Transforming East Lake: Systematic Intentionality in Atlanta

The East Lake community in Atlanta faced high rates of violence and unemployment and low graduation rates. Now, more than 20 years after its decline, the neighborhood—and life for its young people—has dramatically improved.
The Center for Promise, in collaboration with Tufts University's School of Arts and Sciences, is the research center for America’s Promise Alliance. The mission of the Center is to develop a deep knowledge and understanding about what is needed to help create the conditions so that all young people in America have the opportunity to succeed in school and life. The Center’s work will add to the academic exploration of these issues and help give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to effectively work together to support young people.

Foreword

Great progress has been made in the United States on increasing academic proficiency and high school graduation rates, and reducing teen pregnancy rates and homicides. In the low-income, urban centers of our nation, however, progress often stagnates. When a high school diploma becomes less of a norm than violence and incarceration, more needs to be done to transform the lives of young people. Our belief is that this transformation occurs when government, schools, non-profits, and community members come together a common goal, plan together around a common agenda, and act together around common tactics to support their young people.

The Center for Promise series on comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) is meant to provide guidance to communities ambitiously seeking to embark on and currently pursuing these multi-sector, community-wide actions. In the case studies, the reader will find the stories about the why and the how. Why the community decided to create and implement a CCI and how the community was able to move from an idea to substantive action.

We know that those working day-to-day and week-to-week to implement a CCI can often feel hopeless and disheartened, not seeing that progress is being and often feeling as if they are taking two steps back for every step forward. Our goal is for the lessons from these case studies to help communities strengthen their work and, maybe more importantly, give communities hope that hard work can, in fact, result in success. The lives of young people in economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities can be transformed. We do not believe, nor would evidence suggest, that there is one way for a community to support its young people. Rather, there are overarching principles that increase a community’s chance for success. Here, we start to tell the story of how.
Located on Atlanta’s eastern edge, the East Lake community was for many years considered one of the city’s glamorous neighborhoods. But by the 1960s, rising unemployment and crime marked a neighborhood in decline.

That downward trend only accelerated after the opening in 1970 of East Lake Meadows, a 650-unit public housing development, built on what had been the No. 2 course on the once prestigious East Lake Country Club. The housing project earned the infamous nickname “Little Vietnam” due to its pervasive violence, with a rampant drug trade and a crime rate in 1995 18 times the national average. Ninety percent of the residents of East Lake Meadows had been crime victims themselves, police would not even go into the project without backup. Residents lived in poorly maintained, squat, two-story buildings, duplexes and a high-rise for the elderly; in fact, 40 percent of the homes in the neighborhood were deemed unlivable.

Meadows residents also faced grim prospects for earning a livelihood: the employment rate hovered around 13 percent in 1995. Grindings, intergenerational poverty was everywhere. Resident income averaged less than $5,000; just four percent lived above the poverty line. Meanwhile, only five percent of the fifth-grade students at the Drew Elementary School met state math standards, and just 30 percent of students in the neighborhood graduated from high school. Liquor stores outnumbered grocery stores—when Publix opened in 2001, it became the community’s first new supermarket in 40 years.

Now, says a longtime resident, a “stunning reversal has happened.” East Lake now exudes a vibrancy obvious even to the casual visitor. During the morning commute, children stroll along the sidewalk to Atlanta’s first charter school, Charles R. Drew Charter School. Parents rush to drop off their younger children at one of the community’s high-quality early care and education centers.

Seniors head to a group exercise class at the state-of-the-art East Lake Family YMCA. Throughout the day, people enjoy a round of golf on the public Charlie Yates Golf Course. Amid this hustle and bustle, residents attend to daily life as they frequent Publix or one of East Lake’s banks, gas stations or retailers, all of which have moved into the neighborhood in recent years.

