

**McKinney Community Development Corporation
Grant Application for**



ESPECIALLY NEEDED's 3rd Annual Fall Carnival at The Ballfields at Craig Ranch

1. The mission of Especially Needed is to build a strong community where individuals with special needs are valued, respected and included. This corporation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes as specified in Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The number of directors constituting the initial board of directors is three (3): their names, positions and addresses are:

Heather Astuto – President, 1300 Westmont Drive, McKinney, Texas 75070
Anne-Marie Zellers- Vice President, 5457 Rosenthal Parkway, Lorena, Texas 76655
Melissa Williams – Secretary, 1745 Shoebill Drive, Little Elm, Texas 75068

The purpose of this corporation is:

- Host several events and activities throughout the year in a fun, loving and stress free environment where individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities and their families are included and treated equally.
- Provide quality educational programs and services at a minimum or no cost to the individual or family with a disability.
- Offer community events, workshops and literature to better educate people in the community on the types of disabilities as well as proper communication and how to eliminate prejudices and discrimination against the special needs population.
- Provide an outlet of resources and information for families and individuals to ensure that people with special needs are aware of all the services that are being offered to them and their families.

Families come from all over North Dallas and the Collin County to the City of McKinney to attend the special events. The organization was formed a little over 2 years ago and I spend a great amount of time putting together these events and working on spreading the word to as many families as possible. We currently have no paid staff or volunteers.

The event for which our organization is requesting funds is for:

3rd Annual Fall Carnival

II. Event outline and details:

This event will be held on October 27th, 2012 at The Ballfields at Craig Ranch. The target audience will be families in McKinney and surrounding cities that have children or relatives with special needs. Last year was our second year to host this event and we had approximately 300 families (800-900 people) attend. There were families from several neighboring cities.

At this time there is no charge for the event however, we have contemplated the idea of charging \$5.00 per family to help the organization with future events. \$5 would be the maximum cost.

Some of the planned activities are:

Carnival booths (digging for prizes in sand box, fishing game where child throws the line over the wall and they catch a prize, can knock down, bean bag toss, ring toss and more).

Face painting, balloon artist, a train, petting zoo, cake walk, pumpkin painting, bounce houses, fire engine from McKinney Fire Dept. and representative from the McKinney Police Department that will hand out safety items. Cinderella and a real horse and carriage for photo opportunity. Several volunteers dressed in kid friendly costumes.

Trick or Treat Street was an activity enjoyed most by the children. Last year we purchased a large banner and light posts to mark the entrance of street and we lined the rope lights about 300 feet long on both sides to replicate the look of an actual street. Volunteers posted themselves along the street about every 5 feet with buckets of candy. The children and their families were able to walk up and down the street and trick or treat. It was wonderful to see how easy it was for the families, including those who have children in wheelchairs to have the feeling of trick or treating without having to go door to door in a neighborhood.

Food items that were served were hot dogs, nachos, pickles, popcorn and cotton candy. Drinks were served and for children who were on a special diet we had a menu option for them as well.

Below are some comments I received from families and volunteers that have attended our carnivals:

Heather, I brought my daughter Stephanie, to the carnival, along with family and friends. My daughter is 40 years old, of course, her mental age is very much younger, as she is unable to read or write. I have been in McKinney for nine years, praying something would be available in McKinney for young adults. In the past, we have gone to both Allen and Plano for her to enjoy socializing with other young adults. I know of nothing in McKinney. A good time was enjoyed by all. Have a blessed evening, Jackie

Heather,

Our family had a wonderful time Saturday evening at the carnival. Thank you for organizing this wonderful event! It was so nice to go somewhere where we knew we could relax and not worry about people staring if our son had a meltdown.

Thank you again,
Jennifer Johnson
Resource Reading
Staley Middle School

We had a great time and the event was awesome
Thank you! Jessica King

Thanks!
We had a super time!

Please let me know when you plan next event, also I'm handy with drawing and calligraphy if any of those needs arise, Jordan had a great time, as did !!

Drew Miner
Construction Services
Store Planning Manager

Thanks for all the planning you and all the other people involved did for the carnival. Our family had a great time.
Laurie Wainscott

Hi Heather,
We were able to attend the event on Saturday. What a great time! It was really a treat! Everything was great and well planned. Lucas had a great time!

Becky Chretien-Caillier

We had a wonderful time at the carnival. Thank you so much for all your hard work! My kids loved it!
Hallie Winters

Heather,

This message is to let you know how much the children enjoyed the carnival. Thank you and all the members of Especially Needed for carrying out such a great event. We are very grateful to all the sponsors and volunteers present that made the event so special!

