

FUNDING APPLICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Organization Information			
Legal Name: Gemini Ink	Federal Tax ID#: 74-2774094	501(c)(3) Public Charity 509 (a)(2)	
Address: 1111 Navarro Street	City: San Antonio	State: TX	Zip Code: 78205
Website: www.geminiink.org	Fax: (210) 734-9673	United Way Funded: No	
Fiscal Year: January 01 to December 31			
Head Of Organization			
Name: Alexandra van de Kamp		Title: Gemini Ink	
E-Mail Address: avandekamp@geminiink.org		Phone: (210) 734-9673	
Application Contact			
Name: Alexandra van de Kamp	Title: Executive Director	E-Mail Address: avandekamp@geminiink.org	Phone: (210) 734-9673
Previous Najim Funding			
Year	Funding \$		
2014	\$7,953		
2015	\$8,000		
2016	\$8,000		
2017	\$8,000		
2018	\$10,000		
2019	\$15,000		
Total	\$56,953		
Has the organization applied to the Najim Family Foundation in the past and been declined? No			
Grant Amount Requested \$: \$10,000	Total Project Budget \$: \$17,370	Organization's Annual budget \$: \$331,469	
Mission Statement: As San Antonio's independent writing arts center, Gemini Ink's mission is to teach the craft of writing to people of all skill levels so they can bring their stories to life. For 27 years, our programs have served over 4000 youth and adults a year, with 67% of those served being people of color. San Antonio currently has a 25% functional illiteracy rate, an achievement gap that disproportionately impacts minority students. Thus, our literary and literacy outreach throughout the city is pivotal.			
PROJECT INFORMATION			

Program / Project Title:

To Support the "Write With Me/Read With Me" Program providing writing instruction to children in the 2nd and 3rd Grades at Bowden Elementary School

PROJECT TIMELINE

Start Date	End Date
09/01/2020	05/31/2021

Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation Priorities:

Education

Education Priorities:

Elementary to High School

Program / Project Description:

Gemini Ink respectfully requests \$10,000 to support our Write With Me/Read With Me program at Bowden Elementary School on San Antonio's East Side. This program builds literacy skills and increased joy in reading and writing by providing high quality creative writing instruction and reading support. Four experienced and dedicated writers-in-residence provide two sections of creative writing instruction to 50 children from the 2nd and 3rd grades in afterschool sessions for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. Each section comprises one hour of instruction per week over 10 weeks, offering 10 instructional hours to each student per semester. The program will conclude with a Celebratory Reading where children present their work before family and community members.

We are excited about launching a new partnership with Bowden Elementary School in order to expand our outreach to at-risk youth on the East Side. With San Antonio's 25% functional illiteracy rate still ongoing, our literary and literacy outreach is pivotal. This achievement gap in the language arts disproportionately impacts minority and low-income students, including students from the East Side: there, 10% of the residents are unemployed, 31% live in poverty, and 29% over 25 do not have a high school diploma.

Bowden Elementary is a well-organized school that has a strong commitment to meeting the academic and social needs of its students and has implemented effective and responsive COVID-19 protocols, in line with and in excess of city and state protocols for safely reopening and running educational institutions. While we highly value our long-term relationship with Ella Austin Community Center, it is in a time of transition and has not been able to establish consistent COVID-19 safety and health protocols for its staff and community. As a result, we view this next academic year as an ideal time to broaden our partnerships on the East Side by launching this collaboration with Bowden Elementary, which will ensure we continue to deliver our high caliber writing arts workshops to as many East Side youth as possible, without interruption. The principal of Bowden Elementary, Brian Sparks, is very excited by this opportunity, and Gemini Ink is thrilled to be able to expand our footprint on the East Side with such a professional institution. We will continue to work with Ella Austin as they transition.

