This letter is written to introduce our organization, the Twin Cities Math Teachers’ Circle. We are a collaboration of professional mathematicians and middle school mathematics teachers whose mission/vision is threefold: to create a community among middle school mathematics teachers and professional mathematicians, to provide a source for rich mathematics problems for teachers to use in their classrooms, and to strengthen middle school math teachers’ problem solving skills. Our ultimate goal is to help today’s students become flexible, creative and collaborative problem solvers in order to lead the U.S. in STEM-related fields in the future. To achieve this goal, we want to assist teachers and students to develop a deeper and broader arsenal of problem-solving techniques and to use them effectively to attack challenging problems. We believe this will impact middle school students’ problem solving experiences, expertise, and enthusiasm for mathematics, and ultimately transfer to higher student achievement in mathematics.

In June 2009, our team attended a conference led by the American Institute of Mathematics (AIM), located in Palo Alto, CA. We are following AIM’s protocol, which has been used successfully in other parts of the nation, to develop our Math Teachers’ Circle. We are in the planning phase now, and will officially start our circle in summer 2010. We seek funding of $45,000 for the first year of the program, and expect to need roughly $4000 in each subsequent year. The Twin Cities Math Teachers’ Circle will begin in August 2010, with a three-and-a-half day summer immersion workshop at which teachers and mathematicians will form a collaborative network which will further develop during the academic year. Participation in the workshop will include grappling with deep and interesting mathematics, as well as discussions of middle school pedagogy. Each monthly meeting during the school year will center on some rich and appropriate problem or group of problems, and will include dinner and pedagogical discussions. Each of these six sessions will be co-led by a professional mathematician and a middle school teacher, and the pedagogy will be modeled, imbedded and intentionally discussed. Initially, we hope to involve 20 to 25 middle school mathematics teachers in the Twin Cities.

We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our mission and plans, and to provide additional details. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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