



THE COLLABORATIVE CONNECTION

A Publication of the Healthy Families ♦ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council

November-December 2006

GIP Reduces Latino Gang Violence in the District *Columbia Heights/Shaw Collaborative Managed Partnership*

Latino gang violence and gang-related homicides have dramatically declined in the District of Columbia, according to an evaluation report on the Gang Initiative Partnership (GIP) that was released at the mayor's weekly press conference on November 15 in Columbia Heights.

GIP was launched in 2003 in response to a series of gang-related homicides between 1999 and 2003. Metropolitan Police Chief Charles Ramsey established the program with support from Ward 1 Councilmember Jim Graham in partnership with community organizations, including the Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative (CHSFSC). The objective was to stem the tide of Latino youth violence in the city.



Gustavo Velasquez, Mayor's Office of Latino Affairs, talks to reporters at the mayor's press conference.

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The report indicates that the number of youth shot or stabbed in the Columbia Heights/Shaw neighborhoods dropped from 40 in the four-year period before GIP (summer 1999 – summer 2003) to five in the three years since GIP was created (August 2003 - August 2006). In the four years preceding GIP, 21 young people died as a result of the 40 violent attacks. Since GIP was introduced, just one of the five shootings/stabbings resulted in loss of life and each of the shooting cases were closed by MPD within 48 hours.

In addition to reducing violence, the report finds that GIP has achieved each of its other four major goals –

decreasing gang membership; reducing the number of gang-related suspensions in targeted schools; increasing the involvement of at-risk youth in recreational and other productive activities; and building community capacity and consciousness about gangs.

GIP stakeholders include the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Gang Intelligence Unit and Latino Liaison Unit, US Attorney's Office, Office of the Attorney General for DC, Superior Court Social Services, Court Services and Offender Supervision

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HHS Grant will Fund New Collaborative Fatherhood Program

The Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative Council has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to implement the Fatherhood Education, Empowerment and Development Program (FEED), a voluntary initiative designed to promote responsible parenting by:

- Removing barriers that prevent fathers from being involved with their children
- Training men on skills to help them become responsible fathers

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Oversight Hearing: CFSA Preparing to Exit Court Supervision

At the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) performance oversight hearing before the DC Human Services Committee on October 4, 2006, Uma S. Ahluwalia, CFSA interim director, acknowledged that the agency will not be ready for court exit by December 31, but said, "CFSA has made enormous measurable progress over the past eight months. We are about to enter into negotiations with the *LaShawn* plaintiffs regarding an exit strategy . . . to leave court oversight of child welfare."

The agency was placed under Court supervision in 1995 following a class action lawsuit (*LaShawn A v. Williams*) filed on behalf of children in the city's child welfare system. For more information on *LaShawn*, the implementation plan, and reports, visit <http://cfsa.dc.gov>.

Ahluwalia said that discussions with the plaintiffs and court monitor are only possible because the agency achieved tangible results from improvement strategies implemented in the second half of fiscal year 2006. She said that CFSA continues to move children to permanence more quickly through family stabilization and reunification, guardianship, and adoption, indicating that in FY 2005, 1,232 children reached permanence, and through August of this year, another 965 reached permanence. She also said that in FY06, the proportion of out-of-home cases exceeded that of in-home cases for the first time, which "reflects reformed practices such as referring low- and moderate-risk cases to the Collaboratives, moving more children to permanence, and closing cases safely rather than allowing them to linger in the system for years."

Ahluwalia told the committee that over 90 percent of children that the agency serves continue to be African-American, and that the number of older children, ages 12 to 21, in the system is growing. "In December 2002, this population was just less than half our caseload, but by August, 2006, it had grown to almost 62 percent," she reported. Ahluwalia said that this is due in part to "the District child welfare system's past failure to achieve permanence for some of these children . . . and a changing demographic." She noted that over 37 percent of children now entering foster care are over age 12.

With respect to agency performance, Ahluwalia pointed to 10 performance indicators (see chart below) that the agency tracks regularly, stating that CFSA's performance is strong on seven of these indicators, shows steady progress on two, and needs corrective action on only one. "In the growing number of areas where CFSA has achieved strong performance, we now face the challenge of sustaining it . . . [and] in the declining

number of areas in which we still need to improve, I am confident that strategies now in place will move the agency to higher performance," she said.

Collaborative Council Testimony

Testifying on behalf of the Collaboratives, Eugene Kinlow, Collaborative Council vice president, said, "The Collaboratives are committed to strengthening our relationship with CFSA as we provide front-end services to families diverted from the system and assist the agency in meeting its benchmarks and fulfilling our jointly held mission." Kinlow noted that the \$1.8 million earmarked in the CFSA FY07 budget to support the work of the Collaboratives will serve 550 families in a new case category established by CFSA of families who have been investigated by CFSA and have been classified at a low to moderate risk level using CFSA's structured decision-making process.

Kinlow said that the Collaboratives, working with the Urban Institute, have established a framework for a research agenda that will assemble data and help show that the Collaboratives have helped decrease the number of children in the child welfare system.