Gemini Ink Partner Classes' curriculum uses "mentor texts" to build literacy and literary engagement. Mentor texts are stories or poems that are culturally competent, challenging and absorbing. In Partner Classes workshops, the writer-in-residence presents the mentor text and leads a discussion that helps children grasp why or how the work creates the impact it does - by use of image, metaphor, realistic dialogue, sentence structure, etc. Children gain new language skills by being given specific prompts that encourage them to create their own works in response to the mentor text. The workshop ends with all participants sharing the works they have created, with supportive feedback from the writer-in-residence and their peers. By engaging the children in reading and writing in response to these mentor texts, these workshops radically shift the children's relationship to the written word.

The overall project goals are to build student joy and confidence in reading and writing and to expose students to the art and craft of writing in innovative and engaging ways. We particularly focus on providing culturally diverse texts, where students can see people who look like them in the stories, poems and plays they read. Moreover, we aim to offer a creative and rigorous curriculum that combines critical thinking skills (reading critically, incorporating revision into writing, discovering voice and self) with hard language skills (growing grammar knowledge, understanding figurative language, strengthening inferencing skills, and increasing cohesiveness in writing). Reading and writing being taught together in this natural yet innovative way will help these students in 2nd and 3rd grades "level up" to the requirements of the STARR tests. In fact, evaluation data gathered to date strongly suggest that Gemini Ink's instruction helps students adopt a more positive attitude towards writing and reading over a wide variety of genres; as a result, they are better poised to learn in all areas and show increased performance in STAAR language arts and, even, math tests. During these residencies, we also seek to involve and support parents in nurturing their children's reading and writing efforts.

Gemini Ink is strongly poised, as a result of COVID-19, to provide either virtual classes or in-person classes to Bowden Elementary, depending on the social distancing situation in August 2020 and throughout the academic year and on the school's protocols to ensure student safety. Principal Sparks emphasized that face time with students was key and that his aim was "to keep kids going" during this unprecedented time. Therefore, we are ready to pivot quickly between Zoom and YouTube workshops and in-person classes, an expertise we have gleaned over this past spring.

Because of our strong relationships with partner sites on the East Side, we have come to value these sites as a type of "incubator" in which our most experienced instructors can experiment with the genres and activities that most engage our young students. With the support of Principal Sparks, we will continue to do so with Bowdon Elementary. This allows us to expand the range of our creative writing and literacy outreach among otherwise underserved students on the East Side of our city.

Evaluation Plan:

Gemini Ink has well-developed evaluation methods. These include pre- and post- questionnaires, wherein students have an opportunity to self-assess their level of interest in and engagement with reading and writing. We use pre- and post- writing samples to measure student progress over the program and identify key skills that need to be focused on. Our Program Director also conducts class observations and offers teacher training each semester. We are developing survey questions to assess the impact of YouTube, Zoom and other learning platforms we implement to ensure our youth workshops meet the needs of the at-risk populations with which we work.

Using these evaluation methods, we gauge our success based on the following project goals:

- o increased student confidence as readers and writers
- o increased student confidence with sharing their work
- o increased understanding of literary devices and genres (poetry, short story, creative non-fiction, etc.)
- o increased awareness of and comfort with writing/revision process

Plans to sustain project beyond the term of this request:

Gemini Ink's Partner Classes (formerly Writers in Communities) has enjoyed sustained success that has allowed us to form strong partnerships on the East Side and throughout the city, as well as to nurture a range of funding sources.

Principal Sparks at Bowden Elementary School is strongly supportive of the program and eager to offer his students an innovative curriculum that will engage them with reading and writing in new and creative ways. He worries that the current testing culture separates reading and writing instruction, and he embraces the fact that Gemini Ink's youth workshops pair reading and writing together.

We have worked to gain several funding sources for this program, including funds from Texas Commission on the Arts, the Shield-Ayres Foundation, and the Brown Family Foundation. We have submitted additional requests to the National Endowment for the Arts, the San Antonio Area Foundation, and Mays Family Foundation, among other funders.

Children Impacted:

How many unduplicated children will the TOTAL PROJECT INITIATIVE impact?	How many unduplicated children will NFF REQUESTED FUNDS impact?
50	50

Please provide the percentage of each group below that will be served by the project in which funds are being requested. Do not leave any area blank. If that specific group will not be served, include zero. The percentage should total 100%.

