



NEWS RELEASE

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In 2009, the Dunham Fund, a private foundation established by Aurora businessman and philanthropist, John C. Dunham, announced the winners of the Challenge for Change competition. The competition offered financial incentives for nonprofits to step outside of their established program planning to identify a significant community need, to develop innovative solutions to address that need, and to define a collaborative team to implement those solutions with the goal of effecting positive change in the Aurora, Illinois area. The Challenge winners were offered the opportunity to apply to the Dunham Fund for additional funding to implement the program concepts.

First place winner, Aurora University's Institute for Collaboration program to establish the Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System to support math and science learning and Second place winner, Communities in Schools' Community Assessment Project to facilitate school and community tactical assessment, strategic planning, and grant-writing baseline information, have been awarded grants by the Dunham Fund to make their innovative program concepts realities.

AURORA MATH & SCIENCE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Challenge for Change award in 2009 of \$100,000 was utilized to explore ways to advance and support math and science learning in the community. This funding was used for the planning, including a feasibility study for a magnet academy for students talented in mathematics and science with a focus on students in grades 3-8 and to be a "go-to" demonstration, research and professional development site for schools, teachers, students and community members in the greater Aurora area.

The Dunham Fund Board of Advisors recently awarded a \$250,000 grant, with an additional \$150,000 challenge matching award (one dollar for every two dollars of new funding), which will enable AU and its partners to advance the curriculum and related planning for the creation of the academy. This proposed innovative school will serve students from the East Aurora, Indian Prairie, Oswego and West Aurora school districts, as well as Aurora University students.

In addition, the grant and potential matching funds will support the design of a comprehensive resource development plan necessary to raise the funds to make the academy a reality. The project has already gained the support of local business partners and two major national corporations, Google and Exelon. AU hopes to gain additional local, state and national support for the collaboration with the Dunham Fund challenge matching award.

One of the partners in the development of the magnet academy is the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. "We are so impressed with the shared vision and "all in" engagement of the university, school districts, City of Aurora, Chamber of Commerce and other AMSES partners," said IMSA President Dr.

Glenn W. "Max" McGee. Catherine C. Veal, IMSA Vice President for Strategy and Innovation, and a lead consultant for the project, added, "The Aurora community has put a stake in the ground about the importance of starting early to identify, challenge and inspire talented youth from diverse backgrounds to love, persist and excel in mathematics and science. That's an incredible commitment."

AURORA COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT PROJECT

The Communities in Schools' Community Assessment Project, was recently awarded a \$450,000 Dunham Fund grant. This grant is contingent upon CIS successfully securing additional funding commitments of \$150,000 to insure the sustainability of the project.

The project will begin with an environmental scan of data needs for eleven stakeholder groups, including: primary and mental healthcare, municipal and county government, business and industry, public and private schools and colleges, community not-for-profit agencies and faith-based communities, and the general area population. The environmental scan will identify priority data and information needs and requirements among stakeholder groups, clarify key issues related to data and information availability and accessibility, and establish the format and process with which data and information will be accessed by interested stakeholders. Priorities associated with "what data, how available, and for whom" will be established, based upon shared stakeholder needs and consensus, as part of the scanning process.

By December 2011, data and information, identified as priority needs via stakeholders consensus will be available in a desirable format established by stakeholder input and accessible on-line by means of an open-access website dedicated to this project.

Theresa Shoemaker, CIS Executive Director, said that "This Dunham Fund sponsored project seeks to facilitate community stakeholder groups' activities in such organizational needs as program planning and evaluation, growth and development research, problem identification and intervention, and grant an extramural funding competition."

Assessment project partner, Dan Barreiro, Chief Community Services Officer for the City of Aurora, asserts that, "In these tough economic times, local governments and non-profits are looking for ways to stretch resources. This program will provide a platform for collaborative efforts for seeking outside resources to meet the needs of the community. Through this collaboration, we will have better data for determining priorities and evaluating programs and the careful use of resources." Another partner, Jerry Murphy, Executive Director of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, Inc., also believes that this "initiative could be the quantum step needed in these challenging times of limited resources. Assisting agencies in accumulating and using service data in order to attract additional resources to the Aurora area is key to survival in an uncertain future for publicly-funded services."

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The Dunham Fund is a private foundation established in 2006 to honor the legacy of John C. Dunham, businessman and philanthropist, through grants to Aurora, Illinois area organizations that have the vision and programs to help fulfill Mr. Dunham's dream of "making the world a more comfortable, safer place for mankind to live and prosper."