



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## Summary

Philanthropy is evolving. Technology and a desire to interact in digital social communities are driving a cultural shift. Donors are more than ever seeking ways to make a direct difference and decentralizing from a donor-charity system to a person-need model is the emerging trend. Online donors are interested in a more relevant tangible giving experience with a feedback loop that returns to them. Savvy online donors have high expectations about choice, accountability and transparency.

## Concept

**Connect2Youth** is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization that will use a transparent and accountable process to facilitate DIRECT support and create opportunities for achieving youth: matching their individual need with interest of donors in the marketplace.

Unlike other Organizations serving youth, **Connect2Youth** does 2 things:

1. Serves the individual needs of students instead of a one size fits all approach.
2. Gives donors more control over their contributions and allows for more of their contributions to reach recipients. Donors are also allowed to specify criteria they value: G.P.A, interest (education/career) extracurricular involvement, athletics, etc.

Our goal is to have an immediate and tangible impact on the lives of achieving students to help them become college- and workforce- ready in a 21st century economy.

## Current landscape and the opportunity

Our education system needs to keep pace with the rapidly changing world young people will enter after graduation. Education reform is especially critical to our nation's urban environments.

Unfortunately, there are barriers to reform with no consensus on the immediate horizon. Also given the slow response time of our entrenched institution, reform is a long-term project of incremental steps rather than radical shifts.

For various reasons there are overwhelming challenges facing our school districts. A great deal of energy is deficit/dysfunction focused.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

As a result a large share of resources and energy go towards the at-risk category of young people: dropouts, remediation, those with a history in the juvenile system, etc. With so much emphasis on marketing the problem facing school districts, the students that are achieving often times get overlooked.

Our goal is to focus on this ignored, underserved high-potential group of young people. We aren't interested in culture wars and our mission is not polemical. We are dedicated to the straightforward practical goal of delivering resources and support to achieving students in a timely and efficient manner.

### **How it will work**

Our mission is to connect achieving students to Human Investment Philanthropist (H.I.P.)- Socially conscious citizens (busy professionals, social clubs, neighborhood organizations, businesses, retired CEO's and philanthropic foundations) concerned about the state of public education and looking for ways to support young people. We foster immediate and direct assistance to deserving students based on their individual needs. Our website will have profiles of achieving students in the local community. Human Investment Philanthropist in the community, whether as individuals or as part of a neighborhood group or organization can browse the profiles, find a narrative(s) that appeals and make a connection.

### **Marketing strategy**

We will use an online customer engagement strategy, the placement of messages along different stages of the customer engagement cycle through search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), banner ads through relationships with high-traffic websites, social media networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and Web 2.0 strategies.

Web 2.0 technologies and social media networking provide ways of extending our marketing reach with little effort and cost. Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and podcasts allow us to engage in an ongoing conversation—to help us better understand our



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

donors and potential applicants. (Their problems, needs, likes, dislikes, fears and opinions).

Although our primary marketing efforts will be online we will use more traditional marketing efforts as well. PR, Ads in student publications, relevant radio programming, news.

### **Core competency and future**

A beta-version of our website is currently online at: [www.connect2youth.org](http://www.connect2youth.org) with more information for interested donors and contributors. There you will find our blog and links to social networking sites.

The site features commentary on the state of public education, some interesting information from other sources and more about the core philosophy behind our approach.

We have California state tax-exempt status and will continue to secure Federal 501(c)(3) status. We are proceeding through development stages to construct advisory boards, technical (Web-database), financial partnership, monitor partner and partnerships with businesses that focus on education. During our initial phase we will focus only on the direct assistance area. As we evolve we will seek more programmatic opportunities to provide additional supplemental education.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## **Our team**

**Jonathan Geeter, founder and managing director**, has been involved in non-profit community work in a variety of projects involving youth, education and technology. Including OpNet Community Ventures, a non-profit organization that provided technology access, training and employment for low- income young adults. Jonathan also played a crucial role in the early stages of Oakland Technology Exchange West; a program that has distributed over 15,000 free computers to Oakland public school students, over 10,000 to Oakland public school classrooms and community based labs.

**Connect2Youth** is in the process of developing a list of Advisory consultants in the following areas:

Microfinance  
social performance  
web-technical  
legal  
Communications

## **Revenue**

We estimate that **Connect2Youth** will obtain revenue of about \$125,000 during it's first year.

