

• MELANNE VERVEER •

for Children's
Cabinet

RM 7

A child and family resource center created by a public and private partnership of community volunteers serving Washoe County.

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SERVICES

BADA - Resource Library
Centralized Assistance & Referral
Family Counseling, Truancy Center
Child Care Resource Council
Healthy Beginnings
Parenting Education Network
RAD Tutoring
Youth Support Groups



April 24, 1996

Melanne Verveer
Deputy Assistant to the President and
Deputy Chief of Staff to the First Lady
Old Executive Office Building
17th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 100
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Verveer:

In anticipation of our meeting Monday, April 29, I am sending information to provide you with an overview of the Children's Cabinet, Inc. and our activities. Enclosed are a fact sheet, an 8 minute video, our "2012" initiative brochure, and background on Keith Lee, Chair of our Board of Trustees.

I am looking forward to meeting with you.

Respectfully,

Sarah Longaker
Executive Director

cc: K. Lee
M. Dermody

Maud W. "Jill" Walker Family Resource Center
1090 So. Rock Blvd. • Reno, Nevada 89502 • (702) 856-6200
FAX: (702) 856-6208

The Children's Cabinet, Inc.

1090 South Rock Boulevard • Reno, NV 89502 • 702/856-6200 phone 702/856-6208 facsimile

History

The Children's Cabinet, Inc. was established in December, 1985 as a private, non-profit organization to "fill the gaps" between existing services to children in Nevada and the creation of new programs and resources for families. Its mission is to create a lasting community-wide cooperative effort between the private sector and governmental agencies to address the needs of children and their families.

The Children's Cabinet was initiated by bringing together key public officials serving youth in Nevada, and prominent business leaders to form a high-level "Cabinet" to address the needs of children. This unique public/private structure provides the organizational strength behind the Cabinet's success in coordination of services, resulting in an improved service delivery system with a special focus on prevention and intervention activities.

Children's Cabinet "Campus" of Services

The public/private organizational structure of the Children's Cabinet has resulted in a Campus of buildings and services, located in southeast Reno, accessible by public and private transportation. In 1991, Washoe County Social Services built an emergency shelter for abused and neglected children, "Kids Kottage," directly behind the Cabinet's Family Resource Center. Children placed at the shelter are able to remain in their home school while family situations are carefully assessed and appropriate health and social services are provided.

In 1992, Washoe County Juvenile Services opened an emergency shelter for "status offender" youth, also located directly behind the Family Resource Center. The 24-bed shelter provides a variety of services on both a non-residential and residential basis to youth who have run away from home, are beyond parental control, are truant or who otherwise are in need of supervision and services.

In 1996, a fourth building will open on the Children's Cabinet Campus: Kids Kottage II, a second shelter for abused and neglected children. A long-term strategic plan for the Campus includes development of additional acreage as a "mall" to accommodate requests from other children and family-serving agencies to provide services on site.

LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

Nevada

The Children's Cabinet established the state's first independent Family Resource Center to serve as the focal point in the community for public and private services to children, youth and families. The Cabinet responded to requests from two other communities to duplicate this model, and "spun off" two independent organizations as a result: the Family Cabinet (Las

Vegas, NV) and Children's Cabinet at Incline Village (Incline Village, NV).

Building on this success Cabinet staff and trustees worked with the Governor's office to develop draft legislation to provide funding for developing of a network of Family Resources Centers throughout Nevada. Upon successful passage, service providers in Washoe and the rural counties made their recommendation to the Department of Human Resources that the Cabinet to act as the Local Governing Board, administering the Family Resource Center funds, and providing technical assistance and training.

These Family Resource Centers have been identified by Nevada's Public Health Foundation as key to the success of reducing teen pregnancy rates through serving as Community Action Teams in that effort.

National

In 1992, Washoe County, NV became the fourth M/CAP site in the nation. The Missing and Exploited Children's Comprehensive Action Program (M/CAP), is a national training and technical assistance program, funded through a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Through this training Washoe County developed and implemented strategic plan to effectively respond to the needs of missing, exploited, abducted (and otherwise abused) children. This plan has been updated once and the multi-disciplinary team continues to work toward meeting the goals set forth.

The Cabinet's Executive Director has worked as a consultant to M/CAP, representing nonprofit/ community based sector, and facilitating the development of multi-disciplinary strategic plans. Since January 1993, she has participated in on-site assessments and/or implementation training in eight states: California, Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Colorado, Louisiana, South Carolina, Missouri; an assessment of Hawaii is scheduled late Spring/early Summer.

The Children's Cabinet has served as Northern Nevada's contact point and liaison with the Children's Defense Fund. Coordination of press and media events to announce CDF's annual publication, State of America's Children, has resulted in wide-spread coverage and increased awareness. The Cabinet took a leadership role in initiating a local response and community awareness of CDF's national Stand For Children day, June 1, 1996.

Taking the lead in forming policy discussions on Block Grant impact in Nevada, the Cabinet initiated a Federal Issues Forum in 1995. Recommendations emerging from this group have been integrated into state planning efforts. Publication of a "*Federal Issues Newsletter*" is underwritten by the Cabinet.

International

Judges presiding in Family Court in various African countries toured the Children's Cabinet Campus as part of their training at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in Reno. Citing an increase in contentious custody cases and substance abuse, they identified the Children's Cabinet model as an effective strategy for coordinating services and information sharing.

The Program Director for the Cabinet's Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Library, is scheduled to participate in the U.S./South Africa Joint Conference on Early Childhood Education in August, 1996, bringing her background in early childhood education and substance abuse prevention materials as a resource to those groups.

Community Initiatives

The Children's Cabinet, serving as the as lead agency, along with the Forum for a Common Agenda, is overseeing the coordination and development of a community-wide strategic response to alcohol and substance abuse in Washoe County. Funding initially through a technical assistance grant from Join Together, a Boston-based organization, this effort has resulted in thousands of actual and in-kind dollars being committed to the project.

The need for meaningful, quality placements for pre- and post-graduate university students resulted in the development of a formalized Internship Academy at the Children's Cabinet, where students are matched with programs and activities that meet their educational goals and community service needs.

Innovation

The Children's Cabinet has also placed great emphasis on developing new programs to address the identified gaps in available services. During the last ten years, the Cabinet has developed highly successful pilot projects including the Centralized Assistance and Referral/Truancy Center, the School Early Intervention Program, the Homeless Youth Project, and Northern Nevada's first Family Preservation program to provide in-home family intervention where children are at risk of out of home placement.

While the Cabinet uses volunteers in all of its programs and administrative activities, several programs have been developed, managed and staffed using only volunteers, a somewhat unusual model. These include Project SWEAT (Sierra Wilderness Experience and Training), "RAD" Reach for the Academic Difference tutoring program (now staffed with one full-time coordinator), the Parent Education Network that coordinated parenting information and classes, and the Clothes Closet for foster and low-income children and their families.

Other innovative programs developed by the Children's Cabinet include the Healthy Beginnings Partnership, a group of forty local agencies working together to promote education, advocacy and expansion of resources to reduce perinatal substance

abuse and its effects on children and families. The Cabinet also houses the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Resource Library that serves as a statewide clearinghouse for drug abuse information and provides the public with alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention materials, as well as a video loan library.

Awards and Citations

The Children's Cabinet has received numerous local awards for its work, including the Agency of the Year Award (1991) from the Truckee Meadows Human Services Association, the Volunteer Organization of the Year from the City of Reno (1990-91), and the Kris Nagy-Johnson Award for Child Abuse Prevention/Treatment from the Child Abuse and Neglect Task Force (1990). National level awards include Citationist in the 1992 Points of Light National Competition, and an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (1990). The Cabinet's founder, Michael Dermody was recognized for his business and civic leadership by ChildHelp, USA (1993).