Finally, Kinlow said that the Collaboratives are working with CFSA to determine how the agency can invest more resources in front-end services, and have already agreed to:

- Co-locate CFSA in-home staff with the Collaboratives, but have not agreed on a specific model.
- Share training models, the Family Development Credentialing program, Family Group Conferencing, and solution-focused training with CFSA staff.
- Share practice model by integrating the Collaboratives' logic model and practice principles with those of CFSA.
- Assist CFSA in establishing family support workers as a strategy to strengthen its practice model.
- Focus on best practices and examine models

of how other states have increased their

investment on the front end.

Copies of both the CFSA and Collaborative Council testimony are available at www.hftcc.org.

	December 2005		August 2006	
	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
1. Achieving permanence	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
2. Administrative Reviews	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
3. Internal quality improvement	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
4. Case plans for foster care cases	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
5. Case plans for family/kinship care cases	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
6. Monthly visits to children in foster care	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
7. Licensing foster homes	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
8. Timely investigations	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
9. Visits to children at home	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady
10. Placement	Strong	Steady	Corrective Action	Steady



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The Collaborative Council provides technical assistance, training and advocacy for a network of seven neighborhood-based Collaboratives in Washington, DC. These Collaboratives, each with its own governance board, offer a range of services directed toward strengthening at-risk families and building supportive communities so that all residents can reach their full potential.

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Collaboratives on the Web

The Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative Council has launched its Web site at www.hftcc.org. The site provides information on programs and services, as well as Collaborative profiles and links to each Collaborative's Web site. In addition, the site will include a calendar of events, and the ability to register online for Collaborative Council events.

Visitors will also be able to access current and past issues of the Collaborative Connection, the current Collaborative Council Annual Report, and other published documents.

If you have questions or suggestions about the Web site, please call 202-299-0900.

Fatherhood Program (from page 1)

- Reconnecting fathers with their children
- Strengthening the relationship between fathers and the mothers of their children
- Improving the manner in which social service providers relate to fathers
- Improving public perception of fathers as an essential part of the family unit.
- Fathering skill building
- Implementation of WatchDOGS (Dads of Great Students) in District of Columbia elementary schools
- Internship opportunities
- Training for community-based organizations and social service staff to work effectively with fathers
- A public awareness campaign on the importance of fathers and responsible fatherhood

The program will serve fathers of children residing in all eight wards of the District of Columbia.

The Collaboratives have been assisting fathers under the DC Fatherhood Initiative since 2004, under a grant from the DC Department of Human Services. "Federal funding will enable the Collaboratives to provide new services that not only help fathers but help organizations and frontline workers improve communication with and service to fathers, which will have a positive impact on children," said Jacquelyn Henry, executive director of the Collaborative Council.

The grant amount is \$2.5 million over five years.

Elements of the program include:

- Intensive case management to connect fathers to housing, employment and other social services

Collaborative Annual Conference Rescheduled for April 2007

The Collaboratives' First Annual Conference and 10th Anniversary Celebration, which was scheduled for October 12-13, 2006, was cancelled due to student protests on the campus of Gallaudet University, where the Kellogg Conference Hotel is located. The events have been rescheduled as follows:

Conference

April 26-27, 2007
Kellogg Conference Hotel
800 Florida Avenue, NE
Gallaudet University
Washington, DC

10th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, April 26, 2007
6:00 pm
Thursday, April 26, 2007
Kellogg Conference Hotel



Barbara Shorter



Barbara Shorter, intake coordinator, Far Southeast Family Support Collaborative, said, "I am a parent of this Collaborative because I helped give birth to it." Shorter one of the community residents who helped start FSFSC.

Focus on Fathers

Fathers Across the City Graduate Quenching Program

Fathers, mothers, children and others from across the city gathered in September for the graduation of men who completed the Collaboratives' Quenching the Father Thirst program. The 12-week program trains men to become responsible fathers/father figures that love, know, and guide their children to success. It addresses the role of fathers, systemic barriers to fathering, and provides training in specific skills to help men to become the fathers that their children need.

In opening remarks, Tony Dugger, director of community engagement, North Capitol Collaborative, Inc., cited statistics on father absence and said that the two top reasons for father absence are substance abuse and incarceration. "Are you willing to stand up, 'fess up, and make up the missing time from the lives of your children?" Dugger asked fathers present at the event. Dugger pointed to the father of Mayor-Elect Adrian Fenty as an example of a father who prepared his son to become the mayor.

Keynote speaker Al Way, regional director of the National Center for Fathering, told graduates that there are things that must be done to sustain the momentum:

- Be encouraged and stay encouraged and learn how to encourage yourself. Be an example. I am passionate because the curse has got to stop here. You can break the generational cycle. You must set the pace for the next generation. Fatherhood is not a practice; it is show time.

Fatherhood is the most important civil rights issue. Women and children benefit when fathers are uplifted.

- Become an ear for your children. Take the time to listen to them. When we give a child our ear, it is a gateway to their heart.
- Be an educated Dad. Take the time to read. Readers become leaders.
- Be engaging. There is no excuse for us not to be. Your hope is in what you can do. Don't focus on your past, throw away your history.

