



UCAN Youth Development
PO Box 281233
Memphis, TN 38168

Dear Potential Sponsor:

Our youth of today are fighting “THE” fight of their lives!...and at a glance our local and regional media outlets reveal that the current reasoning for youth concern is the recent school shooting, the fact of stabbings, hallway rapes, and students beating classroom teachers. Today, there is a spiritual warfare and culture war zone of violence that our children now live in. Daily, families are torn apart by the violence that not only take place outside of their home, but the abuse both physically and mentally that takes place on the inside of the home. As some of us attempt to figure out what has happened to our youth of today, most are in denial that we (parents) ourselves have permanently wounded our own children (emotionally, psychologically, spiritually and even physically). We as parents have allowed mass media to brainwash our youth by giving them a wide open road to negative programming (pornography, drugs, music videos, and sexual orientated shows) as their regular babysitter, morning, noon and night.

There are no real quick fixes for this “culture of violence,” because it’s a “heart problem,” and heart problems normally take years to impact and even more years to transform. UCAN recognizes the need for long-term investments into the lives of our children;—**we are a long-term program by design.**

The young people of today are struggling with adult pressures such as alcoholism, drug addiction, homosexuality, teen pregnancies, and much more. Many of our youth are crying out for help in the only way they know how and that is by engaging in negative acts. Who can they turn to when they don’t know and have never experienced real love without a price? Where is that Big Brother/Big Sister or other mentor who can point them down the road to positive thinking, to walk with them on the street called “You Can Make It,” to give them a hand in self love, self respect and self esteem? **We can!** “UCAN” was created three years ago by a group of concerned citizens who met hoping to find a solution or solutions for our youth and the choices they were making. This group of citizens comprised of everyday working people wanted desperately to help save our children and to help them make better choices in life. UCAN provides a unique environment where youth are taught the values of leadership, integrity, character building, future building, self-esteem and volunteer service to others. Since 2006, UCAN has positively influenced approximately 1,000 youth in the Memphis area.

The UCAN began as a grassroots effort of area business leaders to bring after-school tutoring, mentoring, recreational and social programs directly to the children in Memphis. We are a non-profit public sponsored organization in which 75% of Memphis and Shelby County School District’s youth are headed by single parent households and where fewer parents have the necessary parenting skills to provide a safe and stimulating home environment. It is without the full-time supervision of a strong adult presence that has caused many of the escalating problems of school discipline, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy and worst of all, school drop-outs. UCAN provides early intervention and prevention services through its mentoring relationships,

image development, seminars and workshops to youth in grades middle and high school who are at high risk of educational failure, teen pregnancy, truancy and juvenile delinquency.

Sociologists call the youth of today the first generation without an identity. They are the most fatherless youth culture in history who are left confused, without hope for a future and yet incredibly intelligent and impressionable. Generation X is desperate for role models, starved for affection, but yet crazed with a desire to make a difference!

BUT WE NEED HELP, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are respectfully submitting this letter of request to you and asking that you will consider donating to us a portion of our \$25,000 budget for next years programming. I am eager to discuss further with you this request and to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. Also, if additional information or materials are needed to help aid in this process, please feel free to contact me at (901) 355-1163.

Thank you in advance for your time and your consideration in helping us to continue our efforts in making a difference in the lives of our youth.

Respectfully and sincerely submitted,

Leshundra Finley
President, UCAN