Agenda Item No. 

TO: City Council  
FROM: City Manager and Staff  
DATE: February 9, 2009  
RE: Proposal for Use of March-Heibel Building

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** At the November 3, 2008, Council meeting, the City Council authorized staff to seek written proposals for the renovation, restoration, and use of the City owned March-Heibel Building located at the intersection of Wilkes Boulevard and Range Line Street. One such proposal has been received by the City. The proposal was submitted by First Chance for Children and appears to meet all of the requirements of the City. Staff is seeking Council approval to proceed with negotiation of a formal agreement with First Chance for Children outlining in detail the actual terms of the project. Once drafted, the agreement would be brought back to the Council for review and approval.

**DISCUSSION:** In the fall of 2008 formal title to the March–Heibel drugstore building was transferred back to the City from Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA). CMCA had held title to the building for approximately eight years attempting to raise the funds necessary to restore and preserve the building for community use. Unfortunately the necessary funds were not forth coming and CMCA chose to disassociate with the project.

Following Council discussions regarding the future of the building, staff was instructed to seek proposals from individuals, agencies, and/or organizations who would be interested in renovating, restoring, and using the property. Key concerns being that the historical integrity of the exterior of the building was to be preserved and the use of the building was to be compatible with the adjacent neighborhood park and surrounding neighborhood uses.

The request for proposals (rfp) was advertised through the City’s Purchasing Division and one proposal was received. That proposal was submitted by First Chance for Children. A staff committee consisting of the City’s Purchasing Agent, City Attorney, an Assistant City Manager, and the Director’s of the City’s Park and Recreation and Planning Departments was appointed to review the proposal.

Following an initial review of the proposal, the Committee authorized the applicant to complete a structural evaluation of the building as requested in their proposal. Upon completion of the structural evaluation, the Committee met with Mr. Philip G. Peters, Executive Director of First Chance for Children to clarify further details of the proposal. It is the opinion of the Committee that the First Chance proposal meets the requirements of the rfp and that negotiations should be initiated to draft a formal agreement for use of the building by First Chance.

Key points of the First Chance proposal are as follows:

1.) First Chance for Children is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to help every
child arrive at school ready to succeed. Their programs particularly focus on providing services to low income and minority children.

2.) First Chance will use the building as its main office. In addition to staff offices, the interior will include a larger conference/meeting room capable of serving functions such as group training sessions for caregivers, parent networking activities, and Board of Director’s meetings.

3.) First Chance will preserve the historical attributes of the building’s exterior and will incorporate “green” building techniques and practices as part of the building’s restoration.

4.) First Chance will secure the necessary funds (estimated at $250,000) to restore the building through a combination of grants, loans, and donations. Fund raising will be complete no later than June of 2010, possibly much sooner.

5.) First Chance will operate and maintain the facility as part of its annual operating budget.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Negotiating a long term agreement for both the restoration and the use of the March–Heibel Building should result in a positive impact on the Park and Recreation Department’s budget as the Department would not be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the structure.

**SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTIONS:** If the Council concurs with staff’s recommendation that the proposal submitted by First Chance for Children is a viable proposal for use of the March-Heibel Building, a motion should be passed directing staff to negotiate a formal agreement between the two entities. Once drafted, the agreement will be presented to Council for final review and approval.
Marilyn Starke, Purchasing Agent  
Purchasing Department  
800 Cherry Street, Lower Level  
Columbia, MO 65201

December 19, 2009

Re: Heibel-March Building Renovation, RFP #22/2009

Dear Ms. Starke,

I enclose our proposal to renovate and acquire the Heibel-March building pursuant to City of Columbia RFP #22/2009.

First Chance for Children is a not-for-profit organization located in Columbia, Missouri whose mission is to help every child arrive at school ready to succeed.