At the end of the program, several fathers shared their feelings about the Quenching program. "It has been a privilege and an honor," said one participant. "I was separated from my wife and four-year-old son before the program, and we are now back together. I grew up without a father and have made a promise that I will stand up and be a man," he said. Another participant said, "When I found out about this program, I had to leave the streets because I didn't want my children to follow in my footsteps. I am now working two jobs. I did not have a father to tell me how [to relate to] my children.

This program works," he said, "This program has provided me with a new way of dealing with my kids, and it has resulted in a whole different attitude in my son. I now believe that I am my son's light at the end of the tunnel."



Dad brings new baby to Quenching graduation.

ERFSC Establishes WatchDOGS at Kelly Miller

Thanks to ERFSC's implementation of WatchDOGS (Dads of Great Students) at Kelly Miller Middle School, men are providing positive role models for all children at the school. The WatchDOGS program enables fathers or father figures such as grandfathers, uncles, or other male adults to volunteer at least one day at their child's school during the school year. The purpose of the program is to awaken fathers to the values and benefits of committed fathering and change the culture where every child has a father or father figure to connect with in a positive way at school.



Kelly Miller WatchDOGS members.

The Kelly Miller program activities included an informational session to discuss needs, dads accompanying children to their

homeroom on the first day of school, and dads volunteering with the school's landscaping. Robert Jones, ERFSC Marriage Initiative coordinator, and coordinator of the WatchDOGS effort, said that participants in WatchDOGS also helped Kelly Miller establish a PTA chapter at the school.



WatchDOGS volunteer to improve Kelly Miller landscape.

Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative

CHSFSC Celebrates 10 Years

By Elaine Pinson

There was much to celebrate as the Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative (CHSFSC) marked its 10th Anniversary on Thursday, October 26, 2006 at the True Reformer Building on U Street, NW. Over 150 current and former board members and staff, partners, supporters, friends, and members of the community came out to recognize the achievements and significant impact that CHSFSC has had on the community. Attendees were entertained by the Howard University Jazz Quartet and dined on Caribbean-themed fare provided by the Islander Restaurant.

Board Chair Beatriz "BB" Otero welcomed guests and honorees, taking the opportunity to talk about the accomplishments of CHSFSC of the last 10 years, but also to offer a challenge to work even harder and accomplish more in the next 10 years. While indicating that she is proud of the past and current accomplishments of CHSFSC, Otero noted that "twice as many families are homeless and twice as many families are not earning a living wage" and urged the audience to "hold a new administration to task." Otero said one of the great strengths and reasons for success of CHSFSC is "identifying and lifting up the natural leaders in the community" and providing "an environment where their leadership is recognized, built on, respected, and recognized in many of the same ways that people with traditional degrees are [recognized]. . . ." She also pointed out CHSFSC's profound impact on service delivery and building the



CHSFSC founding Board members Beatriz Otero, Harold Valentine, Priscilla Francis, Rosemary Akinmboni, Cleve Palmer, and Marian Urquilla, CHSFSC executive director

strengths of the community, rather than focusing on weaknesses, and reducing the number of children who come into the child welfare system.

The keynote speaker, Makani Themba-Nixon, echoed Otero's challenge to look to the future of CHSFSC. Themba-Nixon is an author and the executive director of the Praxis Project, a nonprofit organization that helps communities use media and policy advocacy to advance health equity and social justice. Themba-Nixon said, "This organization is not about resting on its laurels, but about the next 10 years," and quoted Martin Luther King, Jr., stating, "Our nettlesome task is to organize our strength into compelling power." While listing some of the many strengths of CHSFSC such as "family, folk, champions, and goodwill," she stated that the next 10 years would be about "how to move from a place of strength to a place of power...and developing an infrastructure for the Collaboratives." She urged the audience not to be afraid and not to step back from the power to "run things, which is the way it should be – residents and families running DC." Themba-Nixon invited the audience to imagine a future where individual families are transformed into a community of families fighting side by side for a better school system for all the children of the

District of Columbia and to envision what can happen 10 years into the future based on the achievements of the past 10 years.

Marian Urquilla has been the executive director for 10 years and said she is most proud of CHSFSC's growth from a two-person team in a cubicle at For Love of Children to a full-fledged neighborhood intermediary, and is looking forward to another decade of accomplishments and service to the community. During the evening, Urquilla was praised for her dedication, tireless work, and for never asking "anyone to do anything that she won't do herself."

CHSFSC presented awards to partners, board members, and staff. Jim Graham, Ward 1 councilmember, received a Change Worker Award for Community Catalysts. Graham said he felt the "power in this room" and remarked that CHSFSC from the beginning was "empowered in the roots of the community." He praised their response and their partner organizations' responses to vital matters affecting the community, such as the shootings in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood, which led to the creation of the Gang Violence Task Force, and the organization's leadership in the most diverse ward in the District.

