



Ms. Susan W. Hoskins LCSW, Executive Director
Friends Foundation for the Aging
P.O. Box 1081
Langhorne, PA 19047

Dear Ms. Hoskins,

On behalf of Caldwell University's School of Business and Computer Science, I am pleased to submit a proposal requesting \$10,000 in support of our Cougar Techies program.

With your generous support, the Cougar Techies program will empower seniors through digital literacy, bridge the technology gap, and offer invaluable learning opportunities for our students. We believe this program will create meaningful connections and a lasting impact on both seniors and students alike.

Thank you for considering our request. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to partner with the Friends Foundation for the Aging to bring this impactful initiative to life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kate Solomon'.

Kate Solomon
Director of Organizational Partnership
Caldwell University
ksolomon@caldwell.edu | 973-618-3352

Friends Foundation for the Aging

Date: 9/12/2024

Organization: Caldwell University

TIN & Formal organization name: 22-1500483 | Caldwell University, INC

Contact name, phone, email: Kate Solomon, 973-618-3352, ksolomon@caldwell.edu

Amount requested: \$10,000

Project title: Cougar Techies Program

Summary Description (maximum 25 words):

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, we find ourselves at a crossroads where digital inclusion is paramount. Cougar Techies is dedicated to significantly enhancing the quality of life for local seniors by providing hands-on technology support.

Please answer the following questions clearly and concisely.

1. What is the problem you have identified?

The primary problem identified is a lack of access to digital literacy support for seniors and career development opportunities for students. The Cougar Techies program addresses several needs and opportunities within the community and amongst Caldwell University students while also filling gaps in existing services:

Community issues:

Digital Literacy Needs: Many seniors struggle with digital literacy, finding it difficult to perform essential tasks such as using smartphones, managing email, and understanding cybersecurity. This technological gap can leave them feeling disconnected and vulnerable in an increasingly digital world.

Social Isolation and Connection: is a growing concern among seniors, especially those with limited mobility or who live alone. The lack of regular interaction can negatively impact their mental and emotional well-being, leading to loneliness and a diminished quality of life.

Existing Service Gaps: Despite the existence of some resources for seniors seeking help with technology, there are significant gaps in terms of accessibility, personalized support, and ongoing education. These limitations prevent many seniors from receiving the consistent and tailored assistance they need to thrive in the digital age.

Student Issues:

Career Development and Workforce Readiness: Many students struggle to develop the career-related skills and hands-on experience necessary to succeed in their fields. Without practical opportunities to apply what they've learned in the classroom, they often find themselves ill-prepared for the demands of the professional world. This lack of real-world experience can create obstacles in securing competitive positions and advancing in their careers.

Lacking Soft Skills: In today's workforce, many young professionals lack critical soft skills such as empathy, patience, communication, and adaptability. These skills are increasingly necessary as industries become more diverse and collaborative. Without opportunities to develop these abilities, students risk entering the job market unprepared to navigate interpersonal dynamics, adapt to varying perspectives, or respond to challenges with flexibility. This gap can hinder their career progression and limit their potential for success in a rapidly changing professional environment.

2. What is the solution you propose to address the problem?

Caldwell University's Cougar Techies program tackles both the digital literacy challenges faced by local seniors and the career development needs of our Computer Science students. This initiative bridges the gap by providing essential technology assistance to seniors while giving students valuable, real-world experience.

Cougar Techies is led by a Computer Science faculty member and includes a blend of classroom instruction, an on-site help desk, and informative workshops. The on-site component is held weekly at the West Essex Branch of the Metro YMCA, where our students assist seniors with a wide range of technology issues, such as connectivity problems, cybersecurity concerns, software troubleshooting, and smartphone apps. Additionally, students conduct monthly workshops on important topics like cybersecurity and avoiding scams. By meeting seniors in a familiar environment, the program fosters meaningful interactions and enhances engagement.

Our partnership with the Metro YMCA is vital to the program's success. It not only provides a welcoming physical space for Cougar Techies but also offers direct access to a large senior population at the West Essex branch. The YMCA actively helps promote the program to its senior members, ensuring strong participation.

We believe that providing this kind of support to our local seniors removes barriers and helps them stay connected with loved ones, access important information, and engage fully in the digital world. At the same time, our students gain invaluable technical and interpersonal skills that are highly sought after in the workforce. By offering direct technology support, students improve their problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and technological expertise, making them more competitive in their future careers.