Publications

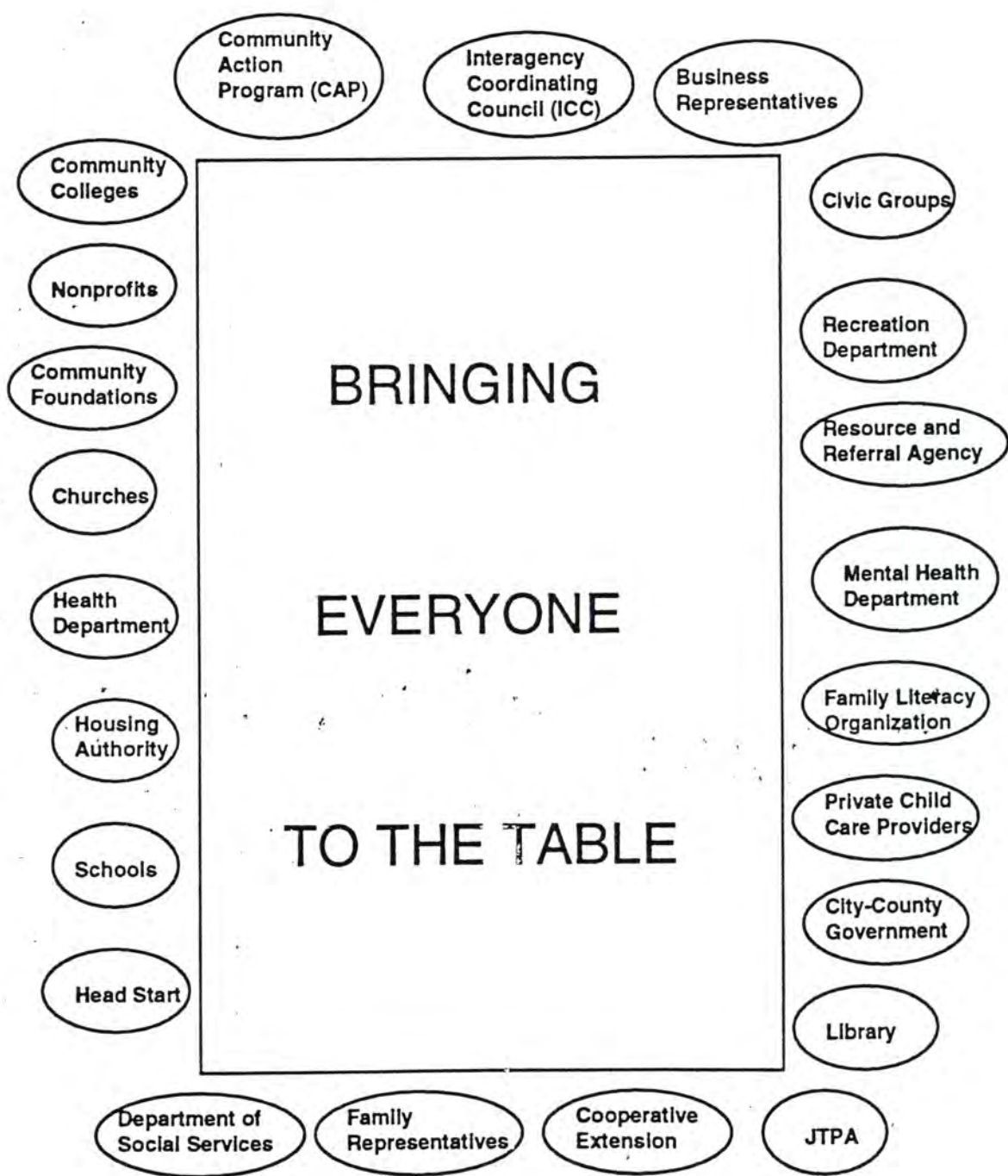
The Children's Cabinet has published a series of public policy documents that have been widely utilized throughout Nevada and the Western region. In January of 1989, the Cabinet published Nevada's Children: Our Most Precious Resource?, a collection of statistics and information about children in our state. In preparation for the 1991 Legislative session, the Cabinet published a "White Paper" on Nevada's Youth Gangs, outlining current data and trends and providing 53 recommendations for the community. This publication has been reprinted several times and continues to be used as a guide for gang prevention and intervention activities in Nevada.

In 1992, the Cabinet published a Summary of the Proceedings of the Summit Conference: Critical Choices for Nevada's Children. In March, 1995, another Cabinet publication was released to the Legislature funded by the Mental Health Foundation of Nevada: Summary Report: Mental Health in Northern Nevada. Summary findings and recommendations of the Truancy Prevention Task Force are scheduled for release Summer, 1996. The Cabinet continues to support production and development expenses of the *Federal Issues Newsletter*, distributed electronically throughout Nevada each week.

Funding

The Children's Cabinet \$2.25 million dollar budget is funded through a combination of public and private sources, including federal, state and local governmental funds, private foundations, service organizations, churches, corporations and businesses, individual donors, in-kind contributions of staff and equipment, and thousands of volunteer hours. In addition, the Cabinet has formed its own Foundation to manage its endowment fund that supports administrative and program activities. The Cabinet's finances are independently audited each year.

Notes



CHILDREN'S CABINET USA

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Children's Cabinet, U.S.A. is to promote the creation and implementation of community-wide cooperative efforts between governmental agencies and the private sector throughout the United States of America to address the needs of children and their families.

CHILDREN'S CABINET U.S.A.

Children's Cabinet U.S.A. is a private, non-profit organization based in Reno, Nevada, dedicated to the development of public/private community partnerships to serve children and families. Children's Cabinet U.S.A. evolved from the highly successful Children's Cabinet Inc. which began serving families in Washoe County, Nevada in 1986 in an effort to "fill the gaps" between existing services to children and the creation of new programs and resources for families.

The Children's Cabinet was initiated by bringing together key public officials serving youth in Nevada and prominent business leaders to form a high-level "cabinet" to address the needs of children. This unique public/private structure has resulted in a vastly improved service delivery system through a centralized Family Resource Center which served 10,880 families in 1993, utilizing public and private employees.

The Children's Cabinet has developed a number of programs to address the identified gaps in the local service delivery system. These include highly regarded model programs for truancy prevention and intervention, family counseling, parenting education, tutoring for at-risk youth, wilderness experience, child care resources, family preservation, youth gang prevention and intervention, substance abuse education and neighborhood centers. The Cabinet has attracted significant private investment in its programs and endowment fund based on its ability to deliver cost-effective services in a family-focused, positive atmosphere.

The Children's Cabinet has successfully replicated its model in several Nevada communities including a rural area of 8,000 residents (Incline Village, Lake Tahoe) and a major urban area, Las Vegas. The Cabinet has been recognized nationally for its innovative application of the public/private partnership concept. Officials were invited to testify before Congress during the Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice Act in 1993 and designated as a model program. In April, 1994, the Cabinet was featured in Senator Biden's report to the Senate Judiciary Committee as a national model program.

Children's Cabinet U.S.A. was formed in response to multiple requests for information and technical assistance in replicating this successful model of coordinating government services and developing private resources for children in an era of dwindling government service dollars and burgeoning family needs. The organizational structure of the public/private partnership approach has emerged as an answer to this dilemma and has encouraged many community leaders to search together for answers to the complex problems facing their communities today and in the years to come.

Services Available through Children's Cabinet USA

On-site Community Needs Assessment and Partnership Feasibility Study

The first step in developing a public/private partnership for children and families is to conduct a thorough analysis of a given community or service delivery area. A coordinated plan of implementation must contain two critical elements: 1) an assessment of the community's perceptions of its needs and 2) a feasibility study to determine if there is a sufficient level of support for the creation of a public/private partnership. Consensus is required or the process may prove unsuccessful.

Each community has its own vision of services needed for its children and families; each has its own personality in terms of leadership, talent and resources. Every community will need to develop an action plan that reflects local concerns and priorities, while featuring strategies and solutions that make sense given the unique political and economic environment of the community.

In order to effectively plan for the development of a public/private partnership, an associate of the Children's Cabinet USA Development Team will work closely with the designated leaders in a community via telephone and fax to define the process to be used to conduct an on-site community needs assessment and feasibility study for a selected geographic area.

In some cases, the geographic area may include multiple cities or counties; in rural areas it may be better defined as a region. The partnership model can also be adapted to address an entire state or used to address the concerns of a series of neighborhoods in a large metropolitan city. CCU staff will consult with the contracting entity to identify the most appropriate geographic boundaries to be considered during this initial phase.

The CCU Development Associate will then spend several days in the community, meeting with key individuals in the public and private sectors who are identified in consultation with the contracting entity. The Associate will describe the partnership concept and solicit viewpoints on the feasibility of developing a local partnership to address the critical family issues in the community. These confidential interviews will also be used to identify community perceptions regarding the most pressing issues which should be addressed by the partnership. While this process is highly subjective, these key individuals will typically represent an informed, active and vocal segment of the community whose support is essential to the partnership's success.

The Development Associate will also collect available local data about community needs and issues. These include existing needs assessments and inventories of services available through United Way or governmental entities; census information to identify population demographics; baseline data available through a variety of sources such as legislative studies, "Kids Count" projects or governmental reports.