Jorge Nava, a parole officer, accepted the Lisa Y. Sullivan Award for Outstanding Commitment to Youth on behalf of The Gang Intervention Partnership, a community collaboration to end gang-related violence. Deborah Thomas received the Larry Ellison Award for Leadership in Community Development for

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Rev. John De Taeye, CHSFSC community capacity building coordinator, receives award.

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative

ERFSC Sponsors Retreat for Community Change

By Artherelle West

Throughout the summer of 2006, Ward 7 and the city at large have experienced excessive youth violence. Following the shooting death of 17-year-old Cynthia Gray and the wounding of several other youths, the residents decided to band together to assess how they could reduce acts of youth violence in their community. Just two months prior, there were shootings resulting in the deaths of Tyrell Jones and Ronnie Garner.

Ronald Moten, co-founder of Peaceaholics, and Artherelle West, East River Family Strengthening Collaborative (ERFSC) Second Responder program manager and director of youth service, spearhead activities with the help of Denise Terrace, Benning Terrace resident, and Ellen Mundaray, Resident Council president.

The process began with a community meeting to discuss community empowerment and how to access resources for the community. Over 50 individuals attended the meeting, including representatives from the Benning Terrace Community, the Resident Council, Keys to Canaan, ERFSC, Peaceaholics, East River Clergy Police Community Partnership (ERCPCP), the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), East Capitol Center for Change (ECCC), Center for Neighborhood Enterprises, DC Department of Recreation (DOR), Roving Leaders, First Rock Baptist Church, and Rise, Inc.

Members of the Benning Terrace Community said that they want a safe, clean community where families can grow and develop without fear of violence. Residents developed a list of 23 items that they felt needed immediate attention. These included stopping the use of the “Simple City” terminology, graffiti removal, trash collection and disposal, transportation services, insufficient lighting, community beautification projects, parenting skills, programs for young women,



Members of the Ward 7 community concerned about violence participate in retreat.

new recreation center or space for extra-curricular activities, community organization, participation and follow-through, family strengthening, adult education and vocational training, drug programs, mentoring and youth advocacy, HIV/AIDS and sexual education, increased police presence, maintenance issues, and strategies to energize the community. These issues were divided into four categories: Family Services, Housing and Maintenance, DC Government/Core Team, and Strategic Planning. By the conclusion of the meeting, the community had accepted the idea of going on a community retreat to address their concerns and develop a strategic plan of action.

The retreat was held September 16 and 17, 2006, at Camp Riverview, a DOR riverfront site located in Scotland, Maryland, with 135 adults and children

attending. Sponsoring organizations were ERFSC, Peaceaholics, DC DOR, ERCPCP, the Roving Leaders, ECCC, MPD, Keys to Canaan, and the Benning Terrace Resident Council.

The retreat consisted of several meetings between the community organizations and residents. The first session was a presentation by Johnny Gaither, Core Team leader for Ward 7, who provided information about the team and helped residents distinguish between the responsibilities of the Department of Housing and other city agencies. The residents discussed

concern about raw sewage, backed-up drainage, and mice infestation. They also talked about the absence of sufficient lighting in hallways and on the streets, as well as public access to apartment keys, and the lack of response of the residential management to repairs and other issues in their units. Information was distributed to the adult participants with contact numbers for future reference.

While the adult participants were in this workshop, the youth were attending a workshop facilitated by Peaceaholics and ECCC on how they can and must positively impact the community. Youth contributed ideas and suggestions that include peer communication, getting drugs out of the community, and participating in community clean-ups.

A “Tail of the Tape” presentation provided a realistic look at youth violence in the District of Columbia. The video production showed how youth and their family members are affected by youth violence, and included clips of youth being interviewed who were then later killed as a result of violence related to gang and/or crew relationships or in some cases just being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The producer of the film, Curtis Mozie, discussed with both children and adults how viewing the film made them feel. Some participants opted not to see the film at all, while others found the informational exchange an opportunity to discuss alternatives to violence.

Ivy and Saleem Hylton, co-founders of Youth and Families in Crisis, LLC, presented a workshop on “Power in the Circle,” which offered problem-solving through the family circle process and taught the basics of conducting a family circle for promoting positive parenting and guidance for youth.

Both the youth and the adults presented what they learned in a final session facilitated by Curtis Watkins, executive director of ECCC, and Ronald Moten of Peaceaholics. The retreat ended with a cookout where the band CCB performed.



Ronald Moten of Peaceaholics talks with parent.

Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative

EBFSC Provides Harmless Halloween for Community

EBFSC partnered with William C. Smith, Inc. and Jetu Apartments on Tuesday, October 31, to host a Harmless Halloween Party, a safe trick-or-treat option for children living in the Carver/Langston community. "EBFSC received enormous support from the community to make this a successful family/community affair," stated Ange Anglade, EBFSC program manager. Anglade said that residents participated in outreach and made donations toward the purchase of candy, games, and food; and that Ronald Miles, owner of Miles Variety located on the Jetu property, provided snacks for the event.