A. Population Served Age		B. Population Served Ethnicity	
Infants (0-5)	0%	African American	35%
Children (6-13)	100%	Asian American	3%
Young Adults (14-18)	0%	Caucasian	1%
TOTAL:	100%	Hispanic/Latino	61%
		Native American	0%
		Other and Define	0%
		TOTAL:	100%

City Council District for Which Children are Being Served:

District2

Line item Budget:

Line Item Description	Total Project Funds Allocation	Najim Funds Allocation
Artistic Expenses (writers in residence, artists, etc.)	\$6,825	\$6,825
Supplies	\$800	\$400
Evaluation	\$1,050	\$875
Celebratory Reading	\$450	\$450
Student Publication	\$1,500	\$0
Partner Classes Professional Training	\$2,495	\$0
Admin & Overhead	\$4,250	\$1,450
TOTAL:	\$17,370	\$10,000

OTHER FUNDING RESOURCES

For Project being Requested: Funding sources and amounts, pending and committed.

PROJECT - PENDING

Funder Name	Amount Requested
Mays Family Foundation	\$10,000
TOTAL:	\$10,000

PROJECT - COMMITTED

Funder Name	Amount Requested
Shield Ayres Foundation	\$2,500
Texas Commission on the Arts--Operations	\$2,000
Brown Family Foundation	\$1,000
	\$0
TOTAL:	\$5,500

Other funding sources and amounts, pending and committed not specific to this request.**ALL OTHER ORGANIZATION REQUESTS - PENDING**

Funder Name	Amount Requested
NEA--CARES ACT (All Programs)	\$50,000
Humanities Texas (All Programs)	\$15,000
San Antonio Area Foundation (All Programs)	\$25,000
Elizabeth Huth Coates Foundation	\$10,000
TOTAL:	\$100,000

ALL OTHER ORGANIZATION REQUESTS - COMMITTED

Funder Name	Amount Requested
Texas Commission on the Arts (All Programs)	\$9,500
Shield Ayres Foundation (Partner Classes)	\$7,500
Brown Family Foundation (Partner Classes)	\$4,000
Orsinger Foundation (All Programs)	\$500
Texas Commission on the Arts (All Programs)	\$4,000
Texas Commission on the Arts--CARES ACT	\$1,362
City of San Antonio (All Programs)	\$26,452
Russell Hill Rogers Funds for the Arts	\$25,000
Frost Bank	\$3,500
TOTAL:	\$81,814

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

What percentage of your board contributes financially to the organization?
 100%

If Board giving is not at 100%, please explain why?
 N/A

How are board members expected to participate in your organization?

Board members contribute financially throughout the year; they support initiatives such as our annual fundraising gala; sustaining membership; public classes, our Autograph Series, which brings a writer of national and international repute to San Antonio for a free public reading and ticketed luncheon; and our youth outreach programming. In the 27th year of our existence as San Antonio's Writing Arts Center, Gemini Ink is working closely with its board to revise our strategic vision and assess our programming for long term sustainability. Moreover, Gemini Ink continues to work with its board to develop robust board engagement. Board members also help make connections for the organization, expanding programming and funding opportunities and ensuring we represent the diverse populations of our city. Board members serve as ambassadors and advocates for the organization. They also provide financial oversight and advice, programming suggestions, and help ensure smooth governance and sustainability of Gemini Ink.

LIST OF BOARD DIRECTORS

Name & Office Held	Corporate Affiliation
Charles Massiatte--Board President	Merrill Lynch
Clarice Golightly-Jenkins--Vice President	University of Texas Health Sciences Center--San Antonio/Professor
Erik Aagaard--Secretary & Interim Treasurer	Argent Trust Company
Martin Rico--Executive Chair	CEO at Rosewood Residential, LLC
Nan Cuba	Writer in Residence at Our Lady of the Lake University
Cary Clack	San Antonio Express-News
John Phillip Santos	University of Texas at San Antonio/ Honor's College--Distinguished Scholar
<p>Signature Alexandra van de Kamp</p>	