M E M O R A N D U M

**To:** Mónica Torres, Chair of English Dept.

**From:** Jen Almjeld, Assistant Professor of English

**Date:** November 26, 2012

**RE:** University support for Girlhood Remixed Camp

I am writing to request funding to support the second Girlhood Remixed Camp, the first of which was held at NMSU in late July of this year and brought 24 area girls to campus to learn about technology, identity, and the influence of media.

**Camp description:**

The Girlhood Remixed Camp, funded last year by a small grant from the Hancock Family Foundation and generous support from the English department, was a four-day residential camp for girls age 10-14 designed to introduce campers to multiple technologies and applications including iMovie, web design, PhotoShop, GarageBand, and blogging. Because one of the main objectives of the camp – an extension of NMSU’s land grant mission – was to serve those in this community who might otherwise not have access to this sort of educational opportunity, the camp was nearly free to the young people participating. Each camper paid $20 and was provided with four days of meals, three nights lodging, access to computer labs and equipment on campus, and instruction.

The camp’s curriculum included about 30 hours of supervised computer lab work – facilitated by the camp director and 15 undergraduate and graduate student volunteers from the English and Art departments. Besides gaining fluency with various computer hardware, programs, and new media practices, the campers also visited the Learning Games Lab to see video games being designed and created and enjoyed recreational activities on campus each evening. The camp ended with approximately 75 friends and family of the campers gathered to view the movies and blogs the campers created to voice their opinions on ways media and society define “girl.”

**Need for the camp:**

The camp quickly filled up last year with us unable to serve fully two-thirds of those that applied to participate in the project. I have contact information for those girls and plan to do some workshops in the spring relating to some of the skills and applications covered in the camp, but I’d like to be able to offer those girls the first slots in our next camp.

Also, the camp has garnered real interest from graduate students in our Rhetoric and Professional Communication program. Three students are so interested that they are preparing an online fundraising project to make sure the camp will be funded next summer and to help with additional supplies – if we are able to secure funding elsewhere – like technology (jumpdrives, cameras, etc.) that we might be able to send home with campers. Additionally, another four graduate students have already asked me about plans for the next camp and how they might help.

**Camp goals and rationale:**

1. Increase access to and skills in technology for girls, particularly in Dona Ana County, regardless of socioeconomic status
2. Increase critical awareness of new media consumption and production practices with particular attention paid to gender and identity representations available to young, female technology users
3. Encourage outreach work amongst undergraduate and graduate students from English and other departments – Students provided a variety of services to the camp from leading software demonstrations and working one-on-one with campers in the computer lab to serving meals and chaperoning evening events
4. Early recruitment for university – Studies show (American Association of University Women, *Tech Savvy*, 2000) that middle school is a critical time in a child’s life in making decisions about future education and professions. Bringing this age group to campus is thus ideal in encouraging students, some of which may be first-generation college students, to consider attending college.

**Details about our first camp:**

* Served 24 10-14 year old girls
* Included 15 volunteers – undergraduates and graduate students from English and graduates students from Art
* Camp was tied to an online graduate-level summer class that attracted 14 students
* Campers produced a variety of media artifacts – blogs, iMovies, images, podcasts and designed a camp logo and T-shirt
* Ended with dozens of parents, siblings, and friends visiting the campus and viewing the girls’ work

**Previous camp budget:**

* Total for last year’s camp was --- $1,941
* Costs included three nights lodging for 23 campers and two chaperones
* Most meals were donated by area merchants – McDonald’s, Sonic – or sponsored by individuals or the English Department (*I do not think this model will be sustainable for the second year of the camp, however.)*

**Estimated budget for 2013 camp:**

* **Total budget for summer 2013 --- $2,774**
* Two nights lodging for 24 campers and 4 chaperones (Housing costs are $21.50 per person, per night for double occupancy rooms) - $1,204
* Incidentals including craft supplies, snacks, and postage for permission forms and information packets - $400
* Three breakfasts, lunches, and dinners for 28 campers plus two additional volunteers at meal time (see chart below for breakdown) = $1,170

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Item*** | ***Cost per item*** | ***Quantity*** | ***Total*** |
| Breakfast | $3/person/day | 30 people  3 days | $270.00 |
| Lunch | $5/person/day | 30 people  3 days | $450.00 |
| Dinner | $5/person/day | 30 people  3 days | $450.00 |
| **Total dining expenses** |  |  | **$1,170.00** |

**Benefits to the campers:**

1. Increase access to and skills in technology for girls at a time when research suggests their interest in technology wanes (AAUW, *Tech Savvy*, 2000)
2. Provide space to discuss and critically engage with issues related to girls’ self-esteem – body image, identity performance, safety online, bullying online, etc.
3. Allow campers a voice in telling their own stories of girlhood rather than merely consuming the narrow gender roles given them by mass media

**Benefits to NMSU student volunteers:**

1. Increase technology and teaching skills for graduates and undergraduates
2. Offer experience planning and administering major outreach initiatives
3. Important professional development, particularly for graduate students training to become faculty
4. Ties to pedagogical goals of the English Department graduate programs
   1. Three graduate students are drafting an online fundraising campaign for the camp as part of projects in their Modern Rhetorical Theory and Multimedia Theory and Design classes.
   2. This experience offers an ideal space for graduate students to practice teaching and classroom management skills that are covered in many of our pedagogy classes.
   3. The camp also forces students to verbalize for the campers the ever-widening definition of writing, as inclusive of multiple media, that they are learning in our classrooms.

**Benefits to the department/university:**

1. Furthers NMSU’s land grant mission
2. Facilitates the research agenda for at least one faculty member (Dr. Jen Almjeld) and several graduate students. Dr. Almjeld will present on the camp at the SWTX PCA/ACA conference and Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) and plans a co-authored article with a colleague at another university and at least two articles with graduate students from NMSU.