

February 24, 2011

Project Success to Cease Operations June 30th

At a meeting today of the Project Success Board of Directors the Board approved the recommendation from staff to end all Project Success services effective June 30, 2011, and to dissolve the Illinois not for profit corporation established in 1998.

For many years, Project Success has provided almost \$400,000.00 annually in programming and services to the Decatur Public Schools, including many notable services with solid results to help at risk children succeed in school since it began as a pilot program in 1992. Services have included after school tutoring, identification/enrollment of area homeless children, activities to increase parent involvement, over \$100,000.00 annually for Family Liaisons, the *Seniors for Success* volunteer program, school supplies for 2000 needy children each fall, and the *Right Track* truancy prevention program started in 2001 when the District had little interest in tackling truancy. Since 2000 over 37,000 children and families have attended our annual STICK WITH YOUR KIDS! event at the Civic Center to promote parent involvement. We developed *House Calls Home Visits* in 2002 to encourage teachers and principals to make home visits at the start of the school year...since that time over 4,000 families have been visited and encouraged to become involved in their children's education.

Our Board has worked hard to finance our operations and operate in a sound fiscal manner while providing adequate reserves to carry over each year to cover funding fluctuations. And this year is no exception. We are particularly proud that in addition to being the recipient of many state and federal grants supporting our work over the years, we have been a United Way agency since 2006.

There is no question that the current state and federal budget restraints will make funding programs such as ours more challenging. But we have successfully faced similar challenges in the past, and would be willing to do so again but for a changing community environment.

The decision to discontinue services was made due to increased duplication of efforts, poor communication and lack of support by District #61 administration, coupled with the Community Foundation's aggressive marketing and fundraising to support its Education Coalition (with very little promise that much, if any, of the funds being raised by the Coalition will support ongoing programs such as ours and others whose results are highlighted in their frequently published fundraising ads and promotional materials). This has resulted in a negative impact and general decline in local financial support necessary to support Project Success' work to help at risk children succeed in school.

Given the current climate, the difficult decision was made to no longer devote the tremendous time and energy necessary to raise funds and deliver programs. We regret that these factors have convinced us that notwithstanding our continued desire to help children succeed in school, it was time to let those so prone to take credit for our work actually raise the funds and run the programs. We thank the community for its support these many years.

Jane Shade
Executive Director
Project Success