

## Jazz for Peace Grant Application Form Page 2

### *Additional information or comments:*

Dear John:

Is your organization really real? I received information regarding your organization in my on-line non-profit newsletter and I could not believe my eyes. I wanted to cry and matter of fact I did drop a few tears.

I started this program three years ago, as a community outreach coordinator employed for a residential treatment center (orphanage) for children waiting for loving foster homes or to be adopted to build their self-esteem. For nearly twenty years, I have been a freelance entertainment newspaper reporter, and desired to bring celebrities to these youth to inspire them to dream and to set goals they could achieve.

Over the years, the program has been very successful in changing lives and healing broken hearts. But I had been serving only one agency, my place of employment. The demand in working with foster youth is overwhelming, therefore, this year, I branched out... taking a huge leap of faith and The Brightest Star program became a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization of its own. The organization is 100% charitable and no one is paid—everyone associated with the organization is a volunteer dedicated to helping youth in foster care. Today, this program is offered to three outstanding residential treatment centers (orphanages) in Southern California serving the needs of collectively nearly 2,000 youths in residential treatment settings and foster homes. I have recruited many celebrities, (all not shown on website) and many volunteers (mostly mental health interns and students) to inspire the youth.

Celebrities, business owners, politicians, noted individuals come speak with the kids and spend time with the youth, privately, up-close and intimately without fanfare and hoopla in their educational setting in small groups for inspiring. They come to up build a young person's life and to empower them to believe that the choices that their birth parents made, does not define them or who they are destined to become. We are forever, building self-esteem in these youth who feel worthless and abandoned because it sometimes appears that nobody wants them. We are always up building and encouraging youth who emancipate from the foster care system often who have no one or any support system. They often need many items and things. This is the mission and purpose of The Brightest Star program, to build dreams and self-esteem in abused and abandoned children and to provide them with the tools to building positive mental wellness. It's amazing to see the transformations that have occurred.

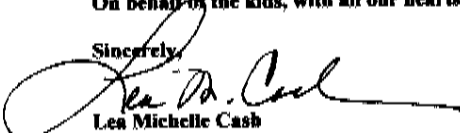
Finding funding, so that I keep this valued program running is difficult at this time, because most foundations and grant opportunities are seeking 2-3 years of service. The Brightest Star program does not meet this requirement at this time. Although we have been in business with many community awards to prove it that have honored our valued work, I did not receive our non-profit status until Jan. 2008. Since then, we have functioned completely on charitable donations, and my savings, the gifts that keep on giving. It's so amazing what God has done.

One of our biggest desires is to take small groups of foster youths in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade available for adoption (that never comes) because they are older kids to visit out of state colleges. Especially Harvard, because if they work hard their college at Harvard for an undergraduate degree is paid for by Harvard. They could do it if they only believe, have a dream and set short and long term goals to achieve. However, we have to show them. When we do make a Harvard visit, Noble Peace Prizewinner, Eric Wesel has accepted an invitation to spend the afternoon and have lunch with the youth. This is the type of mission and life changing opportunities we are about—to dream and dream big!

Therefore, this is the purpose I am submitting an application to you, tearfully and prayerfully because we need your support. The funds I am requesting will keep The Brightest Star program operational for one year without worry or struggle. Providing us to continue our services towards building self-esteem and dreams in abused and abandoned youth. The funds, awareness, and publicity that you provide us with your Successful Benefit Concert Series will be a remarkable gift and the lives you will affect: *Priceless*

On behalf of the kids, with all our hearts, we are sending our warmest regards.

Sincerely,

  
Lea Michelle Cash  
Founder, Executive Director