We propose to renovate the building in compliance with “green” building requirements and in a manner consistent with its status as a notable historic structure. First Chance for Children will then use the building as its headquarters, housing our three parent educators, teacher trainer, fiscal manager and director. The conference room will serve multiple functions, such as hosting group training sessions for caregivers and for parents. We anticipate that the Boone County Coordinating Board for Early Childhood Education and the Early Childhood Advisory Group will also meet there.

We propose to finance the renovation and acquisition of both the building and the land beneath it by raising half of the costs through grants and financing the remaining half with private donations and a mortgage loan.

We would be delighted to answer any questions you may have about us or our proposal.

Happy holidays,

Philip G. Peters, Jr.  
Executive Director

dedicated to success through early education
Proposal of First Chance for Children

CITY OF COLUMBIA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Heibel-March Building
Renovation
RFP #22/2009

Submitted December 19, 2008

First Chance For Children
Ready for School, Ready for Life
PROPOSAL OF FIRST CHANCE FOR CHILDREN

For the convenience of the evaluators, we have chosen not to submit our proposal in a narrative form, but, instead, to submit it as a series of responses to the requirements listed in the RFP. If the evaluators would prefer a different format or desire additional information, we would be happy to provide it.

1. TRANSMITTAL LETTER

As required by the RFP, this proposal is accompanied by a transmittal letter prepared on our letterhead and signed by Philip G. Peters, Jr., our Executive Director. By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors on Wed., Dec. 17, the board voted to authorize a bid for the Helbel-March building on behalf of First Chance for Children to authorize Mr. Peters to sign and submit on its behalf.

2. PERSONNEL/FIRM INFORMATION

A brief description of the individual/organization/firm submitting the proposal. Include your Mission Statement if applicable. Include a brief history of your firm. Individuals assigned to this project, resumes for such individuals and/or a description of their past relevant experience.

OUR WORK

First Chance for Children is a not-for-profit organization located in Columbia, Missouri whose mission is to help every child arrive at school ready to succeed. Because low income and minority children disproportionately arrive at school without the social, emotional, and cognitive skills they need, our programs focus on them.

Children who arrive at kindergarten without age-appropriate social, emotional, and academic skills have much higher rates of retention in grade, disciplinary problems, and referral to special education. As they grow older, they have higher drop out rates, more welfare use, higher teen pregnancy rates, and more conflicts with law enforcement.

It doesn’t have to be that way. First Chance for Children is dedicated to building an early education system that helps every child arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed. We tackle the school readiness gap in several ways:

- Mentoring low income parents through home visits
• Recruiting eligible mothers at our two Lend and Learn Toy Libraries, both located in the First Ward
• Helping caregivers improve the quality of their programs
• Advocating public policies that help every child arrive at school ready to succeed
• Raising public awareness of the importance of early childhood education
• Bringing community stakeholders and civic leaders together in the Early Childhood Advisory Group
• Preventing SIDS and child abuse with our safe cribs and home visit programs.

If we obtain the Heibel-March building, it will serve as our home office. Our parent educators will be based there. They do home visits for low-income parents to help them learn more about child development. Although the state-wide Parents as Teachers program is a wonderful resource for middle-class and upper-class families, it has had less success reaching low-income and high-risk families. Our job is to reach more of those families. In families with multiple risk factors, we often find weak maternal attachment and our first task is to reduce the risk of child abuse or neglect. Our home visitors then try to help the family build a strong attachment between mother and child, a trusting relationship between parent and home visitor, and a stimulating environment enriched with early language and literacy activities.

As another example of our work, we have just begun to rolling out our new B-Shops Program, a partnership between First Chance for Children and eight minority barber shops and beauty shops in Columbia. We have provided each shop with a basket of books suitable to be read to, and by, children from birth to third grade. The baskets contain a mixture of classic children’s books and books likely to resonate with minority children. To encourage their use, we give a raffle ticket in the child’s name to every parent, friend, and relative who reads to a child while at the shop. In the long term, we hope that B-Shops will be the beginning of a grassroots “Cradle to College” literacy initiative in Columbia’s First Ward. We are now working with the CARE Gallery to enlist their high school students next summer to create for us a contemporary message and image that will catch the attention of young mothers.