Within one month of the site visit by Children's Cabinet USA, the contracting entity will receive a confidential written analysis of the community's perceptions of critical issues and the feasibility

of forming a public/private partnership for children, youth and families. This blueprint will serve to identify key individuals and groups which should be represented in the partnership, including private sector leadership, as well as a suggested implementation timeline and identification of potential resource opportunities to support the collaborative effort.

The cost for conducting the on-site community needs assessment and feasibility study is \$6,000 including travel and site visit expenses. The Children's Cabinet USA Development Associate will also be available via telephone and fax should clarification or discussion be needed prior to implementing the plan.

Curriculum-Based Training: Public/Private Partnerships

Training in specific areas of developing, implementing and maintaining a public/private partnership to address the needs of children, youth and families is available through Children's Cabinet USA, at the Children's Cabinet Campus, located in Reno, Nevada.

Training sessions are customized to fit the needs of individuals or community "teams" who are interested in a first-hand view of the model partnership in action. Communities may choose to participate in an intensive one-week training session which includes on-site visits with program staff and Partnership agency representatives. A 13-module curriculum specifically addressing the unique aspects of designing and delivering services through a public/private partnership model is presented. The curriculum utilizes a lecture/discussion format and includes worksheets which provide a detailed implementation framework for staff and board members upon return to their respective communities. The small group format also provides an important support and networking mechanism for those involved in this innovative collaborative effort.

The curriculum topics may also be used to design a specialized training and technical assistance program for communities who do not wish to enroll in the entire course. Each topic in the specialized training and technical assistance series is taught by an experienced professional who has been directly involved in the development of the successful Children's Cabinet model.

The five-day intensive training sessions are outlined below:

- Day 1: * Synergy of a Public/Private Partnership
 - * Identifying the Players and Common Purpose
 - * Structure Options and Development Steps
 - * Partnership Meetings
- Day 2: * Community Needs Assessment
 - * Identifying Priorities through Strategic Planning
- Day 3: * Resource Development
 - * Financial Management

Day 4: * Personnel Management
* Volunteer Development

Day 5: * Media Relations
* Evaluation
* Maintaining a Healthy Organization

Several informal evening “round-table” discussion sessions will be incorporated into the training sessions to take advantage of public and private sector networking opportunities.

Technical Assistance

Other specialized technical assistance may be negotiated with Children's Cabinet USA for special projects in contracting communities. Expert staff are available for on-site consultations focusing on specific areas of need. Technical assistance may be requested in the following areas:

- * facilitation of strategic planning sessions
- * program evaluation
- * internal agency audits
- * development of restructuring plan
- * staff recruitment and evaluation
- * staff training and team-building
- * planning or facilitation of meetings, conferences or workshops
- * resource development planning
- * development of media relations plan

Contracts are negotiated on an individual basis with the contracting entity in each community based on the scope of the services to be provided. Please contact Children's Cabinet USA for more details.

Cost Breakdown:

On-site Community Needs Assessment and Partnership Feasibility Study: \$ 6,000

Preliminary telephone work to plan on-site visit and 2-day on-site consultant fee: \$ 2,000
1-day consultant fee to analyze data and prepare report: \$ 1,000

CCU overhead charge: \$ 2,000 (includes long-distance telephone/fax charges, binding of reports, postage, support staff time for scheduling etc.) and travel expenses of consultant per travel policy, (travel expenses will vary but an average expense might be \$300 airfare, \$200 meals/one night hotel and \$50 car rental)

Contribution to Children's Cabinet Inc.: \$1,000 (10% of fee)

Curriculum-Based Training: \$ 6,000

Tuition charge for up to 10 participants: \$ 5,000
(\$800/day for consultant; \$200/day for CCU overhead which includes expenses for refreshments, lunches and transportation)
Contribution to Children's Cabinet Inc. for room, support staff time, on-site copies: \$ 1,000 (10% of fee)

This is break-even point whether we include up to 10 participants from one community or put together 10 participants from several communities by charging them individual fees as follows:

Tuition charge per person: \$ 1,000 (\$200 per day) If we get 6 people, we've covered our base costs. Any additional people will be extra overhead for CCU.

Travel, lodging and food (except for lunches) are responsibility of participant.

Technical Assistance: To Be Negotiated

The basis for negotiating technical assistance contracts is as follows:

\$ 1000/day consultant fee
25% of consultant fee for CCU overhead
Actual travel expenses

Outline of Curriculum Modules

- I. Synergy of a Public/Private Partnership
 - ** Philosophical overview of the model
 - ** Why it works
 - ** Creating a common vision

- II. Identifying the Players and Common Purpose
 - ** Search for key public sector leaders
 - ** Search for key private sector leaders
 - ** Interviewing potential participants
 - ** Group process and building trust

- III. Structure Options and Development Steps
 - ** Private, non-profit
 - ** Pros and cons of non-profit structure
 - ** Process of incorporation and tax-exempt status
 - ** Sample documents: bylaws, articles, personnel policies
 - ** Community advisory group
 - ** Pros and cons of informal structure
 - ** Who will do the work?
 - ** Location and space issues
 - ** Liability and insurance considerations

- IV. Partnership Meetings
 - ** How to run an effective meeting
 - ** Agenda and minutes
 - ** Keeping track of next steps

- V. Community Needs Assessment
 - ** Analysis of existing data
 - ** Survey of consumers
 - ** Identifying gaps and duplications

- VI. Identifying Priorities
 - ** Short and long-term goals and objectives
 - ** Strategic Planning: Annual Retreat

VII. Resource Development

- ** Identification of existing resources that can be brokered
 - 1) Financial
 - 2) Personnel
 - 3) In-kind contributions of expertise, equipment, space
- ** Grant-writing overview and skills-builder
- ** Utilizing the judiciary

VIII. Financial Management

- ** Effective budgeting
- ** Maintaining files and reports
- ** Oversight mechanisms
 - 1) Role of board Treasurer
 - 2) CPA
- ** Long-term financial considerations

IX. Personnel Management

- ** Hiring, rewarding and firing leadership staff
- ** Recruitment Issues
- ** Selection Process
- ** Training and management of staff
- ** Evaluation and incentives
- ** Development of benefits package
- ** Internal staff communications and motivation techniques
- ** Ensuring diversity

X. Volunteer Development

- ** Effective volunteer management
- ** "Buy-in" of the community
- ** Recruitment and selection process
- ** Training and "matching" volunteers
- ** Evaluation

XI. Media Relations

- ** Building a media network: Print, Television, Radio
- ** Placing "Good News"
- ** Minimizing the impact of "Bad News"
- ** Developing outreach mechanism through the media
- ** Nuts and bolts of preparing a news release or public service announcement
- ** When and how to host a news conference

XII. Evaluation

** Measuring Your Success

- * Defining success
- * Consumer surveys
- * Data analysis
- * Community feedback mechanisms

XIII. Maintaining a Healthy Organization

** Mechanisms of orientation and training of board members

** Leadership development

** External communications:

- ** Agency newsletter/magazine
- ** Annual reports

** Periodic "check-ups"

File C.C.
USA

Creating Neighborhood Family Centers

What To Do and How To Do It



Copyright May 1994
A Family Cabinet Publication
P.O. Box 12096
Las Vegas, Nevada 89112-2096
Phone: (702) 385-5437 FAX: (702) 989-7396

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I. INTRODUCTION

This publication is designed to be used for different purposes at different times by different people. In other words, we wanted to make this work as open for as many people to use as possible. Think of it as a guide instead of as a landmark set in stone. As you run into specific problems or want guidance about neighborhood services in your community, we hope you will find parts of this publication useful.

Our approach is grounded in the following assumptions:

- ° Individuals, families, and groups are human beings faced with a variety of problems that cannot be effectively dealt with separately. The same is true for a neighborhood since it is a system of families, individuals, groups, institutions, agencies, and organizations.
- ° Services which can bring solutions to individual and neighborhood problems should be comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and responsive to the needs of individuals, their families, and the total neighborhood.
- ° We recognize the family as a unit with its own integrity and we are especially concerned with strengthening and enriching the family so that all of its members may benefit.
- ° The neighborhood is a social, economic, cultural, and psychological entity, which has a great influence on the lives of individuals, families, and groups which are a part of it. Neighborhoods are also always changing, never staying the same.
- ° While needs of a neighborhood and its residents will change over time, there will always be a need for institutions serving that neighborhood to stay in touch with the people they serve; and
- ° A Neighborhood Family Center can help keep that connection over time as well as provide a link to the larger community.

This guide utilizes the ideas and techniques that we have found useful or that others have used to make their neighborhoods better places to live for everyone.

