

April 27, 2009

City of San Jose
Healthy Neighborhood Venture Fund
Appeals Subcommittee
200 East Santa Clara Street, 9th Floor
San José, CA 95113



Stronger Communities
Healthier Kids

Dear Appeals Subcommittee,

International Children Assistance Network (ICAN) respectfully submits an appeal for our **rating of 71** and **ranking of 44** for the **Happy 5 Project, requesting \$150,000.**

We carefully re-scored our proposal based on the Rating Tool as well as the rating instructions listed in Form C-Narrative in the RFQ. We engaged staff who participated in the writing of the proposal, as well as those who did not in order to get a fair assessment.

The re-scoring shows a score of at least 82.5 (not yet counting the External Review score). We believe that this score is more reflective of a) ICAN's qualifications, b) the needs of the Vietnamese community, and c) the Happy 5 program's proven 5-year track record of creating positive behavioral changes within the Vietnamese community that advances HNMF's goals.

The appeal letter will follow this order:

Part A: Appeals the score of **zero** given by the External Review Panel

Part B: Cites evidence from our submitted proposal in each of the four areas of evaluation where we deserve more points: *Needs, Program Design, Service Capacity, and Skills and Competencies*. The appeal also assesses areas where we could have given more information and gives reasonable points of deduction.

The Happy 5 program has received funding from H.N.V.F. since 2006, and since then has changed the lives of hundreds of families through the parenting workshops and radio program. We consistently deliver stellar performances, exceeding delivery plans and achieving positive behavioral changes among our participants.

We are grateful for HNMF's vision in funding innovative and creative projects such as our Happy 5 project which have yielded tremendous returns for the community. By *continuing* to fund the Happy 5 program to serve the Vietnamese community, HNMF shows their investment into a community whose needs are often silent, and thus underserved. Your investment these past three years have allowed us to serve this isolated community.

We ask you to renew your commitment to the Vietnamese immigrants who call San Jose their new home, and fund the Happy 5 program to give this community the resources they rightfully deserve to build a healthier future for themselves, and their children.

International Children Assistance Network

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PART A: APPEALING THE EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL’S SCORE OF ZERO

ICAN respectfully appeals the decision of the External Review Panel’s score of **zero** which fails to acknowledge the needs in the Vietnamese community and the critical services that we provide to the Vietnamese community (which accounts for 10% of San Jose City’s population).

We ask that our Happy 5 proposal be granted points in this category for the following reasons:

- a) The extensive **needs of the Vietnamese community** that ICAN’s proposal clearly demonstrates,
- b) The proven track record of positive behavioral changes that has occurred through *Happy 5*’s unique, **culturally competent and linguistically appropriate program design**, and
- c) The **gaps in service** towards Vietnamese children and families that would occur if ICAN’s programs fail to receive funding in this cycle. ICAN is the only organization that specifically serves Vietnamese families with children ages 0-5 through Early Care programs. While larger organizations may claim to serve multiple populations including the Vietnamese community, ICAN’s culturally competent services compellingly serve over 80 families a year (plus a waiting list.) We are the only agency with the radio program focusing on raising children in the early years, with hundreds of listeners calling us and service providers for counseling and services for their families, citing the Happy 5 radio program as their outreach venue.

PART B: RE-SCORING OF SECTIONS IN PROPOSAL

I) Needs Statement: Received a Score of 24.33. Should have received a score of at least 28.

A) Our proposal cites EXCELLENT data to describe the needs of the Vietnamese community, the second largest immigrant community in Santa Clara County with socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural barriers that lead to limited parenting skills and access to parenting resources, that may adversely affect the healthy development of children.

| Socioeconomic Barriers | Linguistic Barriers | Cultural Barriers |
|---|--|---|
| <p>“According to the 2006 Census, the Vietnamese population in Santa Clara County is estimated at 116,000, with 71% born in Vietnam and 29% born in the US (actual population is more around 150,000)” (pg 1).</p> <p>“More than half of the population [has] lived in the US around 10 years or less” (pg 1).</p> <p>“The average per capita income for Vietnamese population is \$15,385, well below the average US per capita income of \$21,587” (pg 1).</p> <p>“Due to the high cost of living in the Bay area that requires both parents to work, it has led to a ‘new generation’ of care providers consisting of grandparents, relatives, and older care providers” (pg 1).</p> | <p>“Through focus groups conducted in early 2008, we learned that language barrier is the number one reason why Vietnamese families do not access services” (pg 1).</p> <p>“Data from our workshop participants in the past 5 years confirmed [that] more than 80% of participants have limited English proficiency” (pg 1).</p> | <p>“Our workshop surveys and home-visits show that many in this target population do not have much knowledge about child development and/or child abuse/neglect” (pg 1).</p> <p>“[The] ‘new generation’ of care providers consisting of grandparents, relatives, and older care providers have ... limited knowledge of child development, and who might be well-entrenched in the traditional childrearing philosophies and practices that are culturally acceptable but which may put them in trouble with U.S. laws” (pg 1).</p> |

