

## *The Jenna Fund for Kids in Need*

My name is Jenna Newman. I have started a charitable foundation to raise money for disabled children called "The Jenna Fund for Kids in Need", see [www.jennafund.org](http://www.jennafund.org). I am raising money through different fund raising projects. The first \$10,000 raised will go to the Kennedy Krieger Institute where I did an academic internship through my high school, and where I continued to volunteer over the summer.

**Best Practice 1: What recognized community need was met by your project?** While interning at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, I saw many children with severe disabilities. Not only were the families faced with overcoming health issues, but many families were struggling financially. I wanted to raise money to help these children with the healthcare they need and to improve the quality of their lives. Healthcare institutes for disabled children like the one at which I work rely on volunteers and outside funding for their resources. The disabled children benefit from any money raised to help provide physical and emotional support for them and their families.

**Best Practice 2: How was the project connected to the school curriculum and curricular objectives?** I began an academic internship, which is an honors course, through my school. I wanted to work with children who had medical, emotional, and psychological problems as my long-term career goal. The Kennedy Krieger Institute was one of the sites that worked with the internship program. My experience working with these children has totally changed my outlook on life. I have come to realize how lucky I am to be healthy and to have the resources I need when I am sick. I worked with many professionals and participated in research projects. My coordinator, mentor and I created a learning plan and I received a competency assessment each quarter.

**Best Practice 3: How did participants reflect on their experiences throughout the project?** I kept weekly journals on my experiences and completed 24 career research projects. It is difficult not to reflect on what I see at the institute. Many of the children are severely disabled and struggle to do the simplest of tasks. It is hard to get these pictures out of mind. My experiences are always with me and I am always sharing them with my family and friends. It is hard not to be touched very deeply by what I see when I am at work.

**Best Practice 4: How did students take leadership roles and take responsibility for the success of the project?** I took complete leadership for the project and I am responsible for its success. My mother and father have been very supportive in helping me to set up my foundation and in carrying out the fundraising activities I have planned. My aunt, who designs and sets up web sites helped me to set up my web site and provided lots of artistic ideas. I came up with the concept and the plan for the fundraising activities.

**Best Practice 5: What community partners were worked with on this project?** I worked with many community partners on this project. First, two community papers wrote articles on my foundation, which helped me in my fundraising efforts. The foundation was started by getting donations from family and friends and through networking. I sent out mass mailings explaining my foundation along with copies of the articles from the papers, and people sent in donations. I approached local businesses to donate prizes for a raffle I am having and all my friends and family are helping to sell the tickets. This project has involved all my friends in the fundraising. A local printing company printed the raffle tickets for me. I designed a website for the foundation with my aunt whose career is to setup websites. The foundation's website can be visited at [www.jennafund.org](http://www.jennafund.org). My neighbor runs a printing business out of her home and her daughter is a graphic designer. They offered to design and donate the contribution cards, which the fund is selling 6 for \$25.00. They did a beautiful job and it was very generous of them. All of the fundraising has been very successful and fun. People are very generous and I have gotten a lot of positive and supportive feedback from my community and school.



**Best Practice 6: How did you prepare and plan ahead for the project?** I first thought of the idea of the foundation and went to my parents to discuss how to get the fund started. My parents knew how to go about it so the paperwork was setup. My initial goal was to raise \$10,000 by the end of the year. I met with the director of fundraising at The Kennedy Krieger Institute to get ideas on how to raise money. I then made a list of all the ways I wanted to raise money and how I could get my community involved. Everything seemed overwhelming at first, but it has all fallen into place and I have been able to raise very close to my goal. I plan to set new goals each year. Many people in the community have offered prizes for my next raffle already. I plan to have candy sales, and car washes to raise money.

**Best Practice 7: What knowledge and skills did students develop through this project?** My experiences working with the disabled children helped me to grow spiritually and to mature. I learned how to do research and I was exposed to many career possibilities that exist in the area in which I want to work. I learned how to work in stressful and sometimes potentially dangerous situations and how to handle them. In starting my foundation I gained confidence in speaking to business owners and in asserting myself. I learned how to ask people for donations in a way that makes them feel really good about giving. Both my work with the children and with the Jenna Fund has been rewarding and a great learning and growing experience. I feel very lucky that my school offers this opportunity to work and learn.

To learn more about the project contact Jenna Newman (Jenna@Jennafund.org), Pikesville High School, Baltimore County.