We consider this guide a "work in progress" and encourage you to call us for more detailed, up-to-the-minute information on any of the topics covered. Our phone number is (702) 385-5437, or you may fax your inquiry to us at (702) 898-7396.

II. THE FIRST STEP

In years past communities always had one thing in common, a "heart." Sometimes it was a church. Sometimes it was a school auditorium. Sometimes it was that one special family that always seemed to have enough room for neighbors every holiday. That "heart" is gone from a lot of places. Some people who have spent a long time studying communities have come to learn that it is this "heart," this special place, that is missing from new neighborhoods. Take away this "heart" and a neighborhood turns into a bunch of buildings.

We hope that you will work, as others have successfully worked, to build a new "heart," a new core, to turn a neighborhood around. This "heart" can be any place you choose. It's like a community family center where all members of the community can go to one place instead of rushing all over town to get the help and direction they may need.

It isn't easy to get one of these centers started, but those who have succeeded have helped make some of the toughest neighborhoods safe.

It starts when someone, sometimes just one person, gets neighborhood people involved. But remember, "if you think you can't change the world by yourself, join some people who agree." The following will help you get started.

One: Take stock regarding the people you want on your team. Sometimes your best friends are the most obvious members you'll find. An ideal group that is almost a guarantee of success would include representatives from local law enforcement, the schools, religious leaders, political representatives, public agency officials, existing resident and neighborhood groups, and local business persons and professionals.

Two: To avoid false starts and disappointments, think about what you want to get out of your involvement and how much time you are truly willing to put in. As a group, decide what you see as the strength of your community. Write down a few ideas that spell out where you want the community to be, and explain what you realistically want it to look like when you've put in your valuable time.

Three: Personal requirements of those you want in your group:

- 1) A healthy sense of self in order to avoid having to defend, protect, or prove themselves constantly;
- 2) Openness and flexibility - doesn't just put up with different ideas, welcomes them, recognizes that genius comes in all kinds of different packages;
- 3) Has a sincere interest in others;
- 4) A willingness to abide by community agreements - not just their way or the highway;
- 5) Once the group votes, a willingness to work for those goals the group has set;

- 6) A willingness to risk asserting oneself - taking initiative and, when necessary, disagreeing are as essential to healthy neighborhoods as the willingness to get along with others;
- 7) A commitment to see it through despite conflict, changing individual needs, and other demands on your time. Remember, the difference you make in your community may be the most important achievement in your life and the lives of your loved ones.

THE FIRST MEETING

There are a number of things you should take into consideration before calling the first meeting.

1. Purpose - Spell out to group members exactly why you are there and what it is you hope to accomplish.
2. Size - Recruit more members than you need because some are bound to drop out.
3. Time Considerations - Spell out how often and how long your meetings will be so that other people who are thinking of joining can make a decision on whether they can take part.
4. Format - It's up to you, but most successful leaders set an agenda listing goals and items they want to discuss at each meeting.
5. Individual Members - Different views should be considered as you set out to accomplish your goals. The group needs new ideas and new information, but it also needs to have enough in common to set aside arguments and get full participation of all members. Sometimes it makes it easier when people agree to keep what is said in the meeting room between members. It is also helpful when members agree to stick to a format and take ideas in a set order. Don't forget to include local political leaders, local office holders, and others who control resources. They can sometimes be of great help to you in getting your plans funded.
6. Change - No matter how carefully you plan, you can be sure of one thing: people, all people, change. That's true of the group too. That shows the group has a life of its own and signals the presence of a healthy, living system.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF YOUR GROUP

Just as people mature as they grow older, you can also expect to see your group of neighborhood crusaders to go through phases of development. The concept is that the community, like each of us as people, is a being which develops in phases.

PHASE ONE - Excitement. Getting high on possibilities.

PHASE TWO - Jockeying for Power. All kinds of groups in business, government, and social settings, pass through a similar "adolescent" phase before they enter a stable maturity. In this phase, you may need to encourage open communication and pay attention to both individual and group needs. If members feel free to talk about their ideas openly, they will then be able to move to the next phase of development.

PHASE THREE - Stability. Settling into Roles and Structures. Once members learn they can express themselves as individuals, even criticizing the group, and still be accepted, they will begin to relax their rigid stances. During this phase, accept your own, others, and the group's limitations and set about focusing on the task the group has set for itself.

PHASE FOUR - Development. Allow Yourself and the Group to Mutually Unfold. The group begins to take on a heart and soul.

PHASE FIVE - Transformation. Expanding, Segmenting, or Disbanding. In the last phase, a group undergoes a death and rebirth of sorts, either expanding the its identity, or splitting up into a number of smaller groups, or disbanding entirely and freeing its members to develop other connections.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOALS

It is important to everyone that goals be set for the following reasons:

- ° Gives you a solid game plan within the group, neighborhood, and community as a whole;
- ° Sets guidelines for work with individuals by program;
- ° Sets up the "goal line" for success;
- ° Helps create credibility for any fundraising efforts; and,
- ° Motivates members of the group and those who help.

Depending on neighborhood conditions and resident needs, your group may want to develop a mix of services and activities aimed at accomplishing the following goals:

- ° make the neighborhood safer and more secure;
- ° improve the quality, quantity, and type of services and activities provided;
- ° improve the quality of life of the residents;
 - ° better determine service needs and priorities;
- ° develop the Center as a community institution;
 - ° increase the capacity of the neighborhood and its residents to improve the conditions of their own lives; and
- ° reduce crime and vandalism.

In a culture like ours, people have a lot of demands on their time from family, work and friends, they tend to let memberships slide if they don't get built-in rewards or a good reason for spending their time. There is nothing wrong with setting short-term, specific goals to succeed so that you can go on succeeding.

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III. DETERMINING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD'S NEEDS

Prior to any decision regarding what and how services are to be provided for the neighborhood, a neighborhood assessment must be done. It is similar to a company's financial audit covering "assets" and "liabilities."

You should start with a question: What resources do we have to solve this problem ourselves? Rather than a neighborhood "needs" assessment, your first step is an inventory of the neighborhood's assets, capabilities, and abilities.

The key to building a good service delivery system for the neighborhood is first locating all available local assets, beginning to connect these assets with one another in ways that multiply their effectiveness, and harness local institutions to help that have not yet been tapped of their potential. In this way, you can first turn to the problem-solving capacities of the neighborhood's own residents, associations, and institutions.

Your overall goals should include:

1. Promotion of positive attitudes and actions by residents;
2. Encouragement for those individuals who become empowered and self-sufficient to remain in their neighborhoods;
3. Elimination of community isolation by developing linkages to the mainstream economy; and
4. Increased economic support by financial institutions, other businesses, and government.

There has been an upheaval in law enforcement in the last ten years of which you may not be aware - one that probably makes law enforcement one of your neighborhood's most important "assets."

This change is often called "community-oriented policing" (COP) and means that law enforcement now sees the neighborhood as a crucial ally in its war on crime. Police are now encouraged to get to know residents and help solve problems facing the neighborhoods rather than just dealing with the consequences or symptoms. This approach is being promoted from the Federal level through funding prioritization and such concepts as the "Weed and Seed" Initiative. This means that it is likely to spread as a philosophy and with it comes active involvement in neighborhood groups by local police.

Police can be of tremendous help in your neighborhood improvement efforts because of their ability to unilaterally change behavior (through arrests, etc.) and their ability to access other resources (public agencies and private service providers). They also bring to your group an ongoing commitment, stability, and governmental backing if you get them involved.

The next step is to identify what the neighborhood feels are the problems they face and what they would like changed. You and your neighborhood group are one source for identifying these concerns, but you need as much input as possible from the other residents and businesses so your "action plan" (see below) can be as comprehensive as possible to get the most buy-in from the neighborhood as a whole. A simple questionnaire to selected groups can be enough, but to ensure its usefulness, you may want to get expert advice on its construction and distribution from your local college or university. Public relations, advertising, or marketing agencies or departments are another resource for this type of expertise.

Once you have analyzed the information you have collected to determine the neighborhood's needs, your group is ready for the next step - an Action Plan. The following gives you a standard outline that you can follow in developing your plan.

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

What is Needed?

- ° social services
- ° health
- ° education
- ° housing
- ° employment
- ° training
- ° economic development
- ° community services

What Should Be Emphasized?

- ° service delivery
- ° community mobilization
- ° opportunities for improvement

What Types of Programs are Needed?

- ° education
- ° treatment
- ° rehabilitation
- ° compensation
- ° prevention
- ° recreation

What Activities Should Be Undertaken?

