



## PLATO Philosophy Fund Application

*Thank you for Applying!*

*Project Title:*

*Environmental Philosophy with Children Summer Camp*

*Dates for Project: June 3 to June 7, 2019*

*Amount of Funding Requested: \$5,000*

### **1. Please describe the project, including any work that has already been done to develop it. (500 words max)**

Environmental Philosophy with Children Summer Camp is a five-day long UNT student-led summer camp program in Denton, Texas with the central theme of “place,” in which a group of philosophers, artists, and local educators will collaborate together to provide various types of philosophical and artistic activities that encourage children to engage in our place critically, creatively, and caringly. Recognizing that social minorities such as children are more vulnerable to environmental degradation, and that their voices tend to be excluded from discourse on environmental justice, we propose that it is important to help them constitute a community of philosophical inquiry (CPI) to think together towards a possible ecologically sustainable society. To do so, we not only need to transform the classroom into the CPI, but also to transform our place into the CPI. That is, to expand “community” of the CPI to include a larger sense of community, including co-inhabitants of our place.

This project is based on the preexisting Environmental Philosophy with Children (EPWC) program at the University of North Texas (UNT). EPWC is an extended mode of Philosophy with Children (PWC) with a strong focus on environmental problems. Since 2016, a group of graduate and undergraduate students have volunteered as EPWC co-learning facilitators at the Koan School, a K-12 non-profit local school in Denton. We are experienced with children between ages 4 to 18 years old, including students with diverse abilities. Through our experience with children with different abilities and needs, we have found that it is very important to acknowledge and provide different modes of reflection and expression that children are familiar with in addition to philosophical discussion. We will collaborate with UNT Art Education graduate students to develop art activities which will engage children in an artistic, material, and sensorial investigation of our place, offering them another means to reflect on and express their relationships to place. Projects such as map-making, and found-object sculpture will allow children to further explore questions that have arisen from philosophical discussion and vice versa.

This camp will be held between June 3rd to 7th, 2019, targeting local children ages 6 to 10 with a maximum capacity of 25 students. As this is a place-based program, we will visit three different types of local places, the Koan school as the main venue, the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, and the Dallas Zoo, in order to stimulate children’s sense of place

with an aim to form a larger sense of ecological community. At each site, we will take advantage of the unique experiences offered and tailor questions and lessons to those specific experiences so that children can gain a more complex and dynamic appreciation of their place in North Texas.

As 41.5 % of students in Denton are economically disadvantaged, we would like to make sure this program is accessible to children with lower family income and provide full scholarships to those students in need. Thus, having funding is critical for keeping the costs to students low and providing compensation for student staff.

## **2. What is the purpose of this project? (500 words max)**

The purpose of the project is to provide a safe educational space for local children in North Texas to engage in our place critically, creatively, and caringly through philosophical and artistic activities. Denton is a suburban environment, situated north of Dallas with a population of approximately 0.13 million people (2017). Our population has almost doubled since the 1990s, which has invited high economic demands and urban development. Denton was also the site of a bitter political battle on fracking, which began after a fracking site was placed right next to a children's play park. Yet, North Texas is uniquely intersected by multiple sensitive ecoregions (Grand Prairie, Cross Timbers, and Blackland Prairie), which are home to many different species, such as armadillos, box turtles, prickly pear cactus, and post oak trees. Given the particularity and complexity of our home, we will provide philosophical and artistic activities in and out of classrooms to engage and think toward an ecologically sustainable community and society at large.

Through this summer camp, we would like to develop a mindful and inclusive community through learning to form and internalize the three core values of the CPI (being caring, creative, and critical). For this reason, we will employ the methods and values developed by Philosophy for Children Hawaii (p4c Hawaii) such as the concept of "intellectual safety" and "good thinker's toolkit." Intellectual safety will be discussed among the students in the beginning of the program to make sure the experience of philosophical discussion will not be hostile, exclusive, or aggressive. This introduction helps the facilitators and the participants (children) to co-constitute and raise an ethical awareness together. The good thinker's toolkit allows us to introduce children to various kinds of question forms and encourage them to be critical and responsible thinkers. Through daily visual journaling and art-making projects, the children will have the opportunity to further express their concerns, questions, and connections. Making art and sharing it with others invites further awareness of the environment and encourages critical, creative, and caring dialogue.