**Crowdfunding campaign** –10/10 --10,000 people donate \$10

### **Direct contributions:**

Corporate contributions  
Micro-finance  
Donors -Modeling Donorschoose.org donors will be asked for an additional percentage to fund operations with 15% being the default

**Targeted web Ads**-Education, youth, family related business

By year 3 our goal is to pursue earned-income strategies.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

### **Projected budget (1<sup>st</sup> year)**

Item	Amount
Initial website development, hosting and database design	\$20,000
Ongoing website hosting & maintenance	\$5,000
Initial start-up legal consultation	\$5,000
Federal IRS application fee	\$750
Salaries (2) Managing director & bookkeeping/accounting	\$75,000
Marketing-promotions	\$10,000
Credit card processing	\$5,000
Misc.	\$5,000
Total	\$125,750

### **Opportunities for growth**

**Contingent donations:** Upon student improvement, accomplishment, etc.

**Gift cards:** w/processing fee to operations

**Honor/memory:** Fund in name of family member (one time set-up fee)

**Contest:** groups, communities

**Projects:** programmatic earned income projects

**Events:** Golf tournament, Galas



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## **Nuts and bolts**

Donors will be asked to select and rank characteristics that are important to them and **Connect2Youth** will use them to narrow down the field of applicants who match the attribute that each donor values.

### **Potential resources:**

#### **Direct payment**

Again this depends on legal consultation regarding IRS rules and administration logistics will determine if this is a viable option.

#### **Gift certificate/voucher**

- supplemental education
- SAT prep
- College application fees
- College visit
- summer camps
- Etc.

#### **Tangible items**

- musical instruments
- sporting equipment
- etc.

### **Can donors contribute money directly?**

Because of a potential for malevolent donors to direct their funding to kin and personal friends, the IRS prohibits direct donations of money to known individuals. In order to preserve the tax-exempt status of contributions and make sure no donor can direct their contributions toward a single known individual, **Connect2Youth** will adopt multiple controls as precautions (transparency)—our terms and conditions will explicitly forbid attempting to direct money to known individuals. **Connect2Youth** will set a minimum level number (5) of students who match the characteristics specified by the donor and allocate accordingly. If the minimum level of students can't be met to satisfy donor condition, donors will get a message asking them to remove or change one or more of their criteria.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

It's possible we could set up (for the purpose of direct money contributions) anonymous student profiles to fund individuals as opposed to specifying the 'types' of students donors would like to fund. At this point it's unclear whether the IRS would consider those donations as tax-exempt contributions or fully taxable gifts. So we would need to consult with legal advisors in more detail. It may be an option for donors willing to make a contribution without receiving a tax deduction.

## **Benefit**

### **Students**

- Significantly increase accessibility to funds and resources to supplement their education
- It increases likelihood that more students will take advantage of their individual opportunities
- Expose students to a larger pool of available resources and broader pool of potential donors
- Drastically reduce time it takes for resources to trickle down to students
- Creates a more time-sensitive, flexible, relevant and tangible flow of resources

It not only rewards students that perform well, it's an incentive for students to not only maintain but improve their performance. Shows students that their performance and ability is commensurate with the reward.

The acknowledgement and recognition ties students to a community they know that cares about them. Lets them know people are watching and that they matter. Instills the value of giving back.

### **Donor**

- Transparency, accountability, tangible, relevant and immediate
- Donors have input and know how their contributions are allocated
- Donors choose specific criteria: major, interest, socioeconomic background
- Convenience and ease
- Donors receive updates about recipients, thank-you notes, periodic updates and donors at a certain threshold (highlighted, profiled)



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## **Operating principles**

The guiding principles are transparency, accountability, choice/input, impact and relationships.

Our website will also serve as resource link for students, parents, donors, community members interested in education and youth. We will be upfront about methodology for selecting students--- will make public relevant documents, budgets, planned changes to services, growth, partnerships, etc.

We will continuously seek to measure our organizational efficacy to maximize our impact.

- The number of donors and students impacted
- The performance of students.
- Overall benefit to the community

We will be environmentally frugal- We will not have printed material like brochures, etc., saving the resources necessary to print materials and the postage necessary to mail them. Therefore as much as possible all correspondence will be via email or thru social network sites.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## Technical

### Website:

Easy-to-use, visually pleasing, professional.

### Donors

Will see student characteristics from a pull-down menu, with space for donors to suggest characteristics that aren't listed. We can't comply with all but if specific characteristics receive significant demand we will respond accordingly. Donors will be asked to choose multiple characteristics ranking each in level of importance.

