

Creating Futures

Parkmont's Campaign for Today and Tomorrow

Case Statement

1. SUMMARY

Parkmont provides a much needed alternative education for students in the Washington D.C. area who require a small school environment to thrive. The Board of Trustees of the School is committed to assuring that a vibrant and vigorous Parkmont will continue to be available for decades to come. Therefore, the Board has launched *Creating Futures: Parkmont's Campaign for Today and Tomorrow*, a significant campaign to raise the funds that will secure a strong and enduring fiscal base for the school, as well as strengthen the current financial aid and faculty development programs.

2. PARKMONT'S MISSION

How does Parkmont help adolescents develop the confidence and skills they need to move ahead energetically with their lives?

Parkmont School creates a community where students ally themselves with creative adults whose driving concern is each student's success and well-being. Parkmont provides students with substantial experience in the world beyond the actual school building, experience that enables them to see more clearly the possibilities ahead. And, students are challenged with an academic program that fuses adolescent interests with traditional disciplines and respects the variety of their talents and motivations. Students get ready to chart their own course; Parkmont makes sure they're prepared for the journey.

What is Parkmont's commitment to diversity?

It is our belief that a diverse student body promotes the best learning environment. To support a community of students and faculty from differing cultures, races, backgrounds and economic situations, we administer a generous financial aid program – one that provides an average of more than twice the amount of aid awarded by other private schools in the Washington Area.¹

3. HISTORY

Parkmont was founded in 1972 by a group of middle school parents from McLean Virginia wanting an alternative to the typical middle school setting. During the first ten years of the school, it had five homes and at times struggled to meet monthly payroll, let alone keep its mission alive. In 1982, the current School Head Ron McClain, a Harvard graduate who has over 30 years of educational experience, took over the leadership of the school and brought about much needed stability. In 1991 Parkmont expanded to become both a middle and upper school, when it absorbed a small struggling progressive high school and, in turn, moved to its current location. Since then Parkmont has become debt free. It has evolved from being a new and struggling small school to one that is accredited and firmly established within the greater Washington DC academic community. Its educational focus and skills have been honed and refined, proving Parkmont's talent for successfully educating, motivating and mentoring students who have been left behind by the mainstream and more conventional educational establishments.

4. CURRENT NEEDS FOR PARKMONT

Parkmont has outgrown its days of financial crises, is accredited, and is well respected within the community. Even still, its financial reserves are minimal; planning for the school must occur on a year-to-year basis instead of the more sound and strategic multi-year approach. Students can

¹ Source: Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, 2002-03 & 2003-04 – Financial Aid as % of gross tuition

only be guaranteed financial aid for one year at a time, the level of faculty compensation can only be assured for 12-month periods, and the longevity of great school programs is never assured.

Currently there are four areas from which Parkmont acquires the monies to fund the annual budget: tuition, Annual Giving, special events and foundations/other agencies. Tuition levels at Parkmont School are comparable to other small schools in the area but make up only 85% of the total operating budget. The parent body is supportive of the school, which is reflected in the level of funds raised through the Annual Giving campaign and special events, but even with these revenues the budget does not balance. Thus, each year the school looks to foundations and “special angels” for the additional support.

Angels by their nature do not come along every day and foundation support is unpredictable. Thus, for Parkmont, now over 30 years old, to be in the position to move to its next level of maturation – effective multi-year planning and budgeting – a stronger fiscal foundation must be established through the creation of a reliable and ready reservoir of financial resources on which the school may rely during naturally occurring fluctuations in enrollment levels.

5. A CAMPAIGN TO MEET THE NEED

To build these essential reserves and fiscal foundation, Parkmont’s Board of Trustees launched *Creating Futures: Parkmont’s Campaign for Today and Tomorrow* in 2005. This campaign, already having reached successful heights, has been essential for the School to continue our mission. More D.C. kids will surmount their hurdles and finish school if Parkmont is available to them. And we want to be more than just available. We want to continue providing them with aggressive financial aid, outstanding teachers to guide them through their schooling, and the additional resources necessary to educate and guide individual students with different learning needs.

Creating Futures: Parkmont’s Campaign for Today and Tomorrow focuses on strengthening three critical elements of the school infrastructure – building blocks that make the work we do with kids possible. Funds raised for the three areas through the *Creating Futures* campaign would allow Parkmont to meet the needs of today, while also preparing for the challenges of the future:

■ **Financial Aid**

Goal: \$500,000 permanent endowment
\$50,000 annually for at least 10+ years

True to the mission and philosophy of the school, at the forefront of the *Creating Futures* campaign is the establishment of a financial aid (FA) fund to stabilize the FA program.