To learn more about our work, visit: http://www.firstchanceforchildren.org.

OUR HISTORY

The history of First Chance for Children begins in 1996 with a Boone Health Report Card committee charged with discussing child care issues. Those discussions led to the creation in 1998 of our predecessor, the Community Child Care Consortium. The Consortium received seed money from the United Way and the City of Columbia to hire a director. In 1999, the Boone County Community Partnership became eligible to apply for early childhood funding from the Missouri Department of Social Services and asked the Consortium to prepare the grant application and to provide the underlying services. The applications were successful and that stream of grant revenue has continued to support our programs since then. Because DSS receives this money from gaming revenues that are dedicated to early childhood services, we have good reason to believe that these grants will continue to be awarded.
In 2001, the Consortium rewrote its mission around the goal of improving school readiness and changed its name to Boone Early Childhood Partners (BECP). In 2003, we became a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and, in 2006, changed our name to First Chance for Children to better reflect our mission of helping underserved children. Since then, First Chance for Children has successfully applied for grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the Children's Trust Fund to supplement our DSS grants.

RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS

The renovation of the Heibel-March building will be supervised by our Executive Director, Philip G. Peters, Jr. His resume is attached.

3. CONTACT INFORMATION
Provide information about your firm to include:

- Name, address, phone, fax number(s) and email address of firm

First Chance for Children
P.O. Box 1101
1123 Wilkes Blvd.
Columbia, MO 65205 (for the P.O. Box)
573-777-1815
573-777-1816 (Fax)
director@firstchanceforchildren.org

- Name, address, phone, fax number(s) and email address and title of primary contact person for this project

Philip G. Peters, Jr., Executive Director
First Chance for Children
P.O. Box 1101
1123 Wilkes Blvd.
Columbia, MO 65205 (for the P.O. Box)
573-777-1815
573-777-1816 (Fax)
director@firstchanceforchildren.org
4. PROJECT APPROACH

Provide a narrative, describing how your firm will address the needs of the city described herein. A detailed description of the proposed project including:

- Why you or your organization is interested in this property.

We are interested in renovating and obtaining the land beneath this building for several reasons. First, the Columbia Public Schools have announced that Field Elementary School will cease to be an elementary school next June and that it is likely to be converted into an Early Education Center. Jack Jensen, the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Elementary Education, has also indicated his desire that the building house not only CPS early childhood programs, like Title I Preschool and Parents as Teachers, but also representatives from other early childhood organizations so that it can become the hub or "front door" to early childhood services for new parents in Columbia. First Chance for Children, for example, might be able to move one of its Lend and Learn Toy Libraries into the room that currently houses the Field library. Our staff very much wants to be close to that hub. The Heibel-March building would literally place us on the same "campus."

The second reason why we are interested in this building is that it is located near many of the families whom we serve. Proximity to our families is the reason why we have chosen to locate our two Lend and Learn Toy Libraries at the Blind Boone Community Center and at 1200 Wilkes Ave. Both are near the Heibel-March building. Proximity is our Lend and Learns and to our families is likewise an important reason why we would be delighted to have our home office in the Heibel-March building.

This location is also appealing because it will help us build on our relationship with the teen mothers at Douglas High School and with the barbers and the barbers and beauticians participating in our B-Shops program. We are currently renting space in the Atkins Building and that location, like the Heibel-March building, has proven very convenient for the community events that we have attended at Douglas Park, the Columbia Housing Authority, and area churches.

Our third motivation is esthetic. Both our staff and our board of directors love the history, charm, and romance associated with the building and its history. In 2005, the March-Heibel Building was listed as one of the city Historic Preservation Commission’s (HPC) most notable properties. We very much want it to continue to serve as an integral part of the neighborhood and the community.