During the event, which attracted 200 families, teenagers from the surrounding community, Browne Junior High School and Spingarn Senior High School helped their younger siblings with arts and crafts while parents used glitter and glue to make Halloween bags and cards. In addition to providing candy, games, toys, arts and crafts, and face painting, the Collaborative also conducted mini-workshops and demonstrations on how to keep safe during nighttime trick-or-treating. "With our Harmless Halloween Party, we hoped to eliminate the need for some children to go trick-or-treating in the community at all, but for those who wanted to do so, we provided glow-in-the-dark bags, clothing, and toys to ensure that children were protected and visible during the night hours," said Anglade.



Harmless Halloween Party provided safe activities for families.

EBFSC Organizes Candidate Forum

EBFSC held a forum with 2006 School Board candidates at Browne Junior High School (BJHS) for parents, students, teachers, and community residents in its targeted area. The Collaborative organized this event to afford residents an opportunity to have their voices heard on issues directly impacting them. The forum also gave the candidates an opportunity to share with the audience their ideas and vision upon election.

Parents, community residents, and BJHS students asked the candidates questions regarding the Master Facilities Plan; improvement of school lunches; monies for after-school programs; the plan to improve the structural conditions of District of Columbia Public

School system, especially BJHS; and the proposals to close Charles Young Elementary School and to change BJHS to serve K-8th grade students.

Attending the forum were the Board of Education president candidates Sunday Abraham, Carolyn N. Graham and Laurent Ross; and candidates for District 3 (Wards 5 and 6) Lisa Raymond, Marc Borbely and Robert Vinson Brannum.

Editors note: Robert C. Bobb is the new president of the Board of Education; Lisa Raymond is the District 3 representative.



Participants at the candidate forum.

CHSFSC Celebrates 10th Anniversary (from page 5)

her tenant and community advocacy and her role in the preservation of Capitol Manor as affordable housing for 102 families.

Additional Change Worker Award recipients were Rosemary Akinmboni, Sandy Dang, Priscilla Francis, Beatriz "BB" Otero, Cleve Palmer, and Harold Valentine for Founding Members with Continuous Service; DC Action for Children, Insoo Berg, Rev. John De Taeye, and Timothia Howard for Community

Catalysts; and Penelope "Penny" Griffith, Patricia Sullivan, and Jason Young for Staff Excellence.

Proud members of the Green Team, the ambassadors of U Street Business Improvement District (BID), one of CHSFSC's newest initiatives, were also in attendance. They said they felt like they "were part of something special" and were excited to be among the eight individuals chosen out of 200 applicants for the program. They have been warmly welcomed and feel

supported by the merchants who have told them they believe the neighborhood looks better already.

At the close of the evening, on behalf of the staff and board, Otero presented Urquilla with a Mayan-themed collage by 13-year-old artist Genesis Sanchez and thanked her for her "work, friendship, love, and commitment."

Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative FSFSC Announces Funding to Community Partners

Representatives from five Ward 8 nonprofit organizations shared information about their work to support 580 at-risk families, under a grant from the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative (FSFSC), during a community meeting on October 26, 2006, at the Covenant House in Southeast Washington. The funds, which are provided by the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), will be used to provide essential services to community residents. The organizations are Advocates for Justice and Education, Covenant Baptist Church, Emmanuel Baptist Church, My Sister's House, and Sasha Bruce Youthwork.

"We are pleased to provide funding to these agencies in partnerships that help us assist residents of Ward 8 to properly care for themselves and for their families," stated Perry J. Moon, FSFSC executive director. "These partnerships increase our ability to manage the high volume of families in this community who are in need of supportive services."

Audrey Suttan, deputy director, CFSA, said, "I am proud of the work that the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative has been providing in Ward 8, and of the work that all of the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives have been doing across the city. The CFSA and Collaborative partnership has been doing a fantastic job of keeping children out of the foster care system." Suttan noted that the number children in foster care has dropped from 3,600 to 2,058 since the Collaboratives were formed 10 years ago. "Children are traumatized when they come out of their homes. Systems can't raise children," she said.

Each of the Ward 8 organizations – staffed by a director, a licensed social worker, a case manager, and a family support worker – received \$150,000 to provide risk assessments, case management, home and school visitations, information and referrals, emergency assessments and assistance, respite care,



Audrey Suttan, CFSA deputy director, with FSFSC board members and partners.

crisis intervention, family decision making, and budgeting classes.

In addition, a variety of other services will be offered by each organization as follows:

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc., 2041 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE – educational advocacy, budgeting classes, early childhood screenings and referrals, employment support and information.

Covenant Baptist Church Family Support and Success Center, 3845 South Capitol Street, SW – mental health referrals, computer/word processing training, food pantry.

Emmanuel Baptist Church, 2409 Ainger Place, SE – after-school activities, GED information and referrals, family recreational activities.

My Sister's House Family Support Center, a ministry of the Matthews Memorial Baptist Church, 2634 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE – parenting skills training, computer/word processing training, marriage group, food pantry, clothing closet.

Kindred Connections, a partnership with Sasha Bruce Youthwork, 2804 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE – GED information and referrals, family recreation activities.