- ° counseling
- ° food stamp program
- ° family planning program
- ° headstart

- ° housing rehabilitation
- ° job training
- ° small business loans
- ° police-community relations program
- ° recreational programs

What are the Results Expected?

- ° number of residents served
- ° number and kind of services provided
- ° number of community mobilization activities organized
- ° number of economic and cultural opportunities created

What Impact will the Services have?

- ° changes in human behaviors
- ° changes in community conditions and quality of life
- ° changes in resources available
- ° changes in institutional behaviors
- ° changes in resident values and attitudes

How do You Measure Change?

- ° overall crime rates drop
- ° physical appearance of the neighborhood improves (debris and graffiti)
- ° lower unemployment rates and increased business activity
- ° drop in alcohol and drug-related crimes as well as domestic violence incidents
- ° survey of attitudes shows residents more hopeful about themselves and more prideful about their neighborhood.

The focus of the Action Plan that your group develops should be on utilizing the resources within the neighborhood first. This is best accomplished by having as your goal the creation of your own Neighborhood Family Center which can serve as the centerpiece for your group's Action Plan.

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IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY CENTER

Neighborhood Family Centers can provide a wide variety of services:

- ° Community-wide information and referral assistance;
- ° A range of activities including, health, housing, employment, youth programs, education, legal services, economic development, and family counseling among others;
- ° A variety of approaches including delivery of services, mobilization of residents, and enhancement of opportunities;
- ° Different orientations including treatment, rehabilitation, compensation, and prevention;
- ° Different strategies including "core services" like outreach, intake, diagnosis, the direct provision of services and activities through programs provided to residents, and the indirect provision of services and activities to residents by referral to other agencies and organizations.

A Neighborhood Family Center:

- ° serves a neighborhood target area;
- ° delivers services and activities within the neighborhood it serves;
 - ° offers, either directly or by referral, a range of services and activities to individuals, families, groups, and the neighborhood;
 - ° involves neighborhood residents in decision-making and operation of the Center; and
- ° provides the support required to carry out needed services and activities.

By locating its facilities, services, and activities directly in the neighborhood, the Center improves.

- ° accessibility
- ° use
- ° response time
- ° efficiency
- ° coordination

The Center is a very special place in that it maintains a concern for neighborhood life as a whole. It should function as a crossroads in the neighborhood by bringing together individuals, families, groups, agencies and organizations from the larger community with the common goal of developing and maintaining a healthy and growing community life.

The basis of an effective Center is that it works closely with neighborhood people enabling them to lead meaningful and positive lives. The staff of the Center must have certain important qualities: a warm and friendly approach to people; a good knowledge of the neighborhood; a sound understanding of services; and an ability to help people achieve for themselves.

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V. THE LOCATION

What do you do first? Do you form a neighborhood group or find a potential site or facility for a center? This is a "chicken or egg" question, and the answer is . . . sometimes the chicken, sometimes the egg! Remember, neither can exist for long without the other.

The sequence of events in establishing the Center may be different depending on what came first. So the two situations will be treated separately in this Section.

IF YOU FORM A NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP FIRST

You need to recruit members to your group with the need to locate a facility in mind. Representatives from neighborhood financial institutions or their branch offices, religious leaders, local business persons, political leaders, local police representatives, and teachers can help be your group's eyes and ears regarding possible sites. With or without a center, you are probably going to need these people to give you input along the way. Once the group is formed, you can move on to addressing the Center's site.

With the help of the members of the group, your first step is to do an audit of your neighborhood's physical assets. You can make this easy and fun for your group if you get large-scale maps of your neighborhood from the relevant political jurisdiction (i.e., City, County, or State). Your group can then participate in completing this "asset" map by physically surveying the neighborhood in order to identify all potential facilities (vacant buildings, schools, public buildings, churches, etc.). Once the asset map is developed, you need to determine location availability and usefulness to zero in on the site with the greatest potential.

Foreclosed property is another possibility and the financial institutions can help you identify these. Another source is confiscated property (business, residence, or vacant lot) and law enforcement can assist you in locating any such sites in your area.

Finding a building is often a long, drawn-out process requiring considerable patience on the part of all involved. In order to avoid burn-out and disillusionment, the people working on this need to also have short-term goals. One such short term goal is the development and maintenance of a physical asset "directory" that will need to be updated from time to time. You might want to consider forming a subcommittee.

Also, because of the likely time required to find a permanent location, your group should consider interim, temporary sites such as a school, church, or a public or private agency office that already exist in the neighborhood. Schools are a natural focal point for any neighborhood organization not directly associated with crime prevention such as neighborhood watch programs. Normally, a school is either close to or actually located in your neighborhood, also serving the families who reside there. Another chief advantage is its physical assets which are usually underutilized. These assets include playgrounds, sports fields, auditoriums, and classrooms. The school's human resources are often equally impressive. Its PTA (or equivalent) is usually composed of activist parents who are ready and willing to work on neighborhood

improvement even if it doesn't directly impact on education. For this reason, in organizing your neighborhood group or forming a neighborhood center council, one of your first presentations should be to the local PTA.

The school principal is the key for use of the school facilities themselves. Principals usually have a large degree of autonomy in how they use their school's facilities. Unfortunately, this is both good and bad for neighborhood development since it means the potential use of school facilities will vary from school to school.

Prior to a visit to the principal, it is a good idea to call your local School Board and find out what the overall policy is regarding the use of school facilities. In this way, you will know beforehand how much leeway the principal does have, and it will make it more difficult for him or her to "pass the buck." In most cases, the principal will be very supportive and willing to assist your group in any way possible. Try to get him or her to serve in your group and add the school's assets to your neighborhood total. The principal is often able to bring in outside people and organizations to your group, especially social service agencies and political jurisdictions.

On the other hand, schools are best used for recreational pursuits and summer programs except for their use as Safekey (after-school) sites and homework preparation centers. These two uses are becoming increasingly important with the increase in single parent and two-wage-earner families. Still, the best use is for supplementing (or providing, where non-existent) the residents' recreational options. A different facility is usually needed to represent the "heart" of the neighborhood and provide the full range of services needed by the residents of your neighborhood.

The other facility normally found in or near your neighborhood that has much of the advantages of a school is the church, synagogue, mosque, or other house of worship. The local religious leader is someone that should be active in any neighborhood group, provided they are willing to operate in a non-denominational and non-judgmental way. Often, the local house of worship is an excellent site for programs, especially because it is used relatively less during the weekday. They also make excellent sites for daycare activities. The religious institution's legal status with the IRS also allows it to receive public funding if the funding is to be used for non-sectarian purposes (services open to all, regardless of race or creed). This issue may also restrict your group's ability to work with the local religious leaders, especially if their religious beliefs make it impossible to support certain services, i.e., family planning, sex education, male/female equality.

However, the diplomacy required when dealing with the local neighborhood religious community is well worth it because of the tremendous potential of the building but also the human and fiscal resources of the congregation.

A word of warning - often, groups jump at the first chance for a facility or site and then become totally focused on that as their goal. The high failure rate experienced by groups when

trying to nail down a specific facility or build on one site means that your group should keep all options open and always look for other sites. This is another reason that a specific subcommittee of the group should be used because it can focus on a building without side tracking your group's overall mission.

Ultimately, your group also has to come to a decision whether it needs to take over ownership of the Center - or if it can be someone else's ownership that can be facilitated by your group. Your group needs access to legal advice in this and other areas because ownership may require the need to form a legally independent entity that is tax exempt. A lot of different concerns come from a decision to own the facility. It needs to be looked at very seriously - as a general rule, such a step should be one of the last (not first!) steps your group should consider. Utilizing other like-minded agencies and organizations that have existing legal identities is one way to avoid this problem which brings a long list of financial and legal obligations to you and your group.

This information may make the quest for a location seem overwhelming if your group is just starting, but it also gives you a common purpose and the ability to bond as you go through the trials and tribulations of such an undertaking together.

IF YOU ESTABLISH THE CENTER'S SITE FIRST

If you already have a location - congratulations! You have leaped the biggest hurdle to success. Your group should still do some of the tasks mentioned above, such as the asset mapping, because you will need that information anyway. Also, the group's legal status and role in the Center's operation become immediately compelling questions to answer.

If your neighborhood group is new or has not yet even been created, you can very effectively use the physical location as a rallying point for action and a reason to get together. However, you need to quickly recruit someone with property management expertise or quickly work with an agency or organization that can be relied upon to manage the property.

The danger at this point is that your group loses sight of original purposes for the Center and becomes, in fact, a "property management" group that makes decisions solely on these grounds rather than the original, broader goals of improving the neighborhood.