Fourth, we think that the arrival of First Chance for Children at this location, along with the transformation of Field Elementary School into an early education hub, will contribute to the ongoing revitalization of the area. We want to be a part of that. Our board strongly felt that renovating the Heibel-March building would be vote of confidence in Columbia, its future, and its children.
• How the building will be used.

First Chance for Children will use the building as its main office. The building will house offices, cubicles, or desk space for the executive director, fiscal manager, community relations coordinator, several parent educators (home visitors) and student interns. It will also provide the home base for the staffer who administers two state programs which seek to raise the quality of child care programs that serve low income families.

The interior will also include a conference room capable of serving multiple functions, such as hosting group training sessions for caregivers, parent networking activities, and Board of Directors meetings. We anticipate that the Boone County Coordinating Board for Early Childhood Education and the Early Childhood Advisory Group will also meet there.

• Proposed floor plan for the renovated building.

The floor plan is attached.

• Confirmation that exterior renovation will be consistent with the building’s historical attributes.

Nicholas Peckham has agreed to provide us designs for a green renovation that respects the building’s historical character.

First Chance for Children will keep the exterior as it currently is except to replace the roof, repoint the brickwork, replace the windows as needed, add architecturally compatible windows to the north side, and cover the south side of the rear addition with brick that blends with original brick of the main building. The floor plan that we have submitted will need to be modified so that it keeps the large window on the south side of the building.

We will work closely with the Department of Parks and Recreation to insure a compatible operation and use of both the building and the park. In particular, we would like the park to include equipment and activities appropriate for children under five.
5. SCHEDULE

Anticipated timeline for the proposed project:
- Anticipated length of time required to secure necessary funding for the project.
- Anticipated beginning date of building renovation (no later than two years following Council approval of agreement).
- Anticipated opening date of the facility (no later than two years following the beginning date of building renovation).

Completion of funding: June 2010
Commencement of renovation: June 2010
Occupancy of the building: Dec. 2010

Each of these dates will move forward as much as seven months if we are able to obtain a commercial loan for the second half of the renovation expense, as explained below.

6. RENOVATION PLAN

Proposed construction parameters:
- Estimated cost of building renovation.

The estimated cost is currently $250,000.

- Description of building materials and techniques to be used.

We will use the standard materials and techniques used in green renovations of interiors and roofs.

- Method of acquiring the necessary funds to complete the project.

In February March, we will apply for grants from local trusts. Our goal is to obtain $50,000 from those sources. At the same time, we will apply for Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credits. The property was approved previously for $65,000 in tax credits, but we will need to re-apply. We will apply in May for a community development block grant of $75,000.

Once we have obtained at least $125,000 in public and foundation grant commitments, we will take two steps. First, we will begin a private capital campaign. Second and
simultaneously, we will apply for a private mortgage loan. This loan would permit us to begin renovation as early as October or November 2009. We have been advised that the loan payments on a 15-year loan of $150,000 or less at 6 percent will be less than our current rent.

Given the volatility of the credit markets, it is difficult to predict whether financing will be available. However, we have begun discussions with Commerce Bank and the bank expects to able to give us a decision by mid-January. Based on our preliminary discussions, we believe that commercial lenders may prefer to provide us with a one- or two-year loan to provide funding only during the duration of a capital campaign to raise the remaining renovation funds. That will be a tough project, but our Board is prepared to undertake it.

7. OPERATIONS PLAN

Proposed Operating procedures:
- Address who will operate the facility
- Address how operating funds will be obtained.
- Address any collaborative efforts with other organizations.

First Chance for Children will operate the facility itself.

We receive our operating funds from state and federal grants. We have four five-year competitive DSS grants serving Boone, Cooper and Howard counties and three annual noncompetitive DSS contracts for Boone County that were obtained through our partnership with the Boone County Community Partnership. We reasonably expect to receive those state grants in future years because the DSS grants come from a dedicated pool of gaming revenue, rather than from state general operating funds.

