



# How to Break the Chains of Poverty in Philadelphia

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# We Must Increase the Educational Focus of Philadelphia's Poor Children

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- 25% of Philadelphia's households live below the poverty line
  - Over 50% of the children in these households never graduate high school
  - 84% of Philadelphia's students qualify for the Federal Free Lunch program due to very low incomes
- These families do not have the knowledge to understand how to improve their living standards
- The solution is educating the children in these households and expanding their decision making skill sets



# Poor Children in Philadelphia Face Big Challenges Outside of School

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- The challenges are often beyond their control
- It is difficult to do homework at home due to lack of food, heat and electricity
- Inadequate after school supervision
- Most are being raised by single parents
- Parents often do not value an education
- Maintaining their hope and optimism



# Solution – Learn to Earn

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- Pay kids \$5 a day for learning
  - Must attend school for the entire day
  - Must attend a full one hour after-school “life skills class” to help them break the Chains of Poverty
  - After-school subjects will make kids wise and help them understand how to make their lives successful



# Solution – Learn to Earn

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- Can't pay them cash
  - Kids would get robbed on the way home
  - Bringing the cash to school is dangerous
  - Parents may not use the cash wisely
- Help them to support their households without cash
  - They earn credits against their heating bill, electric bill, water bill, public housing costs
  - Encourage parents to enforce school attendance



# Sample Worldliness Subjects

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- Smoking:
  - Usually kids think in the short term:
    - It is cool to smoke cigarettes on the street corner
  - It takes a teenager 16 years to quit smoking
  - Smoking a pack a day costs \$5.25 a day, \$158 a month and \$30,660 over 16 years.
  - This equates to 15% of what you will earn annually if you drop out of school
  - Message: All decisions are long term decisions



# Sample Worldliness Subjects

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- How much dropping out of school affects your future
  - How much you will earn over a lifetime as a:
    - High school dropout
    - High school graduate
    - Junior college graduate
    - College graduate
  - What education level you need to own:
    - A home
    - A new car
    - Move to a better neighborhood
  - How unemployment rates vary by education level
    - Jobless rate for people with a college degree is only 1.9%



# Sample Worldliness Subjects

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- True costs of “Rent to Own” – 40-50%
- Buying lottery tickets is a suckers game
  - 42% to the house
- The real costs of credit card debt – 24%
- Actual costs of a decision to take drugs
- Disadvantages of “Lay Away”
- Goal setting
- ATM fees – often 10%



# Tons of Other Worldliness Subjects



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- How to save money
  - Understanding banking
  - Benefits of direct deposit
- Teenage pregnancy and it's impact on your education and future
- Gang life & the effects of hate
- Pay Day loans – 9% per transaction
- Check Cashing – 12% per transaction
- Getting arrested → 90% HS drop out rate



# Tons of Other Worldliness Subjects

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- Effects of Alcohol & Marijuana
- Interpersonal dispute resolution
- What prison life is like
- How to budget
- Importance of having an education
- Balancing a check book
- A hopeful vision of life beyond high school



# How to make it happen

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- Subjects will be covered on DVDs and taught by college students and other volunteers
- Approach local donors and charities for funding
- Appeals to 4 major focus areas of giving:
  - Children
  - People living under the poverty level
  - Education
  - People that are helping themselves
- This source of funding will not cost the City money
- No co-mingling with City funds



# Specifics

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- Offered to 6<sup>th</sup> grade (11-12 years old) through high school
- Qualification for participation based on Federal Poverty guidelines
- Credit of \$5 a day
- Monday through Thursday
- Board of Directors will oversee the Learn to Earn Program
- 2 local parents to attend each class



# Parental Involvement

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- Parents must show children that education is important
  - Today many parents never attend school meetings, even when requested by a teacher
  - In poor areas of the city education is not highly valued
- A child's parent or guardian
  - Must attend 1 class a month to receive the credits
  - Can attend as many classes as they choose
- Parent attendance will enable the parents:
  - To understand what is being taught in the Life Skills classes
  - To discuss at home the classes they attend with their child
  - Help control the behavior of the students in the class



# Objective Goals

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- Increase:
  - Daily school attendance rates
  - Graduation rates for each grade
  - High school graduation rates
  - Number of students that continue on to further education
  - # of poverty level children that attend college
- Decrease high school arrest rates by half



# Items to still be considered

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- Size of after school classes? ex. 30 vs. 50
- How students that are bused get home?
- Cost to use school facilities?
- How to tie Learn to Earn into recreational focused after school programs?
- Should 20% of the credit earned go to the child as a direct incentive?
  - CD's, video games, iPods, etc.?
- Logistics and speed of rollout?
  - Full rollout could cost \$45 million per year



# Items to still be considered

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- Interaction of the credits with public assistance?
- Impact of the credits on the IRS earned income credit?
- How to oversee 1,000 locations at 3:15 PM
- How do you handle families in rental housing that includes utilities?
  - Toward summer camp or educational programs?