In another dramatic change, The Villages of East Lake—a mixed-income community of 1,500 where residences are evenly divided between affordable and market-rate units—has replaced East Lake Meadows. Nearly 550 townhomes, villas and garden apartments surround the neighborhood’s landscaped lawns, all within walking distance of the golf course, Drew Charter School, and the YMCA. The once blighted area has attracted more than $175 million in new commercial and residential investments. Since the mid-1990s, home values have risen at a rate almost four times faster than Atlanta as a whole.
Transformation has touched every part of the community. Seventy percent of East Lake’s public housing residents today are either employed or in education or job training programs (the remaining 30 percent are elderly or disabled). In 1995, 59 percent of public housing residents were on welfare, compared to only 5 percent today. Crime overall has declined by 73 percent, and violent crime by 90 percent. The neighborhood now has a crime rate 50 percent lower than Atlanta overall. Children are excelling in school. Ninety-eight percent of Drew students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded state standards in the 2012-13 school year. And nearly 80 percent of Drew students are graduating from high school, compared to only 50 percent of Atlanta Public Schools students and 67 percent of the state’s young people.

What’s the secret behind East Lake’s turnaround? Can lessons from East Lake guide comprehensive efforts at neighborhood transformation in other communities? Through interviews with more than 20 key participants, reviews of historical and current documents, and an examination of existing research about neighborhood revitalization, this in-depth case study explores those questions and illuminates East Lake’s story.

East Lake’s experience demonstrates that even one of the nation’s most blighted neighborhoods—a place of crushing, intergenerational poverty—can become a “city on a hill”—a shining example to others of what determined groups with a well-conceived, evidence-based plan can accomplish for young people and a community.

The East Lake story is especially relevant to the work of youth-focused organizations, such as America’s Promise Alliance. Our theory of action has always centered on the belief that improving outcomes for young people with limited resources and opportunities necessitates the transformation of entire neighborhoods into environments where children can experience the Five Promises, fundamental resources all children need to succeed: caring adults in all areas of their lives, safe places, the things that make for a healthy start and healthy development, an effective education and opportunities to help others. Some have wondered whether systematic attempts at such neighborhood revitalizations were practicable, or even possible—and whether, if successful, they could yield the results for young people that proponents sought. The answer from East Lake is an emphatic “yes,” which should give both encouragement and guidance to those urgently seeking to change the odds for the least advantaged young people in other cities.

**East Lake’s remarkable experience suggests several overarching lessons**

1. **Neighborhood transformation is practicable and replicable.** While positive neighborhood transformation is far from unprecedented, across the country many locals regard as intractable the poverty, crime and other ills of certain neighborhoods. This perception, in turn, may affect the way people in the city (both within and far beyond the particular neighborhood) view emerging efforts at transformation. For those who champion such efforts, East Lake offers a dramatic and powerful affirmation that revitalization can be a worthwhile investment of resources.

2. **Neighborhood transformation must be the product of systematic intentionality.** It is not enough to plant the seeds of positive change and then watch them grow. East Lake took an approach that is the opposite of organic. All aspects of the effort there reflected a careful intentionality by the organizers, focused on specific yet interrelated results that would drive the larger transformation.

3. **Change efforts should be based on what research suggests will work.** As one aspect of their intentionality, the organizers of the East Lake effort drew upon available research to guide their theory of change and built a model based on both scholarly research and best practices from efforts in other communities. Evidence suggests that community efforts that do not rely on such models tend to fail. East Lake provides a striking example of how an effort constructed around a research-driven model can succeed.
Background

CCIs as a mechanism for promoting positive youth development

Efforts to transform distressed communities into places where residents lead healthy, thriving lives date back more than 100 years. They include the Settlement House movement of the early 1900s, the War on Poverty in the 1960s, and the rise of community development corporations (CDCs) in the 1980s.

In the 1990s, a new model—the one that informed the effort in East Lake—began gaining popularity: the comprehensive community initiative (CCI). Several key attributes distinguish CCIs from previous approaches to community change:

• a collaborative, comprehensive approach, with intentional alignment across institutions and contexts (e.g. family, school, the broader community), instead of piecemeal, uncoordinated efforts;
• participation by diverse partners instead of single-sector initiatives;
• a governance structure that includes a lead organization to drive the effort instead of a leaderless coalition;
• an asset-based approach that builds on existing resources and strengths rather than considering communities as deficits to be remediated;
• active engagement by residents instead of purely top-down decisions;
• a focus on geographically defined areas instead of being too broad in scope; and
• flexible, non-categorical funding from diverse sources instead of restricted funds that constrain nimble actions.