Friends of the Anacostia Museum Summer Art Team

The Friends of the Anacostia Summer Summer Art Team program, funded with a grant from FSCSC, provided Ward 8 youth, ages 12 to 21, with guidance in producing artwork, some of which was displayed and sold at an Open House Auction and Marketplace on September 16 at the Anacostia African Art Galley and Boutique.

Youth received professional guidance in painting and sketching on canvas; producing jewelry out of quality glass and wood beads; and making jewelry boxes, trays, and other items. The purpose of the program was to create a stronger connection between youth in Ward 8 and the Anacostia museum and to provide a safe and structured environment for youth to develop entrepreneurial skills and gain professional exposure.

The Open House Auction and Marketplace attracted more than 200 people with 20 vendors and live

performances from Chuck Brown, the Silver Stars Ward 8 Youth Steel Drum Band, and other local entertainers. Youth participating in the Summer Art Team made \$200 within the first few hours of the event. Although the program allowed the students to keep the profits from the products, they chose to pool the profits and reinvest in another project which is enabling the students to continue to sell their work.



Summer Youth Art Team participants display their work for sale.

Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative GARCEC Partners with Roosevelt for Parent Center Opening

By James Cunningham

Theodore Roosevelt Senior High School opened its Parent Center during a well-attended parents meeting on October 18, 2006. "This parent center is opening to give parents a voice in our school. It will serve as a launching pad for parents' participation in their children's education here at Roosevelt," said Dr. Benjamin Hosch, Roosevelt principal.

Hosch laid out his vision for parental involvement, stating, "Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning . . . and will be encouraged to be actively involved." School psychologist Tina Milledge, agreeing with the principal, said, "Any public school system that is having success or is successful in this country does so because they have

serious parent involvement." One parent stood up and addressed the principal's comments asking, "Does your invitation for parent involvement . . . mean that parents will run the center?" Dr. Hosch replied, "Certainly."

Leon Williams, Parent Center coordinator, said, "You have the ability to transform this school, so we invite you to participate on every level here at Roosevelt." Mr. Williams said that the center has attracted a number of agencies and other resources to provide parents with support, and introduced Erica Louison of DC Parent Smart, and Rev. James Cunningham of GARCEC. Cunningham said that the Collaborative will provide technical support and training for the Parent Center.

Gang Violence Reduced (from page 1)

Agency, Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services, DC Public Schools Gang Task Force, CHSFSC, Columbia Heights Weed and Seed, Latin American Youth Center, Neighbors' Consejo, DC Public Schools (Bell Multicultural High School, Wilson High School, and Lincoln Middle School), DC Department of Mental Health, and the offices of Councilmembers Jim Graham and Adrian Fenty.

CHSFSC coordinated the multiple stakeholders, managing the partnership and the technical assistance provided through GIP, as well as the outreach to parents and the community. The report indicates that the coordination and information sharing has been critical to GIP providing timely, effective programs and, when necessary, swift response to law enforcement.

GIP core strategies include:

- Conducting intensive and targeted police work and building strong police/community relationships
- Providing targeted outreach to gang-related youth and their families
- Educating parents and community members
- Improving and expanding access to services critical to strengthening families

"It was difficult in the beginning because of the tension between the police department and community agencies. We had to build confidence and rapport. Once that was done, the flow of communication and information was important to the effort that we were embarking on," said Juan Aguilar of the MPD Gang Intelligence Unit.

"Trust and communication helped us go in and prevent incidents from happening. We moved from reacting to anticipating," said Marian Uquilla, executive director of CHSFC. "What it came down to was basic community policing – going into homes and schools and talking with parents and school officials," she said.

Officer Andres Marcucci, also of the MPD Gang Intelligence Unit, said, "We wound up being mentors and coaches [to youth] because we were able to talk with them on their level, and we practiced tough love."

Rev. John De Taeye, CHSFC community capacity building coordinator, said, "There is no substitute for getting parents educated and involved. The more our community knows about gangs, the more likely we are to be successful in reducing gang violence and gang activity. Since GIP was created, we've made important strides in gang awareness and knowledge among parents, teachers and other leaders in our community, and it's imperative that we keep building on that progress."

The GIP report – *Gang Intervention Partnership: Evaluation and Recommendations Regarding a Program to Reduce Criminal Activity of Latino Gangs in the District of Columbia* – was commissioned by the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA). The report used quantitative and qualitative research, including analysis of crime rate data, focus groups and interviews with more than 40 young people and adults, to independently evaluate the effectiveness of GIP in its first three years of operation. The Center for Youth Policy Research, an independent, nonprofit empirical research and policy analysis organization, conducted the evaluation and authored the report.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Shirley Saunders

GARCEC is proud to spotlight Ms. Shirley Saunders, community advocate, for her untiring efforts in working toward making the Petworth area safe for families and children. Ms. Saunders is a member of GARCEC and a member of other boards and agencies in Ward 4. Every year, she prepares Thanksgiving baskets for residents in need and she is always alert to issues that may impact children and families. Wherever discussions are taking place and decisions are being made regarding this community, you will find Shirley Saunders there, protecting and advocating for the rights of the residents.

GARCEC thanks Shirley Saunders for all of her hard work on behalf of the community.

