

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School in Santa Fe, NewMexico plans to open on August 13, 2013 as a K-12 New Mexico, PED sponsored charter school at or near 1376 Agua Fria Street in Santa Fe, near Boylan Street, to serve 400 students. The neighborhood has two elementary schools, K-6 Agua Fria Elementary at 3160 Agua Fria St., Santa Fe 87501, reporting Math AYP of 28.8 and Reading AYP of 37.77 with 547 students and R.M. and K-5 Sweeney Elementary 501 Airport Road, Santa Fe 87505 reporting Math AYP of 26.59 and Reading AYP of 42.2% with 569 students. The nearest middle and high schools are De Vargas Middle School and Santa Fe High School, approximately six and one-half miles away. According to key demographic information, this neighborhood is 74.9% Hispanic, 2.5% American Indian, 1% Black and 20% White, with 68.9% Disadvantaged and 51.5% Children living below poverty.

The children and parents in the neighborhood are generally dissatisfied with their schools, we learned as we had casual conversations with over ninety parents and children during the past year, regarding the viability of bringing StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School into this neighborhood. The families are struggling economically and the schools seem to cause them worry for their children. We heard that the schools were boring, not helping them with their needs and not individualized. Further, we heard comments regarding safety concerns, lack of physical education, art and music and nearly all the students we talked with were having trouble learning math, science and reading. We asked each person, whether a parent or a student if they would be interested in attending a small, 400 student community-based K-12 school at or near 1376 Agua Fria Road and every person said they hope StarShine Academy Lisa Law PeaceSchool can open there. The neighbors said they would become involved and would transfer students there. Many said they have been praying for a better choice in their school.

The property SALLPS is considering is approximately five acres and will host a community permaculture garden to help the students learn about health and the environment and to promote community involvement. When we mentioned the possibility of our gardening programs, the neighbors seemed genuinely appreciative. The neighbor to the east of the property has a small eco-learning business and was quite interested in a potential partnership to give the families additional learning experiences.

StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School will use every available resource to support the academic and social growth of each of its four hundred students, individually, in a way that larger schools have difficulty providing. Due to its small size and diverse age and socioeconomic background, the school will leverage those strengths to support its students.

Community Overview

Santa Fe, NM is part of the oldest, continuously inhabited region of the United States. The area has evolved into numerous culturally diverse, internally cohesive communities that embrace self-reliance, strong family-oriented values and traditions rooted in community solidarity. With a land area of 1909 square miles, Santa Fe County is roughly the size of the state of Rhode Island. The County is located in Northern New Mexico and is home to 145,648 residents (75.5 persons per square mile). Nearly 30.4% of the population is under the age of eighteen.

Santa Fe appears to share many challenges and strengths typically faced by countries in the developing world. Santa Fe's social structures are well adapted to both a cosmopolitan, culturally rich, uniquely different, city along with an agrarian lifestyle built upon small, family-run farms and ranches. Many would argue that a community-based agrarian lifestyle is more sustainable for the world as a whole, and would help to alleviate global environmental crises.

Within this neighborhood, cultural dislocation, combined with poverty and hopelessness, has exacerbated, or even caused high rates of depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation and other behavioral health issues. The greatest need for increased access to social services appears to be substance abuse and behavioral health, especially for children and youth.

The economic indicators of the neighborhood near Boylan Lane and Agua Fria Road in Santa Fe, NM paint a bleak picture. With a per capita income of \$15,272, this area ranks among the lowest in income of surrounding neighborhoods. The County has an overall poverty rate of 14.4%

Community Conditions

“Data for Grant Making: A Comparative Study of Community Health in Santa Fe County (June 2009)” from the Northern New Mexico Health Grant Group underscores the strong links between poverty, school failure, crime, drug abuse, access to health care, poor health and teen pregnancy, and the chronically high rates of all these indicators in the County, particularly evidenced in this neighborhood.

Youth behavioral health has consistently been identified as a community health improvement priority in Santa Fe County in plans and needs assessments since 1997. Youth focus groups, conducted as part of the Santa Fe Strategic Prevention Framework effort, identified the following risk and resiliency factors as significant:

Risk factors:

- Community Norms related to alcohol/drug use
- Community Attitudes related to alcohol/drug use
- Community Disorganization and Crime/Violence
- Liquor License Density
- Availability of Alcohol/Drugs
- Extreme Economic Deprivation

Protective Factors

- Commitment to School
- Individual characteristics
- Bonding
- Healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Community Cohesiveness

Causal Factors

- Unemployment
- High School Dropout
- DWI Arrest Rate
- Minority status
- Low socioeconomic status

StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School seeks to serve the community by providing a rich and engaging school environment that will minimize risk factors and increase protective factors for its students. The small school size, vibrant curriculum, service learning components and behavioral health initiatives will provide the basis for lifelong learning and positive commitment to the community.

StarShine creates a solid culture that recognizes that education is for the "whole child," combining academic excellence and achievement, character development and awareness, and community engagement and leadership. Serving Kindergarten through 12th grade with an anticipated enrollment of 400 students, StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School will serve the students of Santa Fe who recognize that our educational philosophy integrates academic, character and unique community.

To implement this philosophy, StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School will use a blended approach leveraging technology with the Core Knowledge curriculum in grades K-8 and the Paideia methodology of Socratic discussion in grades 9-12, both of which will be aligned with New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks as well as the Common Core Standards. The curriculum in the High School will focus on pre-collegiate readiness, and graduation requirements that meet and exceed New Mexico requirements, specifically including math, science, language arts, social studies, physical and behavioral health, communications, humanities and service learning. Demonstrated programmatic components encouraging strong character development and a safe learning environment coupled with active community engagement and strong service learning components in the curriculum will provide the tools necessary for StarShine Academy Lisa Law Peace School students to face the challenges of their community today, and to address life challenges in the world tomorrow.