



LiGHT Grant Application 2023

2023 LiGHT Grant Cover Form and Guidelines



Name of individual, group or organization: BIGJAWS Youth for Christ

Contact name(s): Rhonda Beau, Sarah Mcleester

Address: PO Box 431 Bluffton Indiana 46714

Phone number: 260-824-1330 Email Address: info@bigjawsyfc.org

Name of the program as it would appear on the grant award: _____

Southern Wells Campus Life Programming

Describe who the grant award will serve and approximate number affected: Students

grades 6th-12th at Southern Wells - impactty 400 kids.

Dollar amount requested: \$ 2,500

Would the program be offered if only a *partial* grant from LiGHT is made? Yes

Summary paragraph of the grant award requested: Campus Life Programming funds will

> May be utilized for part of the presentation.

be used to offer robust programming for students 6th-12th

grade at Southern Wells. These tangible supplies will help us stand

in the gap for students in need of support & mentors to succeed in
School & life!

Complete all requested items below:

1) This Cover Form

2) Project Narrative, 1-5 pages typed, including:

- What need in the Community will this program address? Give evidence to substantiate your request. (i.e., data, letters of recommendation, etc.)
- What do you want to do?
- What is your timeline?
- What results do you expect?
- If partnering with other organizations, please list.
- Describe the program and tell how the funds from the grant will be used based on your budget
- Signature page: To include endorsement of the project or program by the requesting agency's Board of Directors. This page must include a signature of the Board president.

3) Detailed budget

Financial Information

Every director is responsible for raising programming funds each year. For example, these funds are used to provide breakfast to students before school, offer scholarships for low-income students to attend camps and events, and for adults to take small groups out to eat. The goal is to raise around \$4,500 each year to facilitate programming for the middle and high school groups. Not only does the director raise this personally, but they also seek additional donors and community support to supplement any deficits, provide extra resources, or to fund special projects. Trying to reach all 400+ students in Southern Wells requires a whole team effort and ample funding.

Campus Life at Southern Wells will continue to invest in intentional programming that seeks to engage a holistic approach to intervention. Supplies, trips, scholarships, games, food, and equipment are all needed to execute a successful program. Campus Life will continue to come along students as they navigate tough life circumstances. Through club, small groups, building times, trips, and appointments, the director and volunteers' step into students' world and provide the support they desperately need. This can happen with your support.

Budget

| Description | Amount |
|---|----------------|
| Southern Wells Middle and High School Campus Life Program Expenses | \$2,500 |
| | |
| Total: | \$2,500 |

Proposal Narrative

Now more than ever students are familiar with isolation, loneliness, and mental health issues. Whether spurred on by the recent pandemic or due to the pandemic exacerbating pre-existing conditions, youth these days are not getting the same kind of peer, adult, and community support they need to become thriving citizens.

According to the Indiana Youth Institute, nearly half (47.3%) of Hoosier children have experienced one or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACE's "are stressful or traumatic events occurring in childhood and (ACES) are used to assess the long-term impact of abuse and household dysfunction on later-life health." (Silverman, 2018)

Students with a high ACE score have a higher probability of experiencing mental health issues, engaging in risky behavior, and struggling to maintain healthy relationships - among many other negative outcomes. No doubt the pandemic has served as an additional ACE for children who have already experienced so much.

Adolescents are in desperate need of mentors, positive role models and community support to combat these negative trends. Just one positive, invested adult in the life of a student can significantly change the trajectory of their story. The Southern Wells Youth for Christ Campus Life Director creates a healthy, safe, and supportive environment for students to be seen and known, and ultimately pull them out of isolation and into healthy relationships. Without this director in their school, many of these teens would fall through the cracks and be left to struggle through many of life's issues on their own. Here is a story from Allison Blevins, our Campus Life director at Southern Wells:

"Yesterday, I walked into the office at Southern Wells to a student sobbing sitting on a chair. While getting ready to leave, I decided to sit down next to them to see what was wrong. When I asked what was wrong, they began to cry harder. I did some breathing exercises with them and got them to calm down again. As we began to talk, they expressed that they were getting picked on in class. This has been a constant occurrence and they felt like no one cared. Because they were angry about getting picked on, they said something that was mean and that they regretted. I explained to them that what they did wasn't okay, but we are not defined by our mistakes."

Youth for Christ (YFC) is passionate about helping students overcome difficult challenges in their adolescent years by providing stable adults, enriching programming, and community support. Funding program needs for our Southern Wells Director will allow this important work to continue to reach every student at the middle and high school.