Establishing an oversight subcommittee is one way to avoid this by assigning supervision of the day-to-day operations of the Center to this group that periodically reports back to the main group on this aspect of the Center.

The overall goal of this subcommittee (or the group as a whole, if newly formed) should be to share expenses and duties whenever possible with service providers and other organizations or people with resources. The arrangements could include the assignment of actual personnel, donation and/or maintenance of equipment and supplies, and/or a budgeted amount to go toward general support. Sharing these costs not only helps spread the financial burden, but

constitutes the surest way to get organizations and agencies to buy into your group. If they put money into the Center, they can be relied upon to play a more active role in its operation.

A FINAL COMMENT

Be ready to say NO! Sometimes a location has everything against it but its availability and that availability turns out to be irresistible. More than one group has been destroyed because it became saddled with a white elephant of a facility or site! Your group must have a vision beyond just acquiring the use of a facility and have the will to resist the temptation of accepting whatever becomes available regardless of its appropriateness. This doubly applies to the actual use of any facility. Your group should assess potential users of the facility equally critically.

Realistically, if you don't have a likely prospect at the beginning of your neighborhood group, you should target 18 months as your goal for locating the best permanent site for your Center.

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VI. FINDING THE SERVICES AND FUNDING

FINDING THE SERVICES

United Way is a good starting point for determining what services are available in the larger community that may be available for your neighborhood. Public agencies often have service directories or know of those that apply to their specific area of interest (such as aging). Your local public library can help your group identify what potential service delivery resources are out there. Your telephone directory lists public and private human care services. In some communities, the local information and referral agency produces a hard copy directory. A college or university in your town often knows of services available outside of the community.

Even with all these potential information sources, this is a deceptively difficult area that may require a lot of work by a subcommittee of your group. It will be extremely rewarding on a short-term basis as you are able to find a service provider and collaborate with others to implement a needed service in your neighborhood.

This search function needs to be a permanent, ongoing task for your group!

FINDING THE FUNDING

At some point, your group will come up against financial barriers to the objectives you want to accomplish. The modest means required to provide support and sustenance to your group can usually be generated fairly easily through support from a local business or two (bank branch, for example) and/or bake sales or direct appeals to members. Often if there is involvement by a public agency, that agency can provide office support for mailouts and materials, etc.

Trying to find funding for what your group sees as a priority (expanding or providing a much needed service, facility, or a one-time event) means that once you embark on this path, your group will be transformed and will experience pressure to become more formalized, up to and including, becoming its own legally distinct non-profit and tax exempt organization.

Usually, this step should be avoided as long as possible unless and until it is the only way to attract the kind of funding required for your group to accomplish its objectives. Until that point, it is better to work with existing agencies that already have the legal status. Your group can jointly support requests for funding with these groups who either have similar objectives or are willing to include yours in their requests for funding.

To avoid bogging down the total group in these issues, your group should appoint a subcommittee to look at funding and financial support issues. It can then periodically report back to the group as a whole. The people on this subcommittee should be those who have the most business-like approach. Your group needs them to protect it from not only unrealistic expectations but also the potentially expensive ideas enthusiastically pushed by one or more

individual group members or a partner agency. This subcommittee must be both able to and willing to say no in situations where it is personally or politically awkward for the group as a whole and/or its individual members to do so.

If managed correctly, this subcommittee can counterbalance the weight of a leadership that may otherwise become dictatorial. On the other hand, if the capacity building is being driven by public agencies or the neighborhood's political leadership, then this subcommittee (Executive Committee, Leadership Council, etc.) could become extremely important with adequate local political representation and public agency involvement .

Your group also needs to get the neighborhood's political leadership involved if it decides to seriously pursue funding for neighborhood projects and programs. In this way, your group can find out about local, state, and federal funds that can be applied for to help your own neighborhood capacity building. Don't expect immediate results, however, since typically it takes some six months before the funds will become available from the date you submit an application. This is another reason why your group needs to set objectives that can be met in the short-term in order to keep the enthusiasm high and continue to expand the group. One of the most effective techniques for the short-term is to piggy-back on the future plans of existing public and private agencies. If your group fosters collaborative efforts and works to bring in new services, there can be neighborhood progress that is fueled out of funds already in agencies' budgets.

This approach does require your group to be inclusive and open to bringing in "outsiders" to your neighborhood. This also means your group will have to share decision-making, because those who bring in resources inevitably also bring an expectation of some role in policy-making and determining how these resources are best utilized.

The private sector is also a ready source of funding if you have the right package to sell. One of the best sources here may be your local United Way. Typically, the United Way entertains funding requests once a year and often any "new" request it funds will be at a modest level. Since most United Way funding goes to sustain existing agencies, an alternative approach is to find one of those agencies and work with them in developing a service or program that can be added to their ongoing programs with the hope that United Way will increase the agency's overall funding to cover it. Even though any such allocation to your neighborhood from United Way is likely to be modest at first, it is very important to establish a relationship with United Way. Over time, these funds will usually increase and normally stay very stable. In addition, the United Way Board and other volunteers are usually key leaders in the community and can be of help to your group in other ways.

Public monies are typically more difficult and time-consuming to obtain and involve a lot of paperwork and detailed applications. Most political jurisdictions, such as cities or counties, have departments that provide federal funding for neighborhood development. You can call them to find out what is required. If your group decides to pursue such funding, it would be a good idea to recruit someone from a local institution of higher learning as a member of your

group. He or she could provide you the expertise needed to meet the public funding requirements for data collection and analysis. Someone with grant writing experience might be particularly helpful.

Both public and private funding through the proposal writing process is a gamble. If your group goes this route, expect a high failure rate. This is especially true until your group attains its first successful proposal. The alternatives include finding an "angel" who can and will cover your group's principal costs and provide any funding needed to meet your group's objectives. Another feasible approach is to become part of the line item budgets of agencies through the development of collaborative arrangements. By putting together enough of these agreements, your neighborhood's service needs may be met without your group having to jump through the many hoops required when applying individually for funding.

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VII. PROBLEMS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER

1. The "Founding-Member-Syndrome"

Sometimes founding members can gain too much power and begin to block the growth of the group. They can attempt to keep the group from making necessary changes to adapt to new circumstances. They may have difficulty including new members in decision-making and relinquishing responsibilities. The skills that leaders need as the group grows will change, and the founding members may not have the skills to make the transition. Please note that not all founding members exhibit the "founding-member-syndrome." Many continue to be wonderful resources, adept leaders, and skillful delegators.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Enlist other founding members' support to deal with the "problem" founding member and to help shift the leadership to other members.
- ° Write role descriptions and use responsibility charts to help clarify the changes.
- ° Give the "problem" founding member new responsibilities that utilize that person's particular strengths.
- ° Develop group rules that limit the length of the term for leadership positions.
- ° Institute rotating meeting chairs to give the spotlight to other members and to gain control over meetings.
- ° Develop a new leadership structure and open all positions for re-election or new selections.

2. Unclear or Disputed Leadership

They can elect leaders who are unqualified, for personal or political reasons. Groups also can develop factions and create situations where several potential leaders are trying to gain control of the group.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Change the leadership and decision-making system to one that encourages shared leadership and responsibility. Develop a rotation process for leadership. Encourage the use of committees where members have input into decisions. Vote on important decisions.
- ° Develop a role description for the leaders and make it part of the selection process.
- ° Develop an orientation program for new leaders and a training program for potential leaders.
- ° Look for leaders who are competent and "neutral," not identified with factions.
- ° Hold a group forum to discuss differing viewpoints when they start to split the group into sides. Use an outside consultant or a well-respected member to facilitate this session.

3. The 80/20 Rule Applies to the Group

This "Rule" states that in most groups, 80% of the work is done by 20% of the members. Groups can demand a lot of time from members, especially leaders. If the responsibilities are not shared among all members, those that do get involved can suffer from burn-out.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Slow down the process and prioritize them. Postpone plans that are least important or pressing.
- ° Rotate leadership positions.
- ° Sponsor member events that are just for fun!
- ° Get feedback from members on realistic expectations.
- ° Sponsor seminars on burn-out prevention and stress reduction.
- ° Focus on expanding membership in order to spread and share responsibilities more widely.

