

Case Study: ASSISTING A FAMILY FOUNDATION

The DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative



BACKGROUND

Rich DeVos once said, "If you have that flame of a dream down inside you somewhere, thank God for it and do something about it. And don't let anyone else blow it out." DeVos doesn't just speak these words, he lives by them.

After serving in the Air Force and co-founding a flying school and commercial air charter service, DeVos and partner Jay Van Andel founded the Amway Corp, a venture that grew to be one of the world's largest direct selling companies. In the wake of his success and after purchasing the NBA's Orlando Magic basketball team, DeVos and his family found the flame of a dream in the form of a common philanthropic goal: to improve the lives of underprivileged youth in urban areas.

SITUATION

While the goal was noble and the resources vast, the DeVos family did not know how to develop a program to turn their common interest into a life-impacting ministry for under-privileged children.

ENTER DARE MIGHTY THINGS

The DeVos family hired Dare Mighty Things (DMT) to create a national prototype for a ministry that would reflect the family's core values and interests. After careful evaluation, DMT steered the DeVos family toward development of a leadership training initiative for urban youth ministry leaders. Building on the organizational values and core competencies of the DeVos family, DMT developed the framework for the DeVos Urban Leadership Foundation.

In order to do so, DMT accomplished the following:

- Built a working model for a year-long leadership training initiative within a city;
- Developed a curriculum and training materials to enhance the skills of urban youth pastors, social workers, teachers and coaches;

- Recruited and trained instructors; and
- Tested the innovation in four pilot cities.

RESULTS

From one full-time staff person in a national office, the DeVos Urban Leadership Foundation has grown into a dynamic organization affecting the lives of millions of urban youth through the professional development of those who lead and mentor them. To date, the DeVos Urban Leadership Foundation:

- Is active in 18 states around the country;
- Has equipped over 400 urban youth leaders with the tools to increase the size, scope and effectiveness of their outreach; and
- Has garnered attention from dozens of religious and secular leaders for its work.

Rather than allow their lack of clarity or expertise to blow out their flame of a dream, the DeVos family hired DMT to understand their vision, research options, create a model, and implement a program for urban social development. The result of the DeVos dream and DMT's expertise is a program that will impact millions of children for years to come.

"Training ministry leaders with the capacity to reach the hearts and lives of at-risk youth is the beginning of transforming our communities. We need a leadership multiplication model in order to reach whole communities of youth for Christ and through the development of the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative, Dare Mighty Things has helped us to do just that."

Ginny Vander Hart, DeVos Foundations Director

"I am now at another church in transition outside of Los Angeles. They suffer from a lack of vision and hope for the future but by using the tool of scenario planning, they will discover that exploring potential futures is a lot of fun and helpful to their ministry. Because of the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative, I'm able to use the tools I learned to pass on to others in my community."

DULI Graduate