We also have a $2.7 million three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education under which we assist five preschools in Boone and Randolph counties. That award will expire on Sept. 30, 2009. Similar opportunities are likely to arise in the future, but we are not relying on that.

As described above in our Project Approach, our interest in this property is motivated by the opportunity that it will provide to partner with the Columbia Public Schools and other early childhood organizations. However, we plan to renovate the Heibel-March building ourselves.
8. REQUIRED PLAN SUBMISSIONS

A "Floor Plan" showing proposed uses is required as part of the RFP. All submissions must meet the following requirements:

- Site Plan at scale: 1/16" = 1 ft.
- Building floor plans: 1/8" = 1 ft.

The floor plan and site plan are attached. The floor plan that we have submitted will need to be modified so that it keeps the large window on the south side of the building.

9. REFERENCES

Two (2) corporate references containing at least one (1) banking reference, and one (1) current or recent client reference. If the respondent has successfully completed any development projects within the past three (3) years, the references should address some or all of those projects.

We have attached letters from:
1. Jack Jensen, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, Columbia Public Schools
2. Darin Preis, Executive Director, Central Missouri Community Action, and
3. K. Michael Ireland, Vice President, Business Banking, Commerce Bank.

10. OTHER

Other Items - Include any additional items or information the City should consider in evaluating your proposal.

Given the age of the property, our offer is contingent on the opportunity to do an inspection of the exterior walls and roof supports within thirty days of contract execution (or before contract execution if feasible) and our receipt of a report indicating that the condition of those features is consistent with a renovation within the City's estimate of renovation costs.

Our offer also is contingent upon the City's agreement to convey title to both the building and the land beneath it. We will work with the City to set reasonable conditions for that transfer and, if necessary, reversion to the City. We may need to receive title to the property at the time of acquisition of a construction loan sufficient to complete construction. Should the renovation not be completed within a reasonable amount
of time, ownership of the structure and the land would revert to the City. Our proposal assumes that our consideration for receiving title to land and building is our promise to renovate the building and that no other charges will be paid for ownership of the properties except a nominal fee, such as $10.

As no parking currently exists on the site and there is no space for future expansion, First Chance for Children reserves the right to petition the City Council for permission to expand, probably to the north. However, we currently have a tentative understanding with the Columbia Public Schools that it will permit parking for our visitors in a portion of the paved playground closest to the Heibel-March building.

First Chance for Children has notified Linda Rootes of the North Central Neighborhood Association of its plans.
CITY OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

NOTICE TO BIDERS
ADDENDUM #1
HEIBEL- MARCH BUILDING RENOVATION
RFP: 22/2009
Proposal Closing Date Remains the Same, Friday December 19, 2008 5PM

Respondents shall note these changes to the above Request for Proposal and incorporate these changes in their submittal. Respondents shall attach a signed acknowledged copy of this addendum to their proposal, if submitting a hard copy (via paper) or agree to the addendum electronically if submitting through the electronic bid system on line.

This addendum consists of the following information:

Extension of Time to Receive Questions: The time allowed to receive questions was to end today, Monday Dec. 1st, 2008. That time has now been extended by one week due to the Thanksgiving Day holiday and the impact that may have had on availability of potential bidders to review the RFP. Questions will now be accepted until Monday December 8, 2008.

The remainder of the schedule and terms of the RFP remain the same as originally issued.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ADDENDUM #1

The undersigned Respondent hereby certifies that the changes set forth in this addendum have been incorporated in their proposal and are a part of Request for Proposal No. 22/2009.

Firm First Choice for Children Date 12/19/08

Signed [Signature]

Respondents are invited to register on the City’s NEW E-Vendor site in order to respond to the above Request for Proposal. Once registered, vendors will receive e-mail bid notification, first acknowledging registration then approval of registration. Upon email notification of registration approval, you may go to the E-Vendor site to respond to this bid.