4. Hidden Agendas and Turf Issues

Competition can become an issue if members of the group begin to perceive the group itself as competition for funding, volunteers, or visibility. This issue can become immediately acute when the group begins to seek funding from outside sources. Being sensitive to members' funding needs and seeking grants limited to the group as a whole through partnerships may ease the tension. Be certain that local public or private funds given to such partnerships are not merely substituting for grants given to individual members in the past. Local funders need to understand the importance of this pivotal issue.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Arrange opportunities for the members involved to talk about their differences. Sometimes the cause of the conflict is attributable to misunderstandings.
- ° Facilitate a session to mediate differences or arrange a compromise.
- ° Explore the possibility of joint efforts and apply for grants specifically earmarked for such efforts.
- ° Assist groups to focus on "common ground" within the group and on the group's overall goals. Not all turf battles or competitive issues have to be played out in the group.
- ° Bring in a professional facilitator or mediator to hold sessions to build trust and reduce conflict.

5. Unfair Recognition and Treatment of Members

Involvement and recognition are interdependent. Members who get involved tend to be better informed and gain more power. Uninvolved members may lose interest and eventually leave the group. Sometimes, for political or personal reasons, some members can receive recognition out of proportion with their contributions.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Create opportunities for every member to be involved in some way.
- ° Clarify the membership agreement to set limits for minimum involvement.
- ° Rotate leadership positions, so that others have an opportunity to lead.
- ° Provide training sessions or experiences to help people who may be shy or feel they do not have the necessary skills to become more involved.
- ° Hold orientation sessions for all new members to establish clear expectations about levels of expected involvement.
- ° Provide opportunities for team-building, to increase group closeness and comfort.
- ° Recognize member contributions and accomplishments as frequently as possible.
- ° Develop a recognition program with clear criteria for awards and use individuals outside the group for the selection panel.

6. Staying on Course

Loss of the group's direction or focus or attempting to handle too many items simultaneously can cause members to lose interest and commitment.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Review the mission statement and use it to plan activities.
- ° Hold a seminar for members to discuss the mission statement and encourage members to suggest ways to bring the group back on track.
- ° Select strong leaders who have a clear commitment to the group's mission.
- ° Examine whether the group has fulfilled its mission and needs to disband or reassess its focus.

7. Challenges to the Group's Credibility

Groups gain part of their power by being seen as credible by the community-at-large and by leaders in business, government, and media. Adverse publicity can threaten this credibility. Such publicity can result from failed projects, improperly prepared reports, internal power struggles, and ineffective advocacy campaigns.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Get accurate information to all members immediately.
- ° Appoint one person to act as public spokesperson.
- ° If criticism is inaccurate, mount a public relations campaign to correct the inaccuracies.
- ° If criticism is accurate, acknowledge it as soon as possible and apologize for the error. Develop a concrete plan for correcting the problem and make it public.
- ° Develop a crisis communications plan and a crisis response team. Provide training as needed.
- ° Develop a planning and management system to avoid mistakes. Prepare contingency plans for all projects and monitor them carefully.
- ° Change leadership if the current leadership has lost credibility.

8. Unsuccessful Activities or Events

Despite the best intentions, some projects may not be successful. Publicly recognized failure has been discussed in the preceding section. This item deals with failures that are not catastrophic, but may have a demoralizing effect on the membership.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- ° Hold a debriefing session for the members involved followed by one addressing all the members.
- ° Study the causes of the failure and apply what is learned to future activities.
- ° Recognize any positive aspects.
- ° Look at the capacity of the group and adjust future activities to an appropriate level.
- ° Get feedback from outside objective sources.
- ° Organize simple activities with high probability of success to re-energize the group.

These eight problem areas represent some of the most difficult barriers that groups may face. They can be prevented through careful attention to group process. If these problems do occur, early intervention can prevent minor problems from turning into conflicts that can threaten the stability and effectiveness of the group.

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VIII. WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP

Occasionally, relevant local services won't be available, or the problem may require information or action outside the neighborhood-based services. The following is a list of common problem areas of this type. Remember, even in these cases, sometimes there is an agency or organization involved in the neighborhood that can help. However, if such a group isn't available, possible places to turn are listed opposite the issues listed below:

NOTE: These resources should be followed up only after you have tried your community's information and referral agency!

ADOPTION:

Contact your local child welfare office. Also, religious organizations often handle these cases and will be able to give information (i.e., the local Catholic Charities Society). For private adoptions, contact your state's Bar Association for a list of lawyers practicing in the adoption field.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE:

The State agency in charge of funding for programs in this area in your community is a good first step for information. Look in the phone book under state agencies or call "Information" at your state capitol.

BILINGUAL:

Your local or state Literacy Council should be of help. Also, the school district, local community college, or university may have programs or know of resources in this area. Your local courthouse may have a list of translators/interpreters for various languages.

BLIND: Your state agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired is the best resource. Also, there usually are local private organizations for the blind listed in the phone book.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

Local and state child welfare agencies have child protective service workers on call but the first contact by you could be the police. They can investigate and then involve other agencies as needed. Contact them through your local Child Protective Services hotline.

CHILD CARE:

Some communities have an agency that provides information and referral on licensed childcare providers. The phone book also lists providers who may or may not be licensed. Childcare providers are licensed by your city or county or state and you can ask them for a list or if a specific provider is licensed. Call the Business License Bureau to find out the right person to contact. Also, licensing is no guarantee that

the provider is capable of providing the quality care your want for your child. It still takes a visit and a thorough investigation in order for you to know.

CONSUMER PROTECTION:

Contact local Better Business Bureau for information. Usually, the state's Commerce Department also has a fraud unit. You may also get help at the local Legal Services office. The prosecutor's office may also have a fraud division.

DISABILITIES:

The state agency in charge of assisting those with disabilities is your best bet for finding out all the resources available. Look in the state agency listing in your phone book that lists DEVELOPING DISABILITIES, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, etc.

DISASTER:

Your local Red Cross Chapter is the first place to turn. Also, Salvation Army responds to emergency needs.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

Call 911 if life-threatening. Otherwise, the phone book will provide a 24-hour hotline to call for emergency shelter, if needed. They will counsel you on the steps to follow. Protective/Restraining Orders should be available at the courthouse.

EMPLOYMENT:

The State Employment Office is a logical first step. Also, there may be a specialized program for the disadvantaged. Look in the state agency listing in your phone book and call any that have "Employment" or "Job" in the title to find out what's available in your area.

FAMILY PLANNING:

Local health agency or public health clinic will be able to help. Also, Planned Parenthood can give you information and assistance. If all else fails, call the local hospital to find out who provides family planning in your area.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

The local State Welfare Office may be of assistance if it involves a child. Otherwise, county social services may be a resource. For special needs, a local private, non-profit agency may help. Contact your local United Way for a list of such agencies.

FOOD/CLOTHING/SHELTER:

Contact the Salvation Army, Goodwill, religious organizations, or local food bank for assistance and/or referrals.

HEALTH:

Local medical and dental societies can refer you to physicians and specialists. The

city, county, district, or state Health Departments can provide referral information or information on your specific health concerns. Some hospitals also provide physician referrals services as well.

MENTAL HEALTH:

Virtually every community has access to crisis intervention services dealing with those suffering an acute mental illness episode. First check the telephone book for listings for mental health crisis hotlines. Your local police may be able to refer you. If not, call your local hospital. For referrals and information on mental health generally, call the local medical society and/or the closest state or municipal mental health clinic or office. Valuable informal information can also be obtained from the nearest chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).

RECREATION:

Your local city or county recreation department has a master calendar of activities which will let you know what's available. Also, call your local Library District because they often schedule events for different age groups. For example, contact any of the traditional youth groups in your community, such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA/YWCA/YMHA, Police Athletic League, etc. Religious organizations such as the Salvation Army have youth groups as well as local churches. Also contact community centers in your area for any scheduled activities involving the ages you are concerned about. (For Seniors, see below.)

SENIORS:

Your local Senior Center is the best place to find out what is available. Your state agency for the aging is another resource -- especially if it involves abuse and neglect or problems with a residential placement.

SUPPORT GROUPS:

There is an overwhelming number of these groups in almost every community. They range from Alcoholics Anonymous to Parents Without Partners. The phone book usually lists many. Your local information and referral agency will have more. Your local newspaper will also list meetings of these groups. Often, the Volunteer Bureau will know of others. Finally, it may require a few phone calls to a relevant agency (such as your local hospital if it is health-related) to connect with the right group since most don't have offices.

VOLUNTEERS:

Contact your local Volunteer Bureau or call United Way to get information on who is helping recruit and place volunteers in your community.

This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of either the issues that may arise or the resources to which you can turn. Hopefully, it does help those looking in the issue areas that

are listed while providing, by example, the approach that can be used when troubleshooting the areas and issues not listed.

