educates our kids on healthy eating, teaches them skills to raise their own food and engages students in hunger relief efforts.

Our project also has been generously supported by a grant from UCOR to build the urban garden infrastructure. We will use the monies from the Besmann Family Fund to purchase three rainwater barrels and art equipment to decorate the barrels and for support of the expert technical professionals who we have brought in for the program to assist with garden design and skills instruction. With your additional support, we will have the resources needed to grow our garden and students’ minds, while teaching them the value of community service and aiding hunger relief in the area.

Please let us know if you need any further information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Miriam Esther Wilhelm  
Head of School