Lastly, we would like to provide undergraduate and graduate students this interdisciplinary and community-based program as a platform to gain first-hand experience in planning and facilitating a camp along with local educators. The summer camp will serve as a creative platform for collaboration, educational opportunity, and peer-mentoring. We plan to share the teaching materials and curriculum developed during the program with other educators and researchers on our webpage (p4c.unt.edu). Additionally, this provides an opportunity for graduate student Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows to apply what they have learned into their own classrooms.

### **3. Who will benefit from the project, and how? (500 words max)**

There are 4 major groups of people will benefit from the EPWC summer camp project:

#### **1) Local children, ages between 6-10**

Local children will benefit from the project directly by receiving interdisciplinary education that focuses on philosophy and art education. Economically disadvantaged students will receive full-scholarships to participate in the program, so that they can be included in our community of philosophical inquiry. As our project focuses on the concept of place, the participants will have opportunities to be exposed and reintroduced to different landmark places within our region, including a small farm, Dallas Zoo, and Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area. Some of our participants might not have access to these areas without our program. Through the development of communities of philosophical inquiry (CPI), the children will also benefit through learning to engage in their place caringly, critically, and creatively.

#### **2) The local educators, school, and community**

Initially, the idea of this summer camp was born out of a dialogue between the EPWC and the Koan school, where parents had shown appreciation for the philosophical discussion children had at school. This summer camp project is a community-based program that requires collaboration among local institutions, such as the Koan school, local nature reserves, and the university. We will create a strong network between local children and educators, nature conservationists, university students, and researchers to foster vibrant dialogue and explore the needs of our community. For example, after our initial project proposal, we discovered that Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area has been searching for ways to engage in multidisciplinary education and outreach. Likewise, the EPWC team will create public exhibitions of children's artwork after the program, in order to share the children's voices with the local community.

#### **3) Undergraduate students, graduate students and researchers from UNT**

As there is rising demand for service-learning and engaged philosophy opportunities among our university students, the EPWC summer camp will help to serve our educational needs. This project is student-led, in which the students learn first-hand, by creating curriculum, planning, managing, and collaborating with multiple disciplines and the local communities. This program has also become a platform for inviting interdisciplinary researchers to form our own community of philosophical inquiry, in order to think through our engagement in the city of Denton. The program will provide the opportunity for students and faculty from the Philosophy, Art, and Education departments to collaborate.

#### 4) **International educational communities: college students, educators, and researchers**

Through this summer camp, we will develop curriculum and hope to share the materials with college students, educators, and researchers who are seeking a philosophy-based summer camp with a focus on place, as such a program is not currently widely available. The EPWC team has already established a webpage (p4c.unt.edu), which should be a platform to exchange the lesson plans and materials with them.

### **4. What is the plan for developing and implementing the project? Include a timeline.**

The plan for developing the project includes:

- November 2018: Form a student-led team for the summer camp at UNT.
- December 2018: Contact local facilities to confirm our collaboration. Finalize funding sources.
- January-February 2019: Conduct the onsite and offsite trips to develop camp curriculum integrating environmental philosophy, art making, and nature exploration.
  - January 17: Curriculum Development Session at the Koan School
  - January 24: Curriculum Development Session at Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area
  - January 31: Curriculum Development Session at the Dallas Zoo.
- February-March 2019: Create and distribute advertisements to stir interest in the program.
- April 2019: Open registration and scholarship application for interested students.
- April-May 2019: Assign tasks to each individual involved with the project including other volunteers.
- June 2019: Prepare and review the lesson plans with each camp director to make sure that each of us is familiar with the daily theme and activity plan.

To implement the project, we will ensure that:

- We have the necessary materials to carry out the lesson plan and provide artistic materials for activities.
- We have sufficient personnel with appropriate experience to provide a safe and supportive environment.
- Personnel have sufficient training to facilitate art making activities and p4c Hawaii methodology, including intellectual safety and good thinker's toolkit.
- We have the necessary approvals and contacts for travel outside of the Koan School.
- This project continues to create opportunities for students and faculty to come together as a community to discuss aesthetics, philosophy, and education.

## 5. What other funding sources have you explored for this project?

We have partnered with the Koan School, which has offered to lend their space and vehicles to host the summer camp. Their experience and know-how in hosting summer camps in the past is indispensable for us to run an effective summer camp program. Additionally, we have sought funding opportunities with the Onstead Institute of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas. The Onstead Institute specializes in supporting and funding K-12 art education. The Institute has committed to funding related art supplies and is currently considering other ways to support this summer camp program, both through in-kind support and additional funding. The Dallas Zoo also kindly offered to waive entrance fees for this summer camp project.