Parkmont is by definition a diverse institution. We believe that diversity -- academic, emotional, ethnic, and economic diversity -- provides an enhanced educational environment in which students learn about, and relate with others from differing cultures, races and economic backgrounds. We need help with economic diversity because it is so expensive, which is why the Financial Aid component of this campaign is critical. The School has always tried to assure that financial aid is available to all who need it. While economics have prevented the school from reaching this goal completely, admittance to the school as much as possible is needs blind.

The steady flow of scholarship income the campaign will provide will complement the aggressive financial aid program that Parkmont has successfully operated for more than fifteen years. It will enable the school to guarantee financial aid to students throughout their course of study and mean that funds will be available to students entering mid-term when financial aid funds at all schools are the most scarce.

■ **Signature Programs Support: Expanded and Improved Learning Spaces, State-of-the Art Technology and Readily Available forms of Transport**

Goal: \$70,000 annually for 10+ years

Much of the learning at Parkmont takes place far beyond textbooks and traditional classrooms. The Signature Programs at Parkmont include extensive use of experiential learning, study tours, field trips, and internships coupled with a homelike school house which is made infinite in size through the extensive use of educational technology. These are vital components of the Parkmont educational experience. The goal of the Signature Programs component of this campaign is to guarantee that the school house oasis is maintained and improved and that resources remain readily available which ensure the continued use of the outside world as our classroom.

As part of the success of the campaign to-date, the school seized the opportunity to acquire the adjacent property. In keeping with the school's philosophic underpinnings our current building is as welcoming, comfortable and safe as a family home. This building however, has been "stretched" to create sufficient space for a full range of class offerings from art to zoology. The new facility, once renovated, will become the home base of the Middle School program and our fine arts activities. Acquiring the property also provides us the opportunity to develop a campus plan that will include on-site outdoor activities. Further funds for the Signature Programs through the campaign have already allowed us to begin renovations of the current school-house. We expect to put \$250,000-\$300,000 in improvements and renovations into the current school home, and \$200,000-\$250,000 into renovating the new building.

The *Creating Futures* campaign will strengthen other elements of our Signature Programs as well. Technology has been fully integrated into the way classes are taught and students research and do their work. It affords students access to the whole world from their small home-like classroom. Further technology offers unprecedented avenues of exploration and study to young people with many, diverse learning needs. The campaign to-date already has helped provide a new laptop cart that computerizes two more classrooms, and online science materials that have expanded the hands-on experience of science in the upper school. Design and publication software, online library memberships, and access to online video libraries will also be added and enhanced. A new wireless network will be added that students can interact with anywhere on campus or from offsite, the goal being to provide students with daily use of the tools that will be critical to their success in college and work.

The school's travel opportunities give students a unique hands-on-learning perspective, and as noted are integral to the Parkmont experience and the way in which our students learn. Kids may visit a mosque in northwest DC, a Mayan temple in Uxmal, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission water cleaning site or the natural water filtration system called the Everglades. For the last 27 years, Parkmont has made sure that our travel adventures have been available to all our students, and thus has underwritten student travel costs at the same percentage as their financial aid. Through underwriting the high level financial support needed and providing the vehicles for these adventures, the campaign will assure that these trips will remain accessible to each and every student for at least the next ten years.

■ **Faculty Development**

Goal: \$20,000 a year for 10+ years

Parkmont School is proud of our dynamic, well-educated, and creative faculty who, in working individually with each student, are the core of our students' experience. The school has built a team of seasoned core faculty, which it combines with more recent graduates who bring energy and new ideas as well as provide role models with whom students can readily identify. Serving kids with special needs and those for whom learning does not come easily, requires unique skills. Specialty training for new teachers

and ongoing curricular development for all faculty is essential to keep the skills and talents of our teaching staff at their peak. By the same token, a stabilized and enhanced faculty educational program will furnish one more benefit that will help attract and retain quality faculty.

In addition to other contributions, we have received a \$25,000 1:1 challenge grant from the Edward E. Ford Foundation for the Faculty Development component of the campaign. We are seeking to match this challenge by May 31st, 2008, with an individual contribution.

6. CAMPAIGN GOAL-SETTING AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Campaign is the largest fundraising effort ever undertaken by Parkmont School. Support for the school has been at an all time high, so embarking on a major giving campaign to drive Parkmont's mission and keep it vibrant has been timely. To meet the needs they have identified, the Board is determined to raise \$1,500,000. Board members themselves have contributed nearly 30% of that goal to this campaign.

We are thrilled to report that, at this time, Parkmont School is just shy of reaching the \$1 million dollar mark in contributions to the Creating Futures Campaign. Still in the "silent phase" of the campaign, the school has had great success. Over 16 donors have made "major gifts", and more solicitations are underway. We plan to go "public" with the campaign in 2008. Funds already given have allowed the school to offer additional financial aid grants, to make building and resource improvements, and to provide teachers with additional learning opportunities.