Empirical evidence has identified all of these distinguishing factors (as well as a theory of change aligned with the effort’s goals and the ongoing use of data to guide the effort) as essential to successful community transformations. Because CCIs foster cooperation, instead of allowing programs to operate in individual silos, and because they recognize that the work must occur within broader, structural and interrelated systems, they offer the potential to bring about transformative change.

Recently, CCIs have been adopted more widely, as illustrated by federal initiatives such as Promise Neighborhoods sponsored by the Department of Education and Choice Neighborhoods launched through the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD). Beyond these national initiatives, numerous local organizations are implementing place-based, comprehensive initiatives throughout the country.

Students who graduated from the Charles R. Drew Middle School are excited about starting the year in the new Senior Academy high school.

This more holistic approach of CCIs is grounded in what research has revealed about human development. Children develop within and across multiple “contexts,” the places where development occurs and the factors that influence that development. Varied and overlapping contexts—such as families, schools and neighborhoods—can positively and negatively affect young people.

a. As one study noted, a collaborative, integrated approach is logical since “...many of these problems are complex; consequently, they go beyond the capacity, resources, or jurisdiction of any single person, program, organization, or sector to change or control” (Laskar & Weiss, 2003, p.18).
An extension of this “relational theory” is positive youth development (PYD). PYD applies a strengths-based perspective that seeks to harness young people’s internal assets and the assets in a community to help young people lead healthy, successful lives, rather than focusing solely on ameliorating deficits. Extensive research suggests that children are served best by the presence of a “youth system”; essentially, a young person’s development is optimized when the key supports he/she needs to thrive are aligned across family, schools, and all aspects of the community—and are applied to the needs and strengths of each young person.

Discerning the potential of CCIs as change agents

While several evaluations of CCIs around the country have shown the value of governance structures and specific strategic processes, relatively few studies have assessed substantive outcomes at the community level of such revitalization efforts. One reason for this dearth of evaluations, perhaps, is that few initiatives have radically reshaped entire neighborhoods in the way that the organizers of the East Lake revitalization sought to do.

As more communities attempt to develop their own CCIs, analyzing community-level outcomes of the revitalization effort in East Lake, with a specific focus on outcomes for young people and their families, provides an especially important case study on how a CCI unfolds, how the CCI aligns efforts to embed each young person in a youth system, and the educational and economic outcomes for which the CCI is striving.

The Story of East Lake’s Revitalization

History of the East Lake Foundation

Distinguished as the home of legendary golfer Bobby Jones, the East Lake community lost its glamour in the 1960s and ’70s, when unemployment and crime began to take a heavy toll. During this turbulent time, Atlanta’s public housing was swiftly declining, and the increasingly blighted state of the East Lake Meadows project set the tone for the entire neighborhood. “East Lake reflected the dysfunction of public housing,” observed Shirley Franklin, who later served as Atlanta’s first African-American female mayor.

In the 1990s, Tom Cousins, a developer and philanthropist who had numerous and longtime connections to the East Lake community, committed to help revitalize the neighborhood. In 1995, he established the East Lake Foundation (ELF) through the support of his family foundation, the CF Foundation. CF also bought the East Lake Country Club, preserving its fabled history while creating a slogan—“golf with a purpose”—that reflected the foundation’s aim of spurring redevelopment of the surrounding community.