## 6. Please list your budget, including any amounts from other sources.

### Other funding sources:

- The Onstead Institute: Art supply cost = \$1,000
- Student Enrollment Fee: \$125 a week  $\times$  16 students max = **\$ 2,000 max (contingent on attendance)**
  - Weekly rate: fixed rate
  - For every two paying students we receive, we can cover one student scholarship. (e.g., 16 paying students, then 8 student scholarships.)
  - Extended Day is available for \$25 extra per student: 8 to 9 am, and 4 to 6 pm. Koan School Staff will provide Extended Day care

### **Koan School Administrative cost = \$1,485.94 (see breakdowns below)**

We acknowledge that PLATO funding will not be used to pay administrative costs. The enrollment fees received from students (\$2000 max) will be used to cover the Koan School's administrative fee. This covers the usage of their school building and vehicles, compensation for their own staff (\$15/hour plus taxes), liability youth camp insurance, background check fees, and any advertisement costs.

- **Facility Rental: \$250**
  - \$5 per hour  $\times$  50 (10h  $\times$  5days) = \$250 water, electricity, liability insurance, background checks
- **Vehicle Rental: \$167.32**
  - Gas for two buses:
    - Koan School (6441 Fishtrap Rd, Denton, TX 76208) to Lewisville Lake (12.8miles): 12.8 miles  $\times$  .545 standard reimbursement rate = \$6.98 one way  $\times$  2 (round trip)  $\times$  2 (two vehicles) = **\$27.92**
    - Koan School to Dallas Zoo: (43.8 miles): 43.8  $\times$  .545 standard reimbursement rate = \$23.60 one way  $\times$  2 (round trip)  $\times$  2 vehicles = **\$94.40**
  - Entrance fee for Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area:

- Bus/Van entry rates \$20/van (10-25 passengers)  $\times 2 = \$40$
- \$5/vehicle (less than 10 passengers)  $\$40 + \$5 = \$45$
  
- **Koan School Staff: \$1,065.74** (\$15 per hour  $\times$  66 hours plus taxes)
  - Staff 1: 30 hours (see breakdown below)
  - Staff 2: 36 hours (see breakdown below)
  - Staff Schedule:
    - Monday, 6/3:
      - Staff 1 – 8 am to 1 pm
      - Staff 2 – 12 pm to 6 pm
      - Koan School Staff supervise students during lunch from 12 to 1 pm, so the philosophy camp teachers can meet and set up activities for the afternoon.
    - Tuesday, 6/4:
      - Staff 1 – 8 am to 2 pm
      - Staff 2 – 9 am to 1 pm, 2 pm to 6 pm
      - Morning field trip to LLELA (9 am to 12 pm)
      - Koan School Staff supervise students during lunch from 12 to 1 pm, so the philosophy camp teachers can meet and set up activities for the afternoon.
      - Staff 2 takes lunch from 1 to 2 pm
    - Wednesday, 6/5:
      - Staff 1 – 8 am to 1 pm
      - Staff 2 – 12 pm to 6 pm
      - Koan School Staff supervise students during lunch from 12 to 1 pm, so the philosophy camp teachers can meet and set up activities for the afternoon.
    - Thursday, 6/6:
      - Staff 1 – 8 am to 4 pm
      - Staff 2 – 9 am to 6 pm
      - All day field trip to Dallas Zoo (9 am to 4 pm)
    - Friday, 6/7:
      - Staff 1 – 8 am to 1 pm
      - Staff 2 – 12 pm to 6 pm
      - Koan School Staff supervise students during lunch from 12 to 1 pm, so the philosophy camp teachers can meet and set up activities for the afternoon.

**Expenditure: the cost that we request from PLATO: \$ 5,000**

- Compensation for Project Leader of the EPWC summer camp (If there is no funding, then no compensation)
  - For coordination of development and implementation of the camp, in addition to on-site camp facilitation:  $\$1800$  ( $\$18.75/h \times 8$  hours =  $\$160/day \times 12$  days =  $\$1800$ )  $\times 1 =$  **\$1800**
- Compensation for four UNT students (If there is no funding, then no compensation)
  - For on-site camp facilitation, which includes curriculum development and planning:  $\$800$  ( $\$20/h \times 8$  hours =  $\$160/day \times 5$  days =  $\$800$ )  $\times 4$  students = **\$ 3,200**