Silverman, D. T. (2018). *Adverse Childhood Experiences*. Retrieved from <https://www.iyi.org/adverse-childhood-experience>

Expectations of Program

The money awarded by this grant will help provide a robust program budget for the Southern Wells Campus Life Director to execute effective programming to reach teens. These funds will enable the director to purchase food, take students out to coffee, help provide scholarships for students to attend YFC trips, buy curriculum and books for leadership development, and supplies for large group events.

The director is held accountable to implement certain programs and activities for their students throughout the year. On average they would be responsible for:

- Attending lunches to contact all students in the school 2-3 times per week.
- Hosting a weekly Club (large group, high energy event to bring in students).
- Plan 2-3 building times per month (intentional activities with a small number of students).
- Arrange small groups throughout the year to do a book study or other common activity that will create a positive connection and help build healthy relationships among peers and leaders.
- Plan 2-3 larger trips to take students out of their county to grow together, learn leadership skills, and build teams through social activities.
- Arrange 1-2 one-on-one appointments per month with students to invest intentionally and work through personal struggles the youth may be facing.
- Schedule multiple contacting times per month (going to where the students are, attending athletic games, performances, local hangouts, etc.).

These are just samples of the many ways the Southern Wells Campus Life Director and their volunteers are involved in intentional relational activities with teens on a regular basis. Support for program money in the 2023-2024 school year will allow for these activities to take place and to help increase the impact on the students we reach.

Benefactors

The presence of YFC at Southern Wells impacts the 400+ youth that make up the middle and high school. In addition to these students, the Campus Life program involves 9 volunteers and leaders. The support directors give to youth directly affects school administration, teachers, and staff along with parents of these teens. Over the past 25 years, Southern Wells school has truly benefited from the impact of YFC Campus Life.

Volunteer Roles

The Southern Wells Director has nine volunteers and leaders working right alongside her to intentionally impact students.

Volunteers are involved in almost every activity, serving directly by building positive student relationships, helping behind the scenes with food preparation, offering their house to host events, or providing program resources. A major component for the director is empowering their leaders to engage students and take charge of various aspects of programming. It is truly a team effort, and the director would not be able to impact the number of students she does without these effective teams.

Not only do these volunteers impact student lives, but they also contribute to the culture and strength of the Wells County community as a whole. These volunteers become advocates for the youth in the community as they show up.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the program's effectiveness is carried out through record keeping of student participation, attendance, and longevity in the program. Each event, meeting, and program offered by the director is tracked in a database and updated weekly. Supervisors evaluate the director bi-monthly and conduct twice a year evaluation to make sure they are successful in meeting goals and effective in reaching students. Ongoing training is offered by YFC leadership to each staff member throughout the year to continue strengthening the impact of Campus Life directors in their communities.

Note about the Budget

The yearly budget for a Campus Life program for a director working in both the high school and middle school is \$4,500. The director must raise these funds themselves. YFC allows the director to spend the money as best fits their program. Since each director uses funds differently based on the needs of their site, it's difficult to break down cost of exactly what is spent on supplies each year – because it varies year to year. Here is a sample of what the money will be used for this year at Southern Wells Campus Life:

- Food and snacks for student events and to build connections during school lunches.
- Trip scholarships for students to participate in events.
- Game supplies to be used at Clubs and Building Times.
- Adult training expenses.
- Books/small group materials.
- Prizes for giveaways at events.
- Funds for relationship building activities, including going out for coffee, ice-cream, etc.
- Event supplies – speakers, yard games, etc.
- Building Time costs – transportation to places like Kings Island, tickets, etc.
- Donor appointment expenses.
- Student Leader breakfast expenses.

September 8, 2023

The Wells County Foundation, Inc.
222 W Market St.
Bluffton, IN 46714

As the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Adams, Blackford, Grant, Jay, and Wells (BIGJAWs) Youth for Christ, I wholeheartedly endorse the enclosed grant proposal. Funds received will enable our chapter to effectively reach the 13,500 middle and high school students across our five counties and these funds specifically to reach students at Southern Wells. Our Campus Life and City Life programs combine healthy relationships with creative programs to help young people make good choices, establish a solid foundation for life, and positively impact their schools and communities.

Thanks for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cory Powell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cory" and last name "Powell" clearly distinguishable.

Cory Powell
Board Chairman
BIGJAWs Youth for Christ
260-824-1330