Structures and processes

Recognizing the need not only to revamp East Lake’s public housing but also to improve other central aspects of the community, ELF developed a model for dramatic change. Based on research and its own observations, the foundation first identified discrete yet interconnected factors that impeded the overarching goal of building a healthy community.

b. While all PYD frameworks espouse a similarly asset-based approach to youth development, its theoretical underpinnings are conceptualized differently by various scholars. For example, the “Five Cs” emphasize the principles of competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring as critical to optimal youth development (J. Lerner et al., 2012; Lerner et al., 2005), and the Search Institute in Minnesota has identified 40 key internal and external developmental assets to collectively benefit young people (Damon, 2004).

c. Some efforts, however, have significantly influenced individual lives, such as the public health coalition model, Communities that Care, which has reduced substance and tobacco use and delinquent behavior among 5th–8th graders (Hawkins et al., 2009; Kubisch et al., 2010; Trent & Chavis, 2009).
Among these barriers were concentrated poverty; a learning gap that began at birth; a lack of high-quality public schools; uneven school transitions resulting from an inadequate educational system that was not equipped to support young people as they entered elementary, middle, and high school; a lack of enrichment and support opportunities; and fragmented resources. All of these factors combined to create formidable, persistent obstacles to success in school and beyond for the neighborhood’s children.

To bring about change, ELF developed a holistic approach to revitalization (outlined below). The theory of positive youth development underlies the work, recognizing and seeking to build upon the strengths of young people and targeting multiple contexts (in East Lake’s case: housing, education and health).

In addition to this critical first step, ELF created processes and a governance structure. For example, through formal memoranda of understanding, ELF sets explicit expectations of partner organizations engaged in the community revitalization effort. Through quarterly partner meetings, the foundation also created a formal mechanism for communicating regularly about current work, sharing pertinent information, and discussing any challenges they encounter.

### Three pillars

ELF’s approach to transformational change is built upon three pillars: (1) mixed-income housing; (2) pre-K-college educational continuum; and (3) community wellness. More specifically, the foundation developed a theory of change that espoused that mixed-income housing would fuel the private market, serving to reduce the concentration of poverty in the neighborhood. A continuum of education running from the pre-K years through grade 12 would address the multiple and intersecting educational challenges in the neighborhood. Wellness programs would help improve the health of the neighborhood’s residents, which would have positive ripple effects in areas ranging from school attendance to the employability and productivity of adults. “Many other organizations don’t address all three (areas),” said Daniel Shoy, Jr., East Lake Foundation’s chief operating officer. Here, “the sum of the whole is greater than its parts.” Consistent with the principles that make for effective CCIs, ELF would serve as a lead organization, following a holistic approach and intentionally collaborating with key partners who oversee the various facets of the effort. Although other communities in Atlanta had similar needs, focusing on the East Lake neighborhood instead of a larger geography would help bring to bear a critical mass of resources necessary to transform a community.

### Mixed-income housing

Because the three pillars needed for a transformation were interrelated, the East Lake Foundation built them not sequentially but simultaneously. The organizers’ efforts with housing mirrored a national trend to address the seemingly intractable problems many attributed to concentrated public housing. While ELF’s work was informed by other initiatives, it also embraced a new concept—mixed-income
housing that combined public and market-rate residential units. The model had originated in Atlanta and was being championed as a strategy throughout the city's struggling public housing developments by Renee Glover, the new executive director of the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). Ultimately, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would incorporate mixed-income housing into its HOPE VI initiatives to revitalize public housing).

Underlying the new model was the theory that mixed-income housing would help build social capital. In other words, people who had lived in an area of concentrated poverty would benefit in a variety of ways from living alongside and interacting regularly with higher income residents with other experiences. AHA's desire to reduce the heavy concentration of public housing, which was mostly located in or near downtown, intensified after Atlanta was chosen to host the 1996 Summer Olympics. In partnership with AHA, ELF initiated a lengthy planning process to raze East Lake Meadows and build The Villages of East Lake as a mixed-income housing development. With AHA's cooperation, residents of East Lake Meadows were relocated to temporary housing while The Villages were under construction.

The Villages were carefully organized: the goal was ensure that the low-income residents ELF was trying to support weren't pushed out by residents able to pay market prices. Existing residents who served on the Planning Committee received first priority for a spot in the new development, while length of residence at East Lake Meadows determined next priority. Of the original East Lake Meadows families, 26.6 percent had returned to The Villages of East Lake during the 10-year period, while 44.6 percent used housing vouchers to move to other neighborhoods, 23.7 percent moved to a traditional public housing project, and 5.1 percent relocated to another mixed-income community.