B) Our proposal provided an EXCELLENT description of how the *Happy 5* program is aligned with *HNVF's Work Plan and Goals* to promote the healthier development of children, and develop connections among Vietnamese residents with their community and neighborhoods (pg 2). Our proposal also cites evidence from past participants that demonstrate how the Happy 5 program has a proven track record of creating these healthier behavioral changes:

“Our past workshop participants have reported *positive changes in behavior*: watching TV less, reading to children more, and taking children to parks, museums or community events more often” (pg 2).

“The *social connection* [among parenting workshop participants] continues even after the workshops have ended. Participants report that they use their fellow classmates as resources, especially for referrals on services” (pg 2).

“When we aired our radio show on foster care and adoption, an elder woman in her 70’s called in to say that she would like to become a foster parent; many other callers echoed her interest to help. The *high number of callers* shows that the radio indeed offers listeners the opportunity to interact with their community/neighbors” (pg 2).

C) Point Deductions in Needs Statement:

We believe that *deducting a maximum of 2 points* (rather than 5.67 points) is reasonable for the following two weaknesses:

- 1) *Program alignment with HNVF*: Our proposal describes that the Happy 5 program “aligns with the Healthy Neighborhoods Strategic Work Plan in that it strives to improve the well-being of Vietnamese residents in San Jose by *increasing their knowledge on how to improve their health* and physical wellness and *facilitate their connection to their community and neighbors*” (pg 2). However, this description could have been strengthened by elaborating on Happy 5’s proven track record of establishing changes towards healthier behaviors that HNVF seeks to achieve. Please see citations above for specific examples of this proven track-record.
- 2) *Rationale of Service Location*: The proposal describes that *Tully Library* was selected as our program site to increase “accessi[bility] to the community,” and was chosen to “respon[d] to input from our participants” (pg 2). However, we should have emphasized that more than 30% of the Vietnamese community is concentrated in East San Jose, and Tully Library is a central venue for community events. A central, localized venue is integral to decrease access to barriers that may prevent the Vietnamese community from accessing services.

Considering the maximum deduction of 2 points, our score for the Needs section should be at least 28.

II) Program Design: Received a Score of 21.67. Should have received a score of at least 27.

A) Our proposal provides an EXCELLENT description of the Happy 5 Program, a public education program about child development that integrates “culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, participatory parenting workshops, media, and support groups” to advance the goal of developing healthier parenting skills that lead to the healthy development of children (pg 3).

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| <p>Parenting Workshops “Parenting workshop [are] an intimate first venue to encourage parents to share their struggles as they learn about child development” (pg 3). “Held on Sunday afternoons, these 2.5-hour workshops (conducted in Vietnamese) provide parents, grandparents, and care providers with culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate knowledge on child development and services” (pg 3).</p> | <p>Vietnamese Radio Program “a 30-minute weekly radio program that provides information on child development in the first five years and creates a forum for discussion on childrearing practices” (pg 3).</p> | <p>Monthly Support Groups “Through the support groups, parents will build and retain a social support network that can serve as resources later down the road, and an environment in which they learn to become better advocates for their children and community” (pg 3).</p> |
|--|--|--|

B) Our proposal provided an EXCELLENT implementation plan that demonstrates the proven track record of behavioral changes towards safer child rearing skills as a result of this culturally competent program design:

“Many parents and grandparents have told us that they were astonished to find out that 90% of the brain development takes place in the first three years of life when the child is still under their care (many expect learning to start when the child goes to school). This has led to a major change in attitude about spending quality time with their children” (pg 3).

“When we broadcasted our two shows on the Children Health Initiative ... we had an average of 18 callers [who] phoned in directly to First 5 and Santa Clara Family Health Plan after each show. The high volume of calls into these agencies shows that there is a need for this information” (pg 4).