TO REGISTER, GO TO: http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Finance/Services/app1proc.php
Philip G. Peters, Jr.

First Chance for Children
1123 Wilkes Blvd.
P.O. Box 1101
Columbia, MO 65205
(573) 777-1815 x 207
director@firstchanceforchildren.org.

2620 Westbrook Way
Columbia, MO 65203
(573) 442-1150

Employment

First Chance for Children

Executive Director (Jan. 2008-present). Nonprofit organization whose mission is to help every child arrive at school ready to succeed, shrinking the race and poverty achievement gaps through high quality early education (birth-to-five).

School of Law, University of Missouri-Columbia, Leave of Absence (1/08-12/09)

Ruth L. Hulston Professor of Law (since 1995-present); Associate Professor of Law (1986-95)

Subjects: Health Care Law & Policy; Torts; Genetics, Law & Policy; The Law of Race-Based Government Programs.

Faculty Fellow, MU Life Sciences & Society Program; MU Center for Family Policy & Research; MU Center for Health Policy; MU Center for Clinical Ethics.

Associate Dean for Faculty Research & Development (Aug. 1, 2002-July 31, 2004)

Responsible for faculty recruitment, the speaker series, work-in-progress workshops, the faculty research leave program, development of interdisciplinary academic programs, and participation in a re-accreditation self-study report.

Director, MU Biotechnology & Society Program (2000-2005)

Founding director of an interdisciplinary initiative to examine the social, ethical and legal implications of agricultural and human biotechnology.

Legal Practice

Woodward, Hobson & Fulton, 2500 First National Tower, Louisville, Kentucky–1983-86

Private civil practice concentrating in malpractice defense, health, and product liability litigation.

Craig and Macauley Professional Corporation, One Post Office Sq., Boston, MA–1981-83

Civil practice involving personal injury and commercial lending.

Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.–1976-79

Trial attorney litigating housing and credit discrimination.

Other Academic Experience

University of Louisville, School of Law, Louisville, Kentucky, Lecturer, Health Law (1984-86)

University of Oklahoma, College of Law, Visiting Assistant Professor of Law (1979-81)

Oklahoma City University, College of Law, Summer School Faculty (1980).

Publications & Presentations

[available on request]

In Progress

Vestiges of State-Sponsored Discrimination: A History of the Negro Achievement Gap

Education

University of California at Berkeley, J.D., 1976; Order of the Coif
Board of Editors, California Law Review; Berkeley Law Foundation (founding member)

University of Edinburgh (Scotland); Rotary Foundation Postgraduate Fellowship, 1972-73
Economic history; intercollegiate basketball.

Harvard University (Economics), B.A., 1972; cum laude; varsity football.

Grants

Co-PI, ¡Listo!: Improving Latino School Readiness with Summer English Instruction, MU
Cambio Center grant (approximately $10,000; approved June 2007).

PI, Correlating Early Education with Readiness to Start Kindergarten, MU Research Council

Community Service

Chair, Boone County Coordinating Board for Early Childhood Education (Oct. 2006-
present) (a board of community leaders seeking to create a high quality system of early education
in Boone County)

First Chance for Children (Board of Directors, 2003-2007; President, Jan. 2006-July 2007)

Family Health Center (a non-profit community health center); President of the Board
Board (July 2003- July 2005); board member 2000-present.

Columbia Public Schools, Achievement Gap Task Force (2006-present)

Columbia Public Schools, Early Education Task Force (2004-05) (charged with drafting a strategic plan for addressing the educational achievement gap that exists when children enter kindergarten)

Nanny's Neighborhood (child care center), Advisory Board (2004).