The foundation also recognized—and took steps to avert—another potential negative consequence of the mixed-income model. The presence of market-priced residences has a predictable effect of increasing property values in the entire neighborhood, which in turn can drive out low-income residents. In East Lake, home values rose at nearly four times the rate of Atlanta as a whole. To help keep low-income residents in the broader East Lake neighborhood, the foundation has begun to purchase properties in recent years with the long-term goal of developing a greater supply of affordable housing. A decade after The Villages opened, an analysis comparing original East Lake Meadows families to a control group of other AHA-assisted families found no significant statistical difference between levels of public assistance the two groups received; this finding suggested that low-income Meadows residents were not being pushed out of the development by an infusion of new residents paying market prices for their housing.

In addition to its ongoing commitment to provide affordable housing, ELF works to break the cycle of poverty through its Resident and Community Support Program (RCSP), which offers financial literacy and career development workshops and training aimed to help low-income residents become more self-sufficient. While RCSP serves all residents of The Villages, regardless of income,

d. East Lake Meadows was not an anomaly in Atlanta. Other public housing developments shared similar problems, leading the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the early 90s to designate the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA)—which is now recognized as one of the most effective housing authorities in the country—as one of the nation's worst (Newman, 2002).
it makes a “special nudge” for those in subsidized housing, according to its manager Jennifer McCrary, a longtime workforce development professional. In its short history, the program already boasts successes, like that of a woman who recently found a new job after being unemployed for more than a year. “She stopped doing it alone,” McCrary noted, pointing out the woman’s gains from the program.

In addition, RCSP strives to nurture relationships among neighbors through a variety of events, such as holiday parties, which provide a fun way for subsidized and market-rate residents alike to interact.

The former East Lake Meadows was defined by concentrated poverty, dilapidated housing, substandard education and rampant crime.

Pre-K–college educational continuum

The East Lake Foundation also began building a cradle-to-college educational pipeline that would be especially important in increasing the odds of success for the neighborhood’s young people. As noted earlier, before the CCI in East Lake formed, student achievement at the local elementary school had been abysmal. Following the closing of that school due to low enrollment, ELF successfully obtained the city’s first charter from the Atlanta Public School system. This was no simple feat: during a contentious process, at a time when charter schools were unknown to most, the foundation worked to ease concerns about both the unfamiliar funding strategy for the proposed charter and the school’s approach.

Armed with their charter, ELF partnered with the New York-based, for-profit charter management organization Edison Schools to open Drew Charter School in 2000 and provide instructional services for five years. The school took over responsibility for instruction in 2005 and has operated independently ever since. Youth from The Villages of East Lake receive first priority to attend Drew as well as ELF’s early childhood and enrichment programs. Second priority goes to residents in the greater East Lake community, and third priority to residents from other neighborhoods in Atlanta. Today, 84 percent of pre-K–ninth-grade students from The Villages attend Drew. The students reflect the neighborhood’s socioeconomic diversity, with approximately 62 percent of them receiving free and reduced-priced lunches.

During the 2012-13 academic year, Drew was one of 315 charters in Georgia, the majority of which are located in metro Atlanta. Drew students are easily recognizable by their crisp khakis and forest green shirts. They participate in extended-day programming, which lengthens the traditional school day, and can choose to participate in expanded learning opportunities through Drew’s After School Program, offered for a modest fee.

“Not only do students have a place to be while their parents are at work, youth participate in a really high-quality and fun program,” said Lindsey Luckzynski, Drew’s director of strategic partnerships. She noted that enrichment activities are geared toward students’ interests, such as gardening, learning Mandarin, and breakdancing.