GARCEC Purchases Allison Street Site

On September 15, 2006, the Georgia Avenue Collaborative was awarded a Community Development Block Grant loan from the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to purchase the 1104 Allison Street, NW site which served as the organization's first office space beginning in 1999. This site currently houses administrative staff and a parent resource center and will become the permanent home for GARCEC's Fatherhood Initiative.

The DHCD loan will finance both the acquisition and the renovation of the property for handicapped accessibility. A ribbon-cutting celebration will be held once renovations are complete.



GARCEC site was purchased with a DHCD loan.

North Capitol Collaborative, Inc. NCCI Parent Retreat

By Tony Dugger

Two coach buses transported about 40 families to the open fields of the Patuxent 4-H Center in Upper Marlboro in August for the NCCI 2007 Parent Retreat. After arriving at 9:30 am, mothers, fathers, and children met nature specialists for farm tours, canoeing, nature workshops, and hiking. Children and parents stood shoulder to shoulder wearing life jackets during canoeing classes. Like soldiers in a regiment, they listened as instructors taught the proper techniques of rowing. Some parents looked exhausted as they returned from the hiking trail. Many underestimated its length. The trail wound two miles around the 4-H Center. Some climbed steep hills while others descended challenging slopes. The less adventurous enjoyed farm tours and workshops about horses, goats, reptiles, plants, various crops, and farm equipment.

Through it all, parents and children learned about the value of open communication in families. Parent education facilitator, Khadija Ash, held two separate meetings with children and parents and one combined

meeting with all members, which provided an opportunity for some really great communication. As the 2007 retreat closed, resource information was provided.

Photographer Rico Rush took group pictures and provided each family with a copy for their albums. "As we mend and heal together, we can help the next person with the resources we have to touch and lift the loved ones in their lives, not only once but many times over," said a Collaborative staff member. "If one is touched by our efforts, then the Collaborative work is complete."



Retreat participants prepare to canoe.

NCCI Hosts Father/Child Back to School Event

By Tony Dugger

Under clear skies and with a temperature of 70 degrees, NCCI distributed 187 backpacks and school supplies to 81 dads who accompanied their 187 children to the NCCI Father/Child Back to School event at the Hyde Leadership Charter School on the evening of September 7, 2006. Some called it a big party. DJ Chuck pumped the crowd with clean and safe versions of popular rap hits and the caterer, Heavenly Delights, fired up its grills and released a barbecue aroma that hit the noses of every person within a five-block area. As children beckoned their waiting parents to eat a hot dog, hamburger, or the party snacks that filled the picnic tables, other adults, just arriving at the school to pick up little ones, pushed their way through the standing-room-only crowd to witness the big celebration.

One dad said, "This is a great event. My children have been attending Hyde for a while, and I have been raising them, trying to be the best role model." He walked with his daughter to pick up her pink backpack, and later they had a hot dog as DJ Chuck



Some of the fathers who participated in the Back to School Event

cranked up Beyonce's new hit single "Déjà Vu." They danced on the open lawn in front of the charter school, as the crowd grew bigger. Before you knew it, fathers, mothers, children, and teachers were dancing, talking, and mingling as the last of the school supplies were handed out. Afterwards, fathers and children posed for pictures. "If we have any chance of reaching fathers and families, it will be in community efforts like this," said a school official. "Not just one time, but over and over again until we change our city."

NCCI Staff Retreat

NCCI staff spent three days at the Harbourtowne Resort at St. Michaels at a retreat facilitated by Dr. Marcus M. Mottley, an experienced psychologist who specializes in individual and organizational development. The first day explored some general concepts of team building, which included observing birds in flight, in an exercise titled "Lessons from the Flock." A video presentation of a Seattle, Washington fish market also revealed essential steps to team building and skills for overcoming challenges. Day two measured the general concepts of day one against the strengths and weaknesses of each department. Disagreement created intensity and commitment created results. The third day allowed for a review of the previous days' progress. No quick solutions were determined, however staff left with a renewed commitment to continue team building.

"I have a talented group of professionals who represent North Capitol Collaborative well," said Charon Ellis, executive director. "The best of families will disagree at home and still have the ability go out and change the community." – **Tony Dugger**



NCCI staff at retreat team-building session.

South Washington/West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative Grandparents Arts-and-Crafts Workshops

By Rachel Lewis

Juanita E. Jones, senior family support worker, has been making a difference in her community for over 10 years. As a long-term employee of the South Washington/West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative (SWWR) and a former advisory neighborhood commissioner, she has done both case management and programmatic outreach. Jones's most recent success involves using photographs as a unique way to empower senior citizens and bridge generational gaps.

The flyers she began putting up over a year ago invited local grandparents and caregivers to "come learn how to make an album that will last for a generation." And come they have. For over a year now, a group of 24-plus grandparents and caregivers have assembled at the King Greenleaf Recreation Center at 201 N Street, SW, to meet with Jones for arts-and-crafts workshops.

All workshop participants are instructed to bring photographs of themselves and their loved ones to incorporate into a cloth album. Jones provides the supplies and instruction to help them work on creating their own albums at each meeting.