Boone County Health Report Card, Community Benefits Subcommittee (1996) (exploring ways to improve access to health care in Boone County, Missouri)

Governor's Health Reform Commission, Consultant, 1993 (the Commission was appointed by Governor Carnahan to propose a plan for universal health care access)

Institutional Review Board, Ellis Fischel State Cancer Center, Columbia, Missouri (1986-1990) (protecting the interests of patients receiving experimental treatment)

Clinical Ethics Committee, University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine (1989-present)

University Hospital Task Force to Revise Consent Policies (1998)

Harvard University, Alumni Schools Committee (Volunteer, interviewing applicants; 1987-present).

Numerous presentations to media and local civic and religious organizations.

**Association Memberships**

American Bar Association, Missouri Bar Association, Boone County Bar Association
American Society of Law, Medicine and Ethics
American Civil Liberties Union
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Society of American Law Teachers
Southern Poverty Law Center

**Personal**

*Born:* February 4, 1950, in Manchester, New Hampshire.


[December 19, 2008]
December 17, 2008

To the City of Columbia,

It has come to my attention that First Chance for Children is interested in acquiring the Heibel-March building. First Chance for Children is a leading group in Columbia on the important issues of early childhood education. Columbia Public School’s partnership with First Chance for Children has been a positive and productive one in furthering the cause of quality early childhood education in the Columbia area.

Columbia Public Schools is in the early stages of considering how it will use Eugene Field Elementary School. It is currently the thinking that Field will no longer serve as an elementary school when the new elementary school, Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary opens in the 2009 – 2010 school year. Under consideration, dependent on financial conditions, is the creation of a “Front Door” for the early childhood programs of Columbia Public Schools and other community agencies with a similar mission. If First Chance for Children acquires the Heibel-March building for its programs, there is the potential for early childhood education to have a strong focus at this location. Columbia Public Schools would also be interested in exploring with First Chance for Children and the city how the use of this location can support early childhood education.

Respectfully,

Jack C. Jensen

Cc Dr. James Ritter, Interim Superintendent, Columbia Public Schools
   Ms. Michelle Gadbois, School Board President, Columbia Public Schools
   Dr. Nick Boren, Chief Operations Officer, Columbia Public Schools
December 17, 2008

Mike Hood
Columbia Parks and Recreation
1 South 7th St
Columbia, Missouri 65201

Dear Mr. Hood,

It is with excitement that I support the application of First Chance for Children for the Heibel-March building in North Central Columbia. You are very familiar with the struggles our organization had with interested neighborhood stakeholders to renovate the building ourselves. While that process served as a valuable “learning opportunity” for me, I was disappointed that the outcome was not different. That said, I am pleased that another organization has the opportunity to put that building to good use and preserve a notable property in Columbia.

I serve as an advisor to the First Chance for Children Board of Directors and have found this organization to be very professional, accountable, and sustainable. The Heibel-March building is a perfect location for their operations and I hope you will favorably consider their application. They currently maintain a Lend and Learn facility just down the street that also connects them to the neighborhood and has established them as a staple of our community. The likelihood that Columbia Public Schools will designate Field Elementary School as an Early Childhood Development center also poses substantial justification for a community early childhood presence to compliment the public school presence.

First Chance for Children is a natural successor to the community center concept that we were not able to implement. They are focused on community issues, are particularly pertinent to the First Ward, and would be a stable presence in a neighborhood that needs stability.

Thank you for considering my support for the First Chance for Children application.

Sincerely,

Darin Preis, Executive Director
Central Missouri Community Action
To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to provide a bank reference for First Chance for Children Inc. First Chance has been a customer of Commerce Bank since June of 2006 and has always managed their accounts responsibly and to our satisfaction. Their deposit accounts maintain an average balance in the mid five-figures and report zero overdrafts. The organization also maintains an operating line-of-credit with a maximum borrowing limit in the low five-figures and has always paid as agreed. We would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information at the direction of First Chance for Children.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

12/17/2008

K. Michael Ireland
Vice President, Business Banking