“Many clients have told us that they particularly enjoy sharing and discussing cultural differences in our workshops and support groups because we have created a safe, trusting and understanding environment by enabling conversations in Vietnamese, and encouraging conversations about differences in culture, tradition, family values etc. These cultural discussions help them retain/internalize the new information and change their behavior” (pg 4).

C) Our proposal describes EXCELLENT intermediate results that are directly connected to HNVF’s Allocation Plan:

“Intermediate Result Statement 1: 75% of our workshop participants will have improved attitude and behavior about parental involvement in school by spending more time to read to their children or talk to their children about their experience in school/day care center. The behavior of reading

and talking more to the children will positively contribute to HNVF short term goal of **increasing parental involvement** in school” (pg 4).

“Intermediate Result Statement 2: 75% of our workshop participants will report new knowledge gained and an improved attitude and behavior regarding force feeding and the importance of family meal times. Having a better understanding the importance of family meal times and having proper feeding techniques will contribute to HNVF’s goal of **increasing better nutrition/healthy eating habits**” (pg 4).

D) Our proposal describes EXCELLENT benefits from our program that are directly connected to HNVF’s Allocation Plan of improving health wellness and facilitating connections to community and neighbors:

“The Happy 5 program provides Vietnamese parents, grandparents & care providers with *knowledge and skills* to ensure their children’s healthy development in the first five years” (pg 4).

“[Participants] will gain knowledge to ... develop healthy eating habits, access existing services on health ... [and] have a network where they can share concerns, learn from one another, and find suitable solutions” (pg 4).

E) Point Deductions in Program Design:

We believe that *deducting a maximum of 3 points* (rather than 8.33 points) is reasonable for the following weakness:

1) *Connection of Community Needs with Program Design:* Our Needs Statement clearly defines the socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural barriers that prevent Vietnamese parents and care providers from gaining appropriate parenting skills. The Happy 5 program responds to these needs with a program design that provides “a multi-faceted approach that integrates *culturally and linguistically appropriate materials*” and *free services* including “participatory parenting workshops, media, and support groups” (pg 3). The proposal would have been strengthened by better articulation of this connection, as well as citing additional examples of behavioural changes and program successes that demonstrates Happy 5’s innovative and effective program design. Please see above for citations about Happy 5’s proven track record of creating behavioural changes.

Considering the maximum deduction of 3 points, our score for the Program Design section should be at least 27.

III) Service Capacity: Received a Score of 11.33. Should have received a score of at least 13.5

A) Our proposal demonstrates EXCELLENT accommodation towards the multi-cultural needs of the Vietnamese community, the second largest immigrant community in Santa Clara County. The evaluation of this section favors organizations who serve “MOST multi-culture needs,” and thus the Happy 5 program would be underscored because it only serves the Vietnamese community. However, the Vietnamese community comprises the second largest immigrant segment of Santa Clara County, and who account for 10% of San Jose’s population, yet who remain drastically underserved. Beyond the traditional barriers that prevent this immigrant community from accessing services, there also exists a shortage of service providers who have a proven track record of successfully serving this community. ICAN is the premiere and only organization serving the segment of Vietnamese children ages 0-5, and thus should receive credit for serving this largely underserved community.

Furthermore, it is ICAN's proven track record in successfully serving the Vietnamese community that make ICAN uniquely qualified to deliver the *Happy 5* program. This track record comes from *staff's extensive skills in cultural competency, knowledge, and experience* with the Vietnamese community that is integrated into all program planning:

"ICAN's core competencies ... [are] in understanding and identifying the needs of the Vietnamese community, gaining the community trust, outreaching to the community, creating and delivering innovative culturally-appropriate public education and outreach programs that effectively address community needs" (pg 5).

"In designing vision, and strategy for programs and overall ICAN, we leverage our Executive Director's extensive knowledge and experience in marketing and project management, garnered from her time of working with Vietnamese refugees and mainstream community in various for-profit & nonprofit organizations in the past 20 years" (pg 5).

"We employ Vietnamese speaking facilitators who are seasoned childcare providers with many years of experience" (pg 5).

"While other agencies with programs serving the Vietnamese community struggle with low attendance, our Happy 5 parenting workshop boasts a waiting list ... and 40% of our workshop participants came from word-of-mouth advertising" (pg 5).