Other features:

1-click donations for repeat donors

Recurring donations options

Anonymous donations will be accommodated

Links and information about our partners

Links to relevant sites with resources on education and youth

There will also be information about our effectiveness and impact

- Total number of donations made to-date
- Testimonials from donors
- A thank-you wall profiling donors

### Social groups

Option for donor teams and groups to develop among individuals who frequent the site.

Option for Neighborhood groups, organizations, clubs and corporate donors to have pages about their activity.

Individual donors can create a profile page to keep record of donations and information regarding students their contributions funded.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

### **Section for Student**

Place to complete application/inquiry.

Follow-up on status of application

Once selected- Students create 'my account' page

- keep track of status

- notification of account activity

- receive messages/alerts

- Submit thank-you e-mail that will be sent to donors

Profiles: photos, videos, and general stories about students.

Widgets for followers to promote **Connect2Youth** on their personal websites.

Section that features

- Number of students served

- Success stories of students who have received contributions

### **Database**

Manage all student and donor information

Database for storing information

When students submit applications the info will automatically populate our CRM system--allowing us to enter, keep track of scores for each part of students' applications.

Internal database will allow us to track each donation made, along with student criteria that donors submit. Then use each donor's characteristics to query the student database, create subset of students who are eligible, then create a table that automatically provides resource associated with individual students.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## **Promotions**

The strategy of utilizing social networking resources for promotion has proven very effective for many non-profit organizations and was very instrumental to Barack Obama's run for President.

Social networking sites like Facebook.

- Options for students to connect with donors network with other students

- Expand donor and student base

- Disseminate news, etc. about the organization, donors and students

- Allow individuals who have not made contributions to follow and keep up with the Organization

## **Students**

Primarily online- attracting potential applicants thru web 2.0 social networking websites.

Online advertising- Google adwords to help drive traffic to the website from Google search related to youth, education and non-profits.

Promote to prominent online bloggers

Speaking opportunities at student organization meetings.

Promoting at student events, through school career counseling offices.

Ads in student publications.

## **Donor**

Primarily online- attracting potential applicants thru web 2.0 social networking websites.

Contest among alumni associations, merchandise with college logos, etc.

Court corporations and foundations for contributions.

Technology companies that want to support students majoring in computer science or math abilities.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

Approach local/area corporate 'community relations' department or corporations that have a social responsibility mission and have a track record of community involvement, especially in the area of youth and education.

Once we establish a solid donor base, we will identify ways to leverage that sentiment, encouraging them to become repeat donors and to reach out on our behalf to their network of friends and associates.

Network for good---promo tools that come with donor management suite.

## **Timeline**

A 'beta' version of our website is online with information about the organization. It also features a blog about the how the venture started.

We will seek out and accept start-up funding online through sites like:

<http://www.guidestar.org>

<http://www1.networkforgood.org>

<http://www.crowdrise.com/>

Also: Papal and Google checkout

We have incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the state of California, and received tax-exempt status on the state level and are working with legal advisors to obtain Federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS.

We are also in the process of recruiting talented and capable individuals to serve as the organization's advisors.

In addition to the legal process necessary for Federal tax-exempt status our efforts are centered on:

1. Start-up fundraising for further development of the website
2. Reaching out to businesses specializing in education for potential partnerships  
-IE: Sylvan and Huntington
3. A financial partner familiar with micro-finance process
4. A monitoring partnership for our student vetting process



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

Once the website is complete, we will post on our site a more detailed version of our student application and vetting process and begin to recruit students to apply.

Once our student recruiting process is in place we will begin promoting the website to our targeted donor prospects. Around back-to-school promotions and events beginning in September, we expect to attract attention and traffic to the site. As we start to show a ground swell of interest and progress, we will develop a promotional plan and budget through 2011 and begin soliciting additional funding. The size, scope and growth direction of our project beyond 2011 will depend on public reaction to it and the funds we are able to attract once we have established a solid foundation for our core concept.

### **Revenue and cost**

Our goal is to raise at least \$125,000 in our first year of operation, with about half of this revenue by end of 2010. This goal will cover our organizational costs and salaries during our first year.

We plan to implement a 10/10 crowdfunding campaign-10,000 people to donate \$10-with the possibility of a donor matching program with a corporate partner-reaching our final goal of \$125,000.

**Start-up cost** and other expenses during the first six months will consist mainly of 501 (c)(3) filing and legal fees, website hosting and design fees, and employees' salaries. The estimated cost of setting up a complete website at: \$10,000-\$30,000. In our projected budget, we list the amount at \$20,000.

