

Dear Green Bay Packer's Foundation,

The Building for Kids (BFK) in Appleton, Wisconsin is seeking a grant to expand programming for children with autism and make the BFK more inclusive for children and adults with disabilities. We are requesting \$10,000 to be used for museum improvements, special program expansion and new special programming creation. The museum upgrades would start in late 2019 to be finished ahead of the BFK's 20th anniversary in November 2020. Expansion of special autistic programming would start in Fall 2019 and new programs would be rolled out in January 2020.

1 in 88 children has been diagnosed with autism and the number of children attending school with special needs has grown to over 13% nationwide. With the growing number of children and adults being diagnosed with autism and other disabilities nationwide, this number will also increase in the Fox Valley. Currently our museum is not as inclusive to these families as it could be.

With learning disabilities on the rise, people in the Fox Valley will need programs and exhibits that children and adults with all kinds of disabilities can benefit from. We currently have programming for children on the autism spectrum but have seen the need for it increase in the past three years. This has been a demand that has not been satisfactorily met by us. Last year we had over 6,000 people participate in our programming and in addition we had over 200 people on waitlists for programs, such as Spectrum Saturday. People like Elena and her six-year-old son Josh. Josh is on the autism spectrum and would be a perfect fit for the Spectrum Saturday program. Programs, such as Spectrum Saturday, fill up quickly and Josh was unable to get into the program for three and a half months. The average wait time to get into the Spectrum Saturday program is 3.5 months. That is a long time for growing children, like Josh, to be missing out on valuable learning programs which could prove a great benefit to them. With increased funding we could expand this program so that more people like Josh can participate.

People with disabilities will also need exhibits which are inclusive to them. This means redoing our current exhibits to make them more sensory input friendly, which people on the autism spectrum suffer from. Too many loud noises and bright lights can cause an overload of sensory input, which will lead to a breakdown in a child with autism.

For over twenty-five years The Building for Kids has been serving the people and families of the Fox Valley. The Building for Kids strives to empower children, engage parents, and energize our communities, which is why it is our mission. Over the past five years we have added new programs in order to make our museum more accessible and inclusive to others, so that all children may be empowered. We first added Spectrum Saturday five years ago in reaction to the rise of autism cases. It has seen overwhelming success over the past five years.

Since The Building for Kids has witnessed success in our autism spectrum programs, we feel we are uniquely qualified to combat this community issue.

We will first use the funds to expand already in place programs which have long waitlists. This includes programs such as Spectrum Saturday, which has an average waitlist time of 3.5 months. We would like to add another Spectrum Saturday session, this would bring the total Spectrum Saturday's per month to two instead of the current offering of one per month. We would like to have this change implemented by Fall 2019. After programs are expanded, we will create new programs for people with disabilities. Major costs to expand programming and create new programs include supplies and staff time.

The last thing we would like to do is redo current exhibits to make them more autism and disability friendly. This would include reducing the number of gratuitous sights and sounds which can cause an overload of sensory input. We would also add raised guides or auditory indicators to help children move from one exhibit to another and to understand the different purposes of the exhibits. Adding these raised guides and auditory indicators are the main cost of the museum building upgrade. We would also increase the general safety in the exhibits. This would include adding chairs with back for support, adding more railings and ramps for wheelchairs, and making sure all the exhibits and their props are properly secured.

With expansion of specialized programs, we will be able to reach more children with special needs and empower them to reach their full potential. In the first six months of expanded programming we expect to see an increase of 250 people attending these specialized programs. Since the Green Bay Packer's Foundation is focused on arts and culture, along with education for the 2018 cycle, The Building for Kids feels that what it is doing aligns great with the foundation's focus. Our Spectrum Saturday program incorporates the arts and culture

The Building for Kids hopes that you will join us in amending this community need for increased specialized programming. With your help and our success with specialized programs, we will be able to empower more children with special needs to reach their full potential. If you have any questions about The Building for Kids project, don't hesitate to call. Our phone number is (920) 734-3226. Thank you for taking the time to read about our project.

Sincerely,
The Building for Kids Staff