When asked to describe her workshops, Jones said her focus is on those she serves. "It's a time when the grandparents can come in there and they can just sit down and create something the way they want it."

Participants use their minds, as they recount the stories behind their photos, and their hands, as they work with Juanita assembling felt designs and other colorful pieces to give their album a feel that is uniquely theirs.

Jones said that once created, the albums become a great way for grandparents to show their grandchildren more about their family heritage. "Often after looking through an album, young people see their grandparents in a different light, realizing that they too were young once and have lived through a lot and have a lot to share as a result," she said.

Jones's grandparents arts-and-crafts workshops have developed such a reputation around town that she recently received a phone call from a resident who wants Jones's help in starting a similar group in her



Grandparents display photo albums created in arts-and-crafts workshops.

neighborhood. Not surprisingly, Juanita is happy to oblige.

To learn more about the grandparents arts-and-crafts workshops or the pre-natal "House Parties" groups, which Jones also leads every Wednesday at the James Creek Community Center at 6 PM, or for information on other SWWR programs, call 202-488-SWWR (7997).

Scenes from the 2007 Health Fair



Over 500 children, families, and community residents attended SWWR's Fifth Annual Health Fair held in partnership with Georgetown University's KIDS Mobile Unit on October 7, 2006.

Transitions

New Hires

Collaborative Council



Nicole Gilbert is the Collaborative Council's program director responsible for managing various programs, as well as overseeing quality assurance, data collection and reporting, and technical assistance. Prior to

joining the Collaborative Council, Nicole worked for Catholic Community Services for nine years in various positions, including division director, regional director, director of foster care, Southeast Family Center administrator, and supervisor of independent living programs. Nicole has served as a member of the Edgewood/Brookland Family Strengthening Collaborative Membership Committee, and as a member of the Family Intervention Program Advisory Board. She received her bachelor's and master's of social work degrees from Howard University, and is a licensed social worker in the District of Columbia and Maryland.



Zelda Plater is the Collaborative Council's part-time receptionist. She retired from the DC Department of Human Services where she was an administrative assistant. She also previously worked in private industry.



Runá F. Peoples recently joined the Collaborative Council as executive assistant responsible for staff and board administrative support and office management. She has more than 10 years of administrative experience, including office manager/administrative assistant for the Virginia Cooperative Extension, and facility monitor and administrative assistant for Arlington County Parks, Recreation and Community Resources.

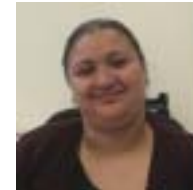
Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative



Alma Deligny joined GARCEC as an accountant. She has worked in the accounting field in nonprofit organizations for more than 20 years. Prior to joining GARCEC she worked for Bread for the World, a research and lobbying organization dedicated to ending hunger worldwide, where she was

instrumental in improving and upgrading processing, including restructuring the general ledger chart of accounts, payroll, timekeeping, and recordkeeping. "I look forward to many years of supporting GARCEC in its mission to improve the quality of life for the community, of which I am a resident," she said.

Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative



Suyapa Paz

The Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative welcomes the following new staff:

Athena Viscusi, senior family services clinician;
Christian Muñoz, senior youth violence prevention coordinator;
Clifton Rogers, 3D clinician;
Hasani Olujimi,

family preservation specialist;
Karen Harrison, family team meeting specialist
Kellee Leo, finance manager;
Sandra Whitfield, intake specialist; **Suyapa Paz**, bilingual family preservation specialist.



Sandra Whitfield

New Address

Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative

EBFSC has moved its Community Engagement office from 1614 Montello Avenue, NE to the Jetu Apartments at 843 21st Street, NE, Unit J. The EBFSC has also established an office at Browne Junior High School at 850 26th Street, NE.

Calendar

December 2007

December 7

3:00-6:00 pm
 Collaborative Council Christmas Party
 Zanzibar on the Waterfront
 (Collaborative staff only)

December 7

10:00-4:00 pm
 SWWR Winter Job Fair
 King Greenleaf Recreation Center
 201 N Street, NW
 202-488-7997

December 21

3:00 pm
 NCCI Community Christmas Party
 Mt. Sinai Baptist Church
 1615 3rd Street, NW
 202-588-1800

Mondays - 6:00 pm

SWWR Parent Support Groups
 St. Augustine Church
 600 M Street, SW
 202-488-7997

January 2007

Family Development Credentialing classes, including train the trainer are now forming and are scheduled to begin early next year. Contact Valeria Carter at the Collaborative Council, 202-299-0900.

Got News? Comments? Ideas?

E-mail the editor at
[ewsassociates@gmail.com.](mailto:ewsassociates@gmail.com)

Coming to the Collaborative Connection in 2007

Beginning next year, the Collaborative Connection will feature a column written by Dr. Rovenia Brock (Dr. Ro) that will address "taking care of self."



Dr. Rovenia Brock is one of America's most renowned African American nutritionists and author of the national best-seller, *Dr. Ro's Ten Secrets To Livin' Healthy*.

For more information on Dr. Ro, visit www.askdrro.com.