Sincerely,

Maricela Reyes

"Heather, just went to your Fall Carnival last night and had the best time of our lives! It was a beautifully put together event filled with wonderful people - can't wait to take the whole family to your next event!"

Ryan Herzog - Parent

"You went above and beyond!!! Truly did a wonderful, incredible job with the carnival!!! Everyone I spoke with there had a wonderful time and the children were all so happy, and that's what it was all about. All of the children had such bright happy smiles. Over the past several days I have also heard from many parents in the community and others..... word is spreading! I just wanted you to know how much your efforts are appreciated. Thank you so much for all the time you have devoted. And I have to tell you, my husband was so impressed and a little bit speechless."

~Jamie Penlin – Parent

[John Snell](#) (volunteer) on Facebook

"Awesome event last night, Heather! It was such a blessing to see all the smiles and laughter on the kids' faces!"

[Carin Duclos](#) (Parent) on Facebook

"Had a wonderful time at the Especially Needed Fall carnival Saturday night. Thank you!"

Just wanted to tell you THANK YOU so much!! We all had a wonderful time and was great to see other families we knew and to meet some new ones.

With many, many Blessings,
Kim and Family

Heather, we discovered your carnival from the Dallas Child website. We are going to be in the area & thought it sounded like a great event for our family! We have a 9-yr-old daughter with cerebral palsy. We are wondering if any of the food or carnival games will cost so we can come prepared!

Thank you so much! This sounds like a fantastic community event!
Shelley

How this event will advance the mission and strategic goals of MCDC and how it will impact the community.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to visit with many of these families and I tend to hear similar comments. They simply don't get out much in the community or go to a lot of the public

events because it can be difficult for them. Location or parking can be a problem or the children may have an episode or issue dealing with their disability and other families/kids will stare or comment. They enjoy being able to meet families with similar experiences. Many of these families have never been to McKinney before. By holding events like these it is just another way we make McKinney unique.

Our organization has been contacted by several businesses that are interested in helping with future events or becoming sponsors. I am not aware of any other organization in the North Dallas area that focuses on events for the special needs community.

III. Financial

Especially Needed is a small organization and currently I handle many of the tasks and event planning. We tend to ask for specific items for an event as opposed to money. Therefore we do not have a budget at this time. We have been very fortunate to have most items donated from local business or members of the community for the events. Any other expenses are paid for by the organization (me personally). If we were approved for a grant from MCDC the funds would go towards fliers, t-shirts, radio advertisement, entertainment, games and/or activities and other marketing tools.

Last year the total cost for this event was approximately \$17,000 (including cost of items that were donated).

Event Budget:

Items expected to be donated:

Venue – Donated by Ballfields at Craig Ranch

Food – purchased with donations

Games and prizes (several will be used from prior years) – Donated by friends and family

250 medium pumpkins – Donated by VMC Landscaping Company

Bounce Houses - purchased with donations and one provided by State Farm – Josh Ragsdale's office/ McKinney

Local band and stage

Expenses that could be covered by grant (marketing items).All items will have the MCDC logo

Cups with logo	800.00
Signage at event	200.00
Webpage assistance	250.00
Local magazine ads	1500.00
Balloons with logo	150.00
Horse and carriage with MCDC logo	700.00
T-shirts	2500.00
Flyers	750.00
Balloon marker (large helium balloon to help people locate ballfields)	200.00

Stuffed Animals for the carnival booth prizes	1000.00
Bounce house	100.00
Photo Booth	400.0

Total event cost (including expected donations)	\$20,000.00
Total requested from MCDC	\$8550.00

IV. Marketing and outreach

Our organization has contacts with all of the surrounding ISD's Special Education Departments and we are able to distribute flyers home to parents that way. We plan to place event information in the local community magazines and websites. If possible we would like to have a few radio announcements. Currently our email list consists of over 500 families with special needs. Every event we host our database grows larger and larger.

Metrics to evaluate success - We require families to RSVP for the event to ensure that we are adequately prepared with enough food, activities and volunteers for the event. We will have a check in area at the event to help maintain an accurate head-count.

This concludes this grant application. However, over the next couple of weeks I would like to provide MCDC with additional newspaper articles and letters of recommendation on behalf of Especially Needed.

Thank you for your time,

Heather Astuto
Founder of Especially Needed



“Celebrating our differences. Celebrating life.”