Additional expenses will include employees' salaries, accounting, credit card processing fees and buffer for misc. cost that may arise. As a start-up cost-savings measure, we have not included office space. However as the project evolves, we're estimating maybe middle to end of year 2, there maybe a need for a small office. We budget \$75,000 for personnel during the first year. This accounts for \$50,000 below market value salary for the executive director, and \$25,000 for contracted accountant/bookkeeper. All salary considerations will be at the discretion of the board of directors, who will review employees' salaries and additional labor needs at least once a year, as per **Connect2Youth** bylaws.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

### **Ongoing funding**

Will use multiple online means to raise start-up funding from online communities. We will apply for non-profit grant money only as a last resort.

After the initial start-up fund raising campaign:

1. We will ask donors to give an additional percentage directly to **Connect2Youth**, to cover operating cost, with %15 being the default.
2. 93% of donors to DonorsChoose.org give an extra 15% to fund ongoing operations\*  
\*”Want to buy my students a \$392 camcorder? A nonprofit uses the Web to work marketplace magic,” Slate, <http://www.slate.com/id/2159771/>
3. Revenue from Web ads focused on education-related business, alumni associations, parenting publications, textbooks, and other retail related to our target market.
4. Our goal is to have **Connect2Youth** evolve to implement earned-income strategies.

It is not yet decided but there is consideration of a small application fee for students. This fee will cover the vetting process of the student application information. This will depend on consultation with our monitoring partnership. The fee will be reasonable as not to discourage many students from applying and we will have a waiver process for students who are unable to afford it or possibly some sort of sweat equity through a partnership with another non-profit or a volunteer/voucher plan with a partner business who would underwrite the application fee.

### **Market growth**

Our initial phase and pilot rollout will be in Oakland, CA. Because of the technology, scaling should be a fairly simple process. We should be able to respond to demands from other communities in a relatively seamless process. Without being too ambitious we’ve set a modest growth process. However, we will be able to respond if demand requires us to accelerate our growth.

- Phase I Start-up----- Oakland
- Phase 2 Beginning September 2011 (throughout California)
- Phase 3 January 2012 Nationwide



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## **Service growth**

### **Students**

As we become more established and successful with our core competency, we will look for more ways to serve the educational and career needs of young people.

- Public school students who want to attend private school
- college students who have the opportunity to work in unpaid summer internships.
- Project-based learning/work experience opportunities.

### **Obstacles**

Biggest is funding; obtaining 'seed money' to fund initial stages

We have created an aggressive, multi-faceted plan for identifying sources and fully expect to attract the necessary funding to begin.

There's no guarantee donors will assist students in their community, however other organizations and ventures have demonstrated that a large market does exist for charitable giving to the less fortunate, especially in the area of education. Our example of DonorsChoose.org shows that donors also value a transparent process with donor input. We also know through personal history that there have always existed members in a given community that value education and are willing to assist young people with their educational needs. We're also confident that **Connect2Youth** offers a true philanthropic experience that is lacking from other organizations focusing on public school educational causes.

There is also the possibility of not attracting students, however it's a very minor concern.



*Connect<sup>2</sup>Youth*  
*creating opportunities for achieving students*

## Conclusion

We are confident that there will be significant interest in our concept. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Americans make donations to colleges, foundations, and other education-related organizations. We are confident that our emphases on transparency, accountability, choice-input, impact and relationships is consistent with a growing trend in donor expectation and provides a more satisfying donor experience.

Organizations like Kiva.org, donorschoose.org, proser.com, discoverscholars.org and Obama's campaign for President provide evidence that technology combined with a desire for more transparency, input and impact has led to a new and more effective way of philanthropy. Giving more control to large contributors and opening up the concept to those that don't have many resources but still have a desire to contribute.

Donorschoose.org lets donors identify and support schoolteachers in need of extra classroom funding, has attracted over \$11.5 million in revenue in just 8yrs. This is evidence that there is an interest

We hope that we have convinced you that **Connect2Youth** fills a void and represents a tremendous opportunity to aid and reward deserving students furthering their development and preparing their foundation for adult life.

**Feedback and information:** Suggestions, comments, recommendations on all aspects of our plan and website. Any ideas or things we haven't thought of, please we'd like to hear from you.

**Contacts/Network:** If you know or could recommend anyone who might be able to help through his or her expertise, intelligences, funding—please let us know. Also spread the word about us.

**Funding:** **Connect2Youth** is currently in the process of obtaining 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status. All donations are retroactively tax deductible.

**Contact: Jonathan Geeter**

[info@connect2youth.org](mailto:info@connect2youth.org)

510 393-6391