



Report to the Community

Issue 3, November 2016

Community Development Spotlight

Small Programs Deliver Big Impact for Parents in Need of Support

Families on the Rise, Quenching the Father's Thirst, and Real-Eyeez Our Worth are just three new programs out of nearly two dozen now underway in neighborhoods across the city to demonstrate that small-scale, hyper-local services can strengthen families and communities. Using \$876,000 in seed money from the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency, the five Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives have issued 22 grants for community-based support services with the potential to reach 1,300 District families.

Community mini grants are a key strategy under CFSA's Safe and Stable Families program, which centers on increasing investment in preventing child abuse and helping parents to keep their children safe without entering the child welfare system. In keeping with the overall thrust of Safe and Stable Families, a number of mini-grant services target young parents with young children.



Brittney Hannah

"Keeping families together, healthy, and stable depends on parents being able to tap good services right in their communities whenever they need them," says Brittney Hannah, the CFSA supervisor who works on Safe and Stable Families. "These mini grants are a strategy for community capacity building. The Collaboratives know their neighborhoods. They're awarding mini grants to fill gaps and meet needs in ways that will strengthen local families."

In addition, the Collaboratives are looking to bolster the overall safety net by enlarging their pool of community partners. Some of the grantees are very small entrepreneurial ventures that benefit greatly from the funding, the chance to show what they can do, and the business-related technical assistance they receive from their larger and more experienced Collaborative benefactor. But for all grantees, small and large, the hope is that a broader and more varied range of services for families will thrive in the community—and remain viable long after the grant period is over.





Community Mini Grants at a Glance

FY16 to date: \$875,757 invested in 22 mini grants with the potential to serve 1,300 families



\$200,000



\$199,599

- **Bright Beginnings (families of up to 80 children)**
Information, support, and well being for homeless families delivered to them in shelters or temporary/transitional housing
- **Communities in Schools in the Nation's Capital (10 pregnant/parenting students at Cardoza High School in NW)**
Supports teen parents in graduating from high school
- **Early Parenting (30 families)**
Family strengthening services including life skills, parenting classes, life coaching, and workforce development
- **Family Place, Inc. (645 families)**
Variety of services for Spanish-speaking families such as English instruction, literacy, nutrition, prenatal classes, and a support group for women experiencing domestic violence
- **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (10 families)**
Intensive support (3 hours/day five days/week) helps parents address behavioral health concerns of children ages 2-7
- **Benning Terrace Residents Empowered to Achieve (30 families)**
Strengthens health and well being of parents and improves academic outcomes and reduces risky behavior of their teens
- **Kids Are People, Too (10 couples)**
Helps couples improve their communication and parenting skills, manage stress, and develop goals and action plans—all directed toward building on family strengths
- **Ready to Work (6-10 parents)**
Individual coaching (2 hours twice a week) designed to result in improved work readiness and gainful employment
- **Real-Eyeez Our Worth (20 families)**
Helps struggling young parents set and achieve goals for greater family health, stability, and well-being
- **Parent Resource Center (30 families)**
Serves at-risk young families with a variety of resources that promote healthy parent-child interaction, based at Plummer Elementary School in SE



\$167,556



\$166,665

- **Growing Together Family Gardening (20 families)**
Engages parents and children at two separate locations in constructing and caring for an organic community garden
- **Linking Wellness, Health and the Arts (20 families)**
Increases participant awareness of how to achieve good nutrition on a budget and combines group meal preparation with the fun of African drumming and dance
- **Principles of Family Development Training (35 parents/35 staff)**
Helps parents and child care staff understand family protective factors, reducing the likelihood of a referral to child welfare
- **Parent-Child Support, Play and Reading Time Project (10 mothers with up to two children under age 6)**
Supports a local group home serving pregnant/parenting young women in foster care and their children in upgrading equipment at the facility (such as washing machines) and providing entry/exit baskets of practical supplies for residents
- **Quenching the Father's Thirst (36 families)**
Parenting and relationship training for young fathers of young children
- **Raising a Superhero (from the Rag Baby Exchange) (40 families)**
Uses doll making as a vehicle for helping women and children develop a healthy self-image

- **Families on the Rise (30 families)**
Sixteen-week curriculum that engages, informs, and supports families struggling to overcome alcohol/drug abuse
- **J and J Monitoring (50 families)**
Substance abuse prevention for youth, understanding the role of fathers in families, and conflict resolution and mediation between rival neighborhood gangs
- **Men and Boys (30 men and their children)**
Helps fathers improve their employment status, support their families, reconnect with their children, and build a healthier relationship with the children's mother
- **Olive Branch Parenting Education and Support (45 families)**
Teaches nurturing skills to parents as an antidote to abuse and offers support groups for parents and connections to other community-based resources



\$141,937

- **Connecting Families with Meaningful Resources (110 families)**
Informs young parents of young children about community-based family support services. Includes parent education in child development and special support for parents getting children back from foster care
- **Families Growing Stronger Together (30 families)**
Parenting education, guidance, and coaching; group support; peer relationship building; and recreational activities for young parents of young children





Karen Feinstein

Georgia Avenue: Parent Education is 'Life-Changing'

"These grants have a definite value in building community capacity," says Karen Feinstein, executive director of the Georgia Avenue Family Support Collaborative. She is talking about what her organization has done with mini grant funding

from CFSA. "We've been able to fund innovative services to young parents and children, address gaps in supports for families, increase access to training that improves parenting, and build a circle of community that we hope to sustain beyond the initial programming."

