

*J. Marion Sims
Foundation*

PERSPECTIVES

FOUNDATION AWARDS MORE THAN \$2 MILLION IN ADULT LITERACY AND RESPONSIVE GRANTS

The J. Marion Sims Foundation awarded the following Adult Literacy grants during the 2008 grant cycle:

- **Brooklyn Springs Elementary School**, \$61,000 one-year transition grant for its "Home Literacy Trail" family literacy program
- **Chester County Literacy Council**, \$69,901 one-year transition grant for its "Guided Academic Preparation Program" workplace literacy program in Great Falls
- **The Children's Council**, \$50,049 one-year transition grant for its "Skills for Success" family literacy program
- **Christian Services of Lancaster**, \$78,744 one-year transition grant for its "Lit-Up" workplace literacy program
- **Communities in Schools of Lancaster County**, \$155,260 two-year challenge grant for its "YouthBuild" workplace literacy program
- **Deliverance Word of Faith Church**, \$88,086 two-year challenge grant for its "Southside Family Literacy Project"
- **Faith, Hope and Victory Christian Church**, \$57,459 one-year transition grant for its "Community Powerhouse" family literacy program
- **Fort Lawn Community Center**, \$235,680 two-year challenge grant for its basic skills, family, parenting, computer, workplace and citizenship literacy programs

Continued on page 2

FOUNDATION UNVEILS NEW ORGANIZATIONAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Over the summer the J. Marion Sims Foundation unveiled its new *Organizational Empowerment* program for nonprofit organizations serving residents of Lancaster County, Fort Lawn and Great Falls, SC. Designed to strengthen agencies' ability to fulfill their missions and sustain their efforts long-term, *Organizational Empowerment* is a multi-faceted approach to building the capacity of the local nonprofit sector. (See "What is Organizational Empowerment?" on page 5 for a detailed definition and specific examples of activities.)

For years the JMSF has worked to increase the potential for success among grantees through a variety of ventures. The Organizational Empowerment (OE) program represents an expansion of these efforts.

One of the most significant aspects of the new program is its integration into the existing grantmaking processes of both the Responsive Grants program and the Adult Literacy Initiative. Beginning with the October 2008 Responsive Grants cycle, the foundation will offer eligible applicants the opportunity to be paired with a consultant for a free organizational assessment.

Continued on back page



Elaine Adkins, Director of HOPE in Lancaster, talks with Lisa Williams of LIFT (left) and Fontaine McNamara of Welvista (right) during one of the Organizational Empowerment workshops. More than 125 agency representatives from the local nonprofit community attended the workshops, which were held at USC-L's Dowling Center July 31 and August 12.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

-James T. Morton



The term *capacity building* is used frequently in nonprofit circles to describe activities designed to strengthen organizations and enable them to better do their work. Capacity building activities may include board training and development, planning, and help with financial management among a host of others.

The Foundation has been engaged in a number of efforts aimed at strengthening nonprofit organizations for several years, including sponsoring educational workshops, maintaining a nonprofit resource library, collaborating with Winthrop University on its certificate program in nonprofit management and providing staff and third-party technical assistance. Earlier this year, the Foundation's Board of Trustees reaffirmed our commitment to these activities and also approved expanding

our efforts to include those described elsewhere in this issue.

The Foundation sees an investment in organizational empowerment to be integral to its grantmaking. The stronger the organization, the greater its ability to deliver sound, innovative, or even unique services to people in great need and the greater our ability to award grants with greater confidence that desired outcomes will be reached.

Additionally, our communities' overall health is measured in no small part by the quality of life of all of its citizens. Strong nonprofit organizations play key roles in improving that quality of life for many.

The Foundation's expanded efforts are another step on a journey toward stronger organizations and healthier communities. We're excited to take that step and to continue that journey.

MORE THAN \$2 MILLION IN GRANTS AWARDED

-Continued from Page 1

- **Housing Authority of Lancaster**, \$75,905 one-year transition grant for its "MAP to Success" family literacy program
- **Lancaster County Literacy Council**, \$73,000 one-year transition grant for its "Reading for Workplace Success" workplace literacy program
- **Learning Institute for Tomorrow**, \$117,327 one-year transition grant for its LIFT health literacy program
- **The Multi-Cultural Information Center**, \$37,824 one-year transition grant for its "Empowering our Future Today" citizenship literacy program
- **USC Research Foundation**, \$54,340 two-year challenge grant for the Kershaw Community Health Education Center's "Improving the Health Literacy of Health Care Consumers in Southern Lancaster County" project

The following Responsive Grants were awarded during the April 2008 grant cycle:

- **Chester County School District** - *Lewisville High's Structured System of Extra Help* - \$89,372 over two years to establish programs for mentoring and after-school academic assistance
- **Lancaster County Council of the Arts** - *Developing the Arts in Lancaster* - \$17,300 for one year for operations and to sustain the art therapy program for students at Southside Early Childhood Development Center
- **Lancaster Fatherhood Project** - *Reconnecting Low-Income, Non-Custodial Fathers to Their Children* - \$270,035 over three years to help low-income, non-custodial fathers become better parents of their children and to improve health outcomes among clients
- **Life Skills Opportunity Corporation (LSOC)** - *Quality Child Care Voucher Program* - \$36,900 for one year to provide parenting education classes and other resources to teenage parents and to help pay childcare so that young parents can remain in school after their children are born

Board of Trustees

Dexter L. Cook, Jr., MD
Chairman

R. Malcolm Edwards, MD
Vice Chairman

Polly C. Jackson
Secretary

Stanley D. Johnson
Treasurer

David R. Blackwell

Miriam M. Boucher

Phyllis B. Bunkley

Robert K. Folks

Charles M. Harrell

Marvin L. Starks

Pamela Y. Temple

Staff

James T. Morton
President

E. Brown Crenshaw, Jr., CPA
Vice President, Finance & Administration

Mary D. Henderson, Ph. D.
Program Officer for Special Initiatives

Sabrina Jones Niggel, MPA
Program Officer for Responsive Grants

Karen W. Ormand
Administrative Assistant

J. Marion Sims Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 818
800 N. White Street
Lancaster, SC 29721

Phone: 803-286-8772

Fax: 803-286-8774

www.jmsims.org

All of the affairs of the J. Marion Sims Foundation are governed by these core values: integrity, excellence, empathy, creativity, humility, responsiveness, learning, and respect.

WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL EMPOWERMENT?

Organizational Empowerment is the name of the JMSF's new program designed to strengthen a nonprofit organization so that it can better fulfill its mission. Many professionals in the field refer to such efforts as *capacity-building*. Other terms commonly used to describe this work include *organizational development* and *improving organizational effectiveness*. The Foundation defines *Organizational Empowerment* as follows:

The process of strengthening an organization through structures, systems, strategies and human resources to improve performance and impact

Examples of each of the separate components of this definition are described below:

Structures – e.g. structure of governing board, legal construct, layout of physical facilities

Systems – e.g. information management, financial reporting, decision-making framework

Strategies – e.g. long-term plans to fulfill mission, performance targets, funding plans

Human resources – e.g. staffing levels, board commitment, screening of volunteers

Throughout the nonprofit sector an abundance of methods has been undertaken over the years in an effort to improve knowledge, skills and processes in these core areas. A small sampling of capacity-building activities is highlighted below:

- Risk management assessments
- Technological upgrades
- Strategic planning
- Diversity training for staff
- Outcomes measurement training
- Computer skills training
- Membership development
- Budget preparation
- Collaborative opportunities with peers
- Grantwriting workshops
- Development of multi-media materials
- Improvement of financial reporting
- Fiscal policy development
- Succession planning
- Technical assistance for mergers
- Website development

JMSF NOW ACCEPTING TEACHERS' PET PROPOSALS

Local teachers won nearly **\$70,000** for their classrooms during the 2007-08 school year through the Foundation's Teachers' Pet Grant program. One-hundred forty-two (142) teachers in the Lancaster County School District and Great Falls and Lewisville schools used these grant funds to support their creative projects and programs.

The Foundation is now accepting grant applications for the current school year. Certified educators in the Lancaster County School District and Great Falls and Lewisville schools are eligible to apply for these grants, which provide up to \$500 per teacher per school year. Proposals are awarded monthly throughout the school year and are due the last school day of the month through March. No application form or attached file is required. Instead, teachers can apply for funds by sending an email message that includes specific information within the text of the message. For a step-by-step guide to applying for Teachers' Pet Grants, please refer to the Foundation's website, www.jmsims.org.



Jalaya Hall, a student in Mrs. Casie Cate's class at Great Falls Elementary, works with geometric shapes as part of the Teachers' Pet Grant project "Fraction Circles."

FOUNDATION UNVEILS NEW ORGANIZATIONAL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

-Continued from page 1

In addition to free consulting, the Foundation will provide in 2009 an all-day class called "Nonprofits 101" for new non-profit executives and those desiring a refresher in core management areas. Next year the JMSF will also convene groups of agencies with similar mission statements to facilitate collaborative partnerships. Participation in these "interest groups," as with every other OE activity, is completely voluntary. In addition to these new OE resources, the foundation will continue to offer activities and materials that it has offered for years, including the nonprofit resource library and free workshops.

The OE program was developed after two years of research and development. Best practices in grantmaking were investigated and an extensive literature review was conducted. Staff also interviewed other foundations that have engaged in capacity-building work. To determine the need for this type of program in the JMSF giving area, JMSF completed a comprehensive needs assessment, including a review of the Foundation's grantmaking since inception. The end result is a program that strives to empower nonprofits by providing them with quality services and tools with which they may build sound and successful organizations.

IRS ADVANCED RULING PERIOD ELIMINATED

According to the temporary Income Tax Regulations issued September 9, 2008, the advance ruling process for a section 501(c)(3) organization will be eliminated. Under the new regulations, a new 501(c)(3) organization will be classified as a publicly supported charity, and not a private foundation, if it can show that it reasonably can be expected to be publicly supported when it applies for tax-exempt status.

The IRS was able to eliminate the advance rulings process because of the recent redesign of the Form 990, which enhances transparency and makes it easier for organizations to report their public support information.

Under the old regulations, an organization that wanted to be recognized by the IRS as a publicly supported charity instead of a private foundation had to go through an extended two-step process. The new rules no longer require an organization to file Form 8734 after completing its first five tax years. Moreover, the organization retains its public charity status for its first five years regardless of the public support actually received during that time. Instead, beginning with the organization's sixth taxable year, it must establish that it meets the public support test by showing that it is publicly supported on its Schedule A to Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. Transition rules apply to organizations that have previously received advance rulings.

J. Marion Sims Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 818
Lancaster, SC 29721

**NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
LANCASTER, SC**

*The mission of the
J. Marion Sims
Foundation is to support
programs and projects of
prevention and education
that enhance the health
and wellness of the
citizens of Lancaster
County, South Carolina,
and the communities of
Great Falls and
Fort Lawn.*

«Organization»
«Contact»
«Title»
«Address 1»
«City», «State» «Zip»