Monies to the campaign are being invested carefully, under the guidance of the Parkmont Finance Committee and a reputable financial advisor. A consultant to the school created a detailed plan for how to expend the money over time, allowing for both endowment funds and "spendable funds", which will benefit current as well as future students and faculty.

The goals within each fund of the Campaign are listed in greater detail as Addendum A.

7. WAYS TO GIVE

Gifts to the campaign may be made over three years. The Board recognizes that during these years, it also will be critical to maintain support for the Annual Giving and Auction fund raising efforts, which provide more than 9% for Parkmont's annual operating budget.

The School will accept cash, check, and stock donations. Wiring information can be provided immediately upon request by the Development Office. Donors may choose to make a contribution to the Campaign in general, or they may wish to designate a particular area.

A chart showing the number and levels of gifts needed for *Creating Futures: Parkmont Today and Tomorrow* is included as Addendum B.

8. RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES

All gifts, regardless of size (except those given anonymously) will be recognized in several ways: on the Parkmont website, in publications, including the Annual Report, and arranged alphabetically to thank each and every contributor for their help. In addition, there are many opportunities to make named gifts to *Creating Futures* and/or to dedicate a gift in someone's honor.

A chart outlining the naming opportunities at each giving level is attached as Addendum C.

9. CAMPAIGN LEADERS

The Parkmont Board of Trustees has been active in shaping *Creating Futures: Parkmont's Campaign for Today and Tomorrow* and will remain so throughout the campaign's duration. Having determined that the time is right to create a firm financial foundation for the school, the

Board has been fully involved in the design and development of goals, committee structure and overall campaign plan. As a demonstration of each trustee's strong commitment, 100% of the Board already has made "capacity gifts" to the campaign. Board Leadership Gifts total \$420,133, or nearly 30% of the overall goal.

Parkmont School is grateful for the strong leadership being provided to *Creating Futures*. A Steering Committee made up of Board members, the Development Committee, and staff, is providing the management of the campaign and the current Development Chair and parent of an alumnus, J. Cari Elliott Gradison, serves as Chair of *Creating Futures*.

Our sixteen donors to the campaign to date are composed not only of Board members, but also of alumni/families of alumni, friends of the school, and foundations. Gifts to date total about \$924,000.00, which is 62% of the way towards our \$1.5 million goal. Campaign leaders are thrilled with the success the campaign has had so far, and look forward to reaching or even exceeding our ultimate goal.

ADDENDUM A

CAMPAIGN GOAL-SETTING: THE NUMBERS

Overall Goal: \$1,500,000

Allocation of funds: \$500,000 permanent endowment

\$1,000,000 in spendable funds

Planned Expenditure Schedule for Spendable Funds

\$140,000 a year for 10+

years

Fund investment Assumptions: 1. All funds will be held for one year to earn accrued interest

2. Average interest earned will be 5% per annum

The *Creating Futures* funds would be allocated yearly as follows:

Need	Amount	Time Frame	Total
Financial Aid			
Endowment	\$25,000	In perpetuity	
Spendable Funds	\$25,000	10+ years	
	Total Financial Aid		\$50,000
Signature Program Spendable Funds			
Technology Fund	\$15,000	10+ years	
Vehicles Fund	\$17,000	10+ years	
School Home Fund	\$38,000	10+ years	
	Total Signature Programs		\$70,000
Faculty Development			
Spendable Fund	\$20,000	10+ years	
	Total Faculty Development		\$20,000

Note: Even after the “spendable funds” are fully expended, the \$500,000 endowment will remain, generating approximately \$25,000 each and every year in perpetuity for financial aid for students at Parkmont.

The Parkmont School Board of Trustees is fully committed to the *Creating Futures* campaign. A hundred percent of the Board has made early gifts to the campaign for a total of \$420,133 or nearly 30% of campaign total. \$924,000 have been raised to date. To raise the remaining 38% we will reach out to other current/former Parkmont families and beyond, to friends, foundations, targeted philanthropists and special “angels”. A gift that might seem modest to older more traditional institutions could be transformation for Parkmont.

ADDENDUM B

Included on this page would be the pyramid chart

ADDENDUM C

The following chart indicates each level of contribution and the naming/recognition opportunities available:

Gift Size*	Naming and Recognition Opportunities**
\$400,000 and above	Name school building or campus
\$200,000 to \$399,999	Name a financial aid or faculty development fund
\$100,000 to \$199,000	Name "commons" room, or entryway/lobby
\$50,000 to \$99,000	Name administrative office or School Head's office
\$25,000 to \$49,999	Name classroom, computer room or faculty room
\$10,000 to \$24,999	Name a van
\$5,000 to \$9,999	Name a picnic table
\$1,000 to \$4,999	Name a bench
\$500 to \$999	Name a tree

*** Contributions over \$150 will receive recognition on Parkmont Wall of Honor**

**** All contributions will have recognition on the website, and listing in Annual Report and other publications**