The Georgia Avenue Collaborative is especially proud of Families Growing Stronger Together (FGST), a parenting education support group conducted by the Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center. Nestled in the Manor Park neighborhood of northwest D.C., FGST uses the evidence-based Effective Black Parenting curriculum, along with intensive support and coaching, to teach lifelong parenting strategies.



It's an approach that worked for Carla and Troy, young parents of three young children.* When the court ordered them to attend parenting classes as one step in getting their baby back from foster care, they found FGST right in their neighborhood. Carla and Troy credit the training with helping them learn how to interact better with each other

and with their two children still at home. In fact, the parenting training and the support they found in their learning group had such a positive impact on them that they chose to remain as peer trainers after completing the course. Best of all, their understanding and use of improved parenting techniques helped them to reunite with their baby more quickly.

"This group was life changing," Carla asserts. "It changed my attitude about parenting and was the best thing I could have done with my time."

Edgewood/Brookland: Making a Doll Makes a Difference

When Louvenia Williams met Sherri Roberts-Lumpkin, a worthwhile mentorship was born. Roberts-Lumpkin's unique company, The Rag Baby Exchange, guides adults and children in making a doll as a vehicle for improving their self esteem. As executive director of the Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative, Williams was interested in developing neighborhood services and had the resources to help start-up programs. With the Collaborative's support, Roberts-Lumpkin attracted grant funding and set up a bank account, non-profit status, and written curriculum for her business. In 2016, a mini grant from Edgewood/Brookland allowed her to purchase enough supplies to hold additional workshops in several low-income neighborhoods in Wards 5 and 6.



Louvenia Williams



Sherri Roberts-Lumpkin

* Names changed to protect confidentiality

Breaking the Cycle

Prototype Training Helps Families Cope with Trauma



On an evening in late July of 2015, local TV newscasters led with a gut-wrenching story: “The 3-year-old girl fatally shot in Southeast D.C. Wednesday night was accidentally shot by her 7-year-old brother, according to the Metropolitan Police Department.”

In Ward 7’s Benning Heights neighborhood, long plagued by gang and gun violence, this tragic death of such a young resident hit hard. Feelings of anger, helplessness, and despair heightened throughout the community. The East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, which had worked to heal neighborhood hurts for nearly two decades, wanted to do more.



Marie Morilus-Black

Meanwhile, Marie Morilus-Black, deputy director of CFSA’s Well Being Administration, was pondering how to teach more people about coping with trauma. Under a five-year federal grant, CFSA had trained some 3,000 social workers, foster parents, and others associated with

child welfare as a way to spread trauma knowledge throughout the system. “But we hadn’t reached out to birth parents,” Morilus-Black says. So when she heard about the heightened strife in Ward 7, taking trauma training to parents at the Benning Terrace housing project, where the East River Collaborative was already deeply involved, just seemed to be a natural response.

In September 2015, 12 families came to the Benning Terrace community room for the first of four 3.5-hour sessions called “Emotionally Intelligent Parent Leadership.” It was a unique approach that applied executive leadership concepts to the challenges of parenting while also integrating brain science and child development and attachment. Parents who showed up loved the first session and kept coming back. Among intriguing topics they explored were:

- Understanding how a child’s brain works and staying connected during conflict.
- Relating to child welfare as a resource rather than as an adversary.
- Staying emotionally grounded and enhancing stress resistance.
- Using leadership skills to advocate for their family and children.

Participant comments in evaluating the course showed that they valued and could use what they had learned in the sessions.

“The class helped me figure out how to get my child to a ‘yes’ versus a ‘no.’ I learned if I change my thoughts, my behavior will follow. This class was awesome. I walked away with great tools to help me communicate with adults and children.”

“I learned about the human brain and behavior—the effects of trauma on your life and how it can cause you to be and think.”

“What I got out of the session was having self control with my children over the weekend.”

“What I learned today is that being self-regulated is one of the most important skills for growing up and to solve a problem with a person.”

Collaborative Partners



Collaborative Solutions for Communities

1816 12th Street, NW, Suite 201, Washington, DC 20009
202-518-6737 • www.wearecsc.org



East River Family Support Collaborative

3917 Minnesota Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20019
202-397-7300 • www.erfsc.org



Edgewood Brookland Family Support Collaborative

200 K Street, NW, Suites 1 and 3, Washington, DC 20001
202-832-9400 • www.ebfsc.org



Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative

2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, Suite 304,
Washington, DC 20020
202-889-1425 • www.fsfsc.org



Georgia Avenue Family Support Collaborative

4420 Georgia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20011
202-727-1815 • www.gafsc-dc.org



D.C. Child and Family Services Agency

200 I Street SE, Washington, DC 20003 • (202) 442-6100
cfsa.dc.gov • dc.mandatedreporter.org
fosterdckids.org • adoptdckids.org
Twitter: @DCCFSA • Facebook: /CFSADC

The DC Child and Family Services Agency is the first responder to child abuse and neglect in the District of Columbia, taking reports 24/7 at 202-671-SAFE. CFSA protects child victims and those at risk and assists families in staying together safely. CFSA publishes this report to the community about the Safe and Stable Families program twice a year.