Through the Cougar Techies program, Caldwell University not only strengthens its connection to the community but also fulfills its mission of fostering student growth through hands-on learning and service. By bridging the digital divide for seniors and providing students with essential career skills, the program embodies our commitment to creating meaningful, impactful experiences for both groups. As the program continues to grow, we are excited about the lasting positive effects it will have on the lives of local seniors and the professional journeys of our students. With ongoing collaboration and support, Cougar Techies is poised to make a significant, long-term contribution to our community.

3. What actions will you take?

Currently, the Cougar Techies program is operational with ten enrolled students. The actions taken to reach this stage include:

- The School of Business and Computer Science leadership has selected a faculty member to teach and oversee the program.
- Ongoing collaboration between Caldwell University and the West Essex YMCA ensures smooth operation of the program.
- The West Essex YMCA is actively promoting the program to its senior members.
- Initial funding has been secured from a local foundation, with plans to pursue additional funding opportunities.

Moving forward, we will take the following actions to ensure continued success:

- Expand promotional efforts to reach more senior participants by leveraging community partnerships.
- Secure additional funding through targeted grant proposals to ensure program sustainability.
- Continuously assess and refine the program based on feedback from students and seniors, adapting the curriculum and services as needed.
- Explore opportunities to expand the program to additional YMCA locations or other community centers.

These actions will help us grow the program, address emerging needs, and ensure long-term impact for both students and seniors.

4. Describe the population to be served.

The Cougar Techies program will support the senior members of the West Essex YMCA, which is located in Livingston, NJ. There are over 1,000 senior members currently enrolled at this location, of which 1% are low-income. This population matches the diversity of the surrounding area of Essex County, which is made up of 48.6% White, 41.0% Black or African American, 25.3% Hispanic or Latino, and 6.1% Asian.

The hope is as this program grows, we will be able to expand into additional YMCAs under the Metro YMCA umbrella.

5. Are there partners/collaborators for implementation or funding-who? Has the solution been tried by other organizations?

Yes, the Cougar Techies program partners with the Metro YMCA to facilitate its implementation. Specifically, the program utilizes the West Essex YMCA facility for in-person tech support sessions, and the YMCA helps promote the program to its senior members.

While similar initiatives have been attempted by smaller organizations with younger students, these efforts have not provided consistent programming or a comprehensive approach like Cougar Techies. Our program operates weekly throughout the spring and fall semesters, offering regular, structured support.

The Cougar Techies program goes beyond basic tech support; it provides a transformative learning experience for students, fostering skills in effective communication, teamwork, and customer service. The intergenerational interactions between students and seniors create a unique environment that aligns with our mission of preparing students through liberal arts and professional studies to contribute meaningfully to society.

For funding, we have secured a modest amount from the Wallerstein Foundation for Geriatric Life Improvement and have submitted a proposal to The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc. to seek additional support. We will continue to search for opportunities to keep this program going.

6. How will you know your actions are having an impact? How will you measure outputs and outcomes?

This initiative is expected to help seniors stay connected with loved ones, access vital information, and engage meaningfully in our digital society, ultimately supporting a healthy and active lifestyle. The effectiveness of this initiative will be assessed based on two key metrics: the quantity of individuals who benefited and the number of students who have satisfactorily completed the course. Each recipient of our services is required to complete an "in-take" form, which will gather comprehensive information regarding the nature of the technological assistance they require.

Upon the conclusion of the program, we reconvened with our YMCA collaborators to evaluate its successes and shortcomings. This post-program assessment is crucial in determining what aspects of the initiative were effective and what areas need improvement. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that we deliver the highest quality service to all members of the YMCA community.



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

P.O. Box 2508, Room 4010
Cincinnati OH 45201

In reply refer to: 4077556534
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CALDWELL UNIVERSITY INC
ATTN TREASURER
120 BLOOMFIELD AVE
CALDWELL NJ 07006-5310



007506

Employer Identification Number: 22-1500483
Person to Contact: S LENARD
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your Oct. 02, 2014, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(03) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in April 1948.

Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section(s) 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(ii).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.

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CALDWELL UNIVERSITY INC
ATTN TREASURER
120 BLOOMFIELD AVE
CALDWELL NJ 07006-5310

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tamera Ripperda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Tamera Ripperda
Director, Exempt Organizations



CALDWELL
UNIVERSITY

School of Business and Computer Science's Cougar Techies Budget

Item Description	Quantity	Price Per Unit	Total
Student Stipend (includes transportation Expenses)	10	\$1,900	\$19,000.00
Faculty Mentor Stipend	1	\$2,750	\$2,750
Student Uniforms (t-shirts)	35	\$10.00	\$350.00
Total			\$22,100.00