B) Point Deductions in Service Capacity:

We believe that *deducting a maximum of 1.5 points* (rather than 3.67) is reasonable for the following two weaknesses:

- 1) *Elaboration on the extensive years of collaborative work with partners ranging from 1-5 years of experience* for all of the partner organizations named: Mekong Community Center, San Juan Bautista Child Development Center, Tully Public Library, Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, Choices for Children, and Catholic Charities (pg 5-6).

However, our proposal extensively states that ICAN utilizes collaboration in all facets of the Happy 5 program from providing ICAN's direct services, as well as strengthening the services of our partners:

"[Mekong Community Center] with their knowledge of community services and counseling skills, is in the best position to respond to inquiry calls and directing people to appropriate services" (pg 5).

"[Collaboration] with San Juan Bautista (SJB) [Child Development Center] ... brings ICAN workshops to low income Vietnamese families in SJB's network" (pg 5).

"[Partnership] with the San Jose Tully Public Library ... makes these workshops available to those who can take public transportation to the library, indirectly promoting access to library services and programs" (pg 5).

"ICAN's collaborat[ion] with the Children's Discovery Museum (CDM) for the past several years ... promote[s] awareness and access to CDM's services" (pg 6).

"ICAN leverages cross-referrals from other agencies serving the Vietnamese community such as Catholic Charities and First 5 as well as our own clients" (pg 6).

- 2) *Elaboration on skills of frontline staff:* Our proposal extensively describes the experience of ICAN's Executive Director (please see citations above,) but could have been strengthened by describing the extensive experience of frontline staff including *three project coordinators, and a cohort of 5 community workshop facilitators* who are all bilingual in Vietnamese and English, and have extensive experience in program planning, curriculum building, outreach, evaluation, and program management.

Considering the maximum deduction of 1.5 pts, our score for the Service Capacity section should be at least 13.5.

IV) Skills and Competencies Capacity: Received a Score of 13.67. Should have received a score of at least 14.

A) Our proposal demonstrated EXCELLENT approaches to promoting healthy lifestyles, and EXCELLENT alignment with ALL of HNVF's Allocation Plan values by citing specific examples of how the Happy 5 program has a proven track record of developing the behavioral changes sought by the values proposed by the Allocation Plan:

Exercise, nutrition, recreational activities:

"After our [radio] show on soda/sugar was aired, an elderly gentleman called in to say that he found the show very informative. He himself is diabetic, and he wants ICAN to provide similar radio shows so that the public can be informed and encouraged to change their eating habits/lifestyles for themselves and for their children" (pg 7).

Fostering independence:

"One parent [from our Parenting Workshops] told us 'I no longer yell at my daughter or force her to do things. I reason with her. When I say thank you to her, and she smiles back at me ... I just love it'" (pg 7).

"From our home visits for the October 08 series, 83% of participants cited new knowledge learned regarding how to develop their children's confidence, self-esteem and social skills ... One parent wrote: 'I will raise my children to have high self-esteem and value themselves more, so as they grow up, it will be easier to communicate with them and they can see where they want to go and what they want to be'" (pg 7).

Building social connections:

"Past participants expressed their desire for more/longer workshops and more frequent support groups so they can share and learn from one another. One mother, who runs a childcare center at home, said that parents would call her to ask for advice or inquire about her daycare center" (pg 8).

Building cross-cultural and intergenerational connections:

"After thorough discussions about values, language skills and acquisition process, family resources etc, we successfully convince parents to speak Vietnamese to their children at home in the first five years. This will a) ensure optimal language development, and b) strengthen cultural identity" (pg 8).

B) Point Deductions in Skills and Competencies Capacity:

We believe that *deducting a maximum of 1 point* (rather than 1.32) is reasonable for the following weakness:

1) *Approach towards Anti-tobacco*: The proposal described Anti-tobacco curriculum topics in the radio program and parenting workshops (pg 7,) but could have been strengthened by citing examples of behavioral changes of past workshop participants that have occurred as a result of the program.

Considering this maximum 1 point deduction, our score for the Service Capacity section should be at least 14.

CONCLUSION:

We have done a very thorough and critical review of our own proposal, based on the Rating Tool as well as the rating instructions listed in Form C-Narrative in the RFQ. We have shown in this letter that our proposal has excellently responded to all HNVF questions and criteria, with only a few minor weaknesses.

We ask that the Appeals Committee accept the appeal that ICAN is making to revise our total score to a least 82.5.

Respectfully yours,



Quyen Vuong
Executive Director