CALL OR WRITE FAMILY CABINET FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE TOPICS COVERED IN THIS SECTION PLUS A LIST OF SOURCE MATERIALS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

PHONE: (702) 385-5437 FAX: (702) 898-7396
ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 12096, LAS VEGAS, NV 89112-2096

IX MEASURING YOUR PROGRESS

You need to set up some way for your group to know how your projects are progressing, probably a way that gives them feedback on an ongoing basis. There are certain steps to follow in setting up such a system and these steps are described below.

Remember, you should put this tracking system into place before you initiate any specific action steps. It is very difficult and time-consuming to research and establish after the fact.

Any action your group takes should be evaluated to see whether it had the intended effect (positive or negative). Answers need to be sought for two basic questions:

1. What will change; and,
2. At what point should each change be expected?

The following describes the steps required to establish a performance accountability system for your group. It is ideally what your group needs to fully answer the above questions. Obviously, modifications will be needed in most cases to fit your own group's real world situation.

1. Are your goals and objectives stated clearly? Are they realistic and measurable?
2. How can progress toward these goals be measured? Most crucial and difficult part -- must settle for approximate measures.
 - a. The trick is to find existing data, or data that can be collected relatively easily and cheaply, that will come the closest to measuring the outcomes desired by your group.
3. How will the information generated be reported and used?
 - a. Reports should be organized around goals of your group or service providers, and whether or not targeted groups are being reached. Also cover who, what, where, when, and how. Also need a brief description to remind how the programs are supposed to work as well as a frame of reference to gauge progress--are things better or worse since the last report?
4. How can the Center's overall development and specific program operations be coordinated to promote synergetic outcomes?
 - a. Program and Center coordination will be needed because you need to measure the effects of different programs on the same target groups in the neighborhood.
 - b. You also need to spot when programs appear to work at cross-purposes.
 - c. Your group's ultimate strategy needs to be based on linking neighborhood goals with changes in the lives of individual residents.

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X. FAMILY CABINET'S BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY

BACKGROUND

Children's Cabinet is a multipurpose program with its own building and medical clinic. It was started in 1986 by a collaboration of public and private agencies in the Reno area. It has since expanded to service all of Northern Nevada and has become, in the last 10 years, a nationally recognized model for multipurpose and coordinated services for children and their families.

In 1992, a consortium of Southern Nevada community and business leaders created the Children's Cabinet of Southern Nevada as an independent organization with its own Board of Directors. Subsequently, the Board perceived that the focus of the organization should be a concern for all members of the family. In an effort to foster public awareness of its new objective, Children's Cabinet of Southern Nevada officially became Family Cabinet, Inc.

Family Cabinet soon became involved with helping neighborhood groups in setting up neighborhood multipurpose centers. Out of this effort came the obvious need for written guidelines for other individuals and groups concerned with reclaiming their neighborhoods.

This Handbook is best seen as a work-in-progress because, as Family Cabinet continues to facilitate with other neighborhood collaborations, it will continue to learn and add to future versions of this handbook in order to pass on the "best practices" in this field.

PHILOSOPHY

Americans have always led the world in taking personal responsibility for bettering not only themselves but also their communities.

The Neighborhood Family Center is grounded in the same spirit of cooperation and collaboration found in the American Midwest barn-raising parties of the 1800's and the flowering of voluntary organizations such as United Way in the 1900's.

The Center is a third generation result of similar enthusiasm because it acknowledges that it is no longer possible for only the voluntary sector to provide a neighborhood the support structure it needs. Now, the overwhelming nature of the problems facing neighborhoods at risk requires a coordinated response by both the private and public sector.

The Center fosters not only doing good and helping your less fortunate neighbor, but also providing that help in a smarter way. We can no longer afford fragmentation of services, duplication of agency efforts, and inefficient use of private resources.

The Center's philosophy also takes a page from modern business practices by focusing on customer needs (resident surveys and involvement in neighborhood groups) and performance results (outcome measures, customer satisfaction, neighborhood and community social indicators such as crime rate, etc.).

Another key component of the Center's philosophy is that you build on success, not failure. In other words, your first job is to identify what works, support its expansion, and then find ways to apply the same successful principles to other areas.

In summary, the Center's overall philosophy can be called asset-based, internally-focused, and relationship-driven.

Asset-Based

Even in the most devastated neighborhoods, the materials needed to start down the path toward economic wellbeing are present and can be used.

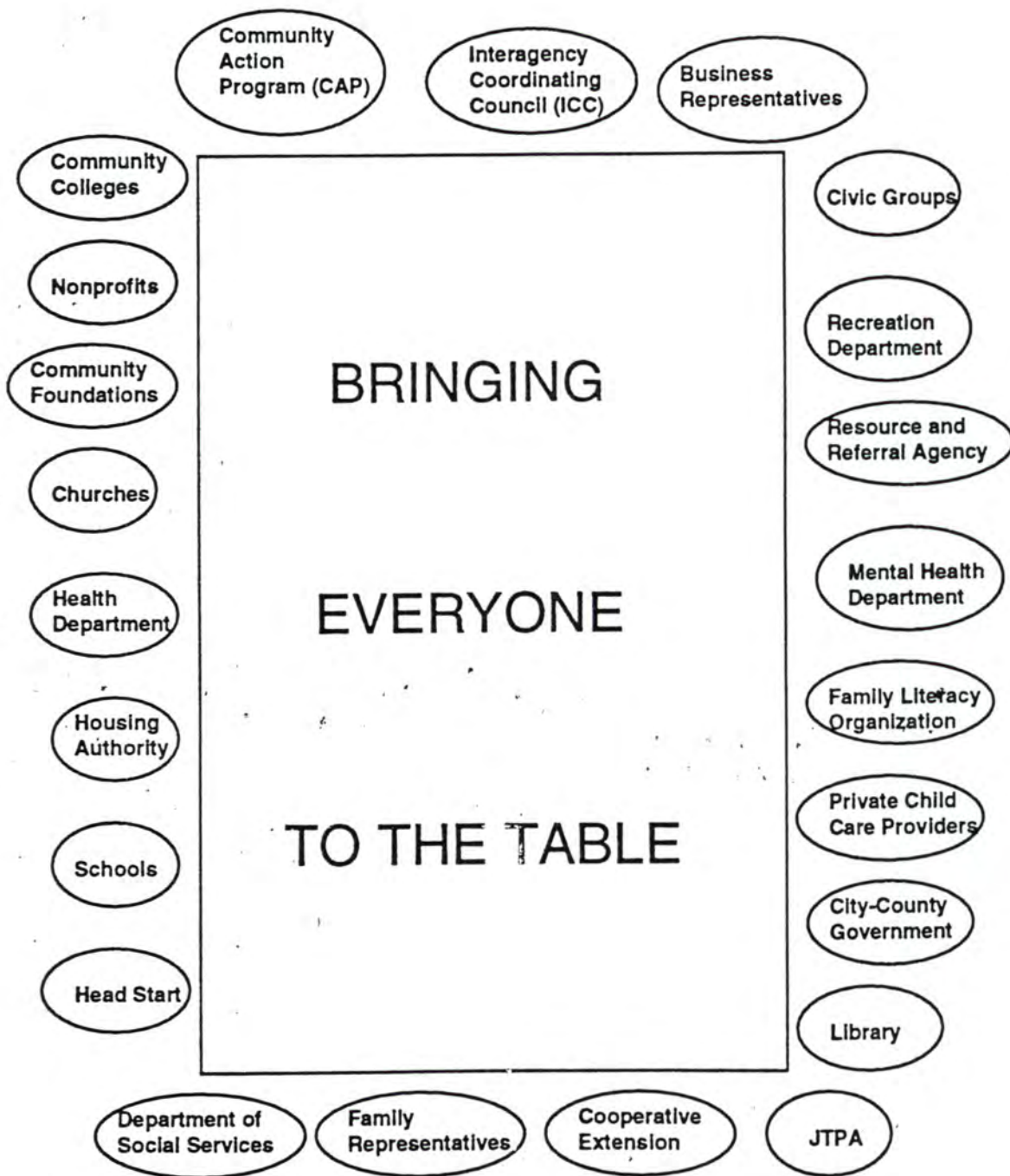
Internally-Focused

Local residents, associations, and institutions set the agenda, select the right strategies, and establish and update the work plan.

Relationship-Driven

One of the real challenges to asset-based community development is the need to constantly build and rebuild relationships between neighborhood residents, associations, and institutions and people outside who want to help and coordinate the activities and make the most of available and potential resources.

Notes



Notes