Drew infuses a strong culture of achievement and character education into the school. Their STEAM curriculum is consistent with the trailblazing spirit of the school’s namesake, Dr. Charles R. Drew, the renowned doctor and researcher who played a seminal role in creating blood plasma processing. The STEAM curriculum integrates the arts into the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The entire curriculum is grounded in building literacy and aims to foster both academic excellence and creativity.
Innovative, interdisciplinary projects abound. During Drew’s STEAM Discovery Day, parents and visitors can experience the curriculum in action. Students showcase their skills and talents through a number of distinctive outlets. During the popular “Nerdy Derby,” to cite one example, students zoom across the school’s outdoor track in race cars they built themselves.

Through partnerships with local universities, such as Georgia Tech, students at Drew have access to eclectic programs in music, technology, and robotics. Drew also collaborates with the Center for Teaching at The Westminster Schools, a renowned private school, to deliver professional development to its teachers.

Once the new school was established, ELF and Drew realized that too many students were entering school not ready for kindergarten. In response, the foundation enlisted early childhood education providers, such as the East Lake Sheltering Arms and the YMCA’s East Lake Early Learning Academy, to shrink the “school readiness gap” between low-income children and their peers from households with more resources. “What we’re doing with children in early years is addressing the disparity of vocabulary and critical thinking skills,” explained Comer Yates, executive director of The Atlanta Speech School, which focuses on language and literacy.49

Partnering with The Rollins Center for Language and Learning at The Atlanta Speech School, early education teachers receive high-quality literacy training that they apply to their work with East Lake children. The Rollins Center has also been a key partner at Drew Charter School, providing high-level professional development around language, literacy and writing to teachers in all grades.

Having established a pathway from birth to middle school, the East Lake CCI moved to address the other end of the educational continuum. “Our (East Lake) kids were going off to 16 or 17 high schools,” explained Cynthia Kuhlman, director of educational achievement at the CF Foundation and chair of the Drew Charter School Board of Directors.50 “That transition point was where we were losing them,” she added.51 ELF and Drew galvanized support from residents and the Atlanta Public Schools’ Board of Education in 2012 to extend its charter to create a high school.

The first students began the 2013-14 academic year in temporary facilities, and the new 200,000 square-foot Drew Charter School Senior Academy adjacent to Drew Charter School is slated to open summer, 2014.52 “Cradle to college seals all those transition points where low-income kids are extremely vulnerable and are liable to slip through the cracks,” said Kuhlman.53

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Community wellness

Children’s voices shriek gleefully as they leave Drew through a main door connecting the school and the YMCA, where they participate in gym classes taught regularly by agency staff in the gym. Students play basketball, volleyball and other games, filling the large, airy building with sounds of cheers and laughter. Meanwhile, older residents circle the raised track overhead, and an energetic instructor loudly encourages adults in a group exercise class. As
part of their physical education at Drew, students can learn to play golf through the East Lake chapter of The First Tee, a nationally recognized golf and life skills youth program. “Youth learn more about themselves than golf skills. [We] use golf as an engine to teach life skills,” explained Nyre Williams, the program’s executive director.54

In conjunction with providing golf as a gym class at Drew, The First Tee also offers after-school and summer programs. More than 600 children participate in these programs in East Lake.

The Charles R. Drew Charter School was one of just 23 schools around the country who won the Grow Anywhere Tour contest. On March 15, 2013, the Burpee Food Truck brought up to 50 vegetable plants for the East Lake Community Garden, and up to 1,300 pounds of fresh produce for the community.

Through gardening and related programs, the foundation offers a variety of ways for East Lake residents to combine improving their health with education. ELF approached the Southeastern Horticulture Society (SHS) to create a community learning garden where residents can grow their own produce and young people can participate in fun outdoor activities. After conducting research that indicated a high rate of diabetes and obesity in East Lake, ELF expanded its partnership with the SHS to create an urban farm. The society employs youth during an annual summer program to teach them firsthand about organic farming and managing a market.

This experience is further integrated into the community through a garden at Drew, where all students are involved in activities that range from building literacy skills by reading about plants in the garden to joining a master gardening program that deepens their knowledge about gardening techniques.

In 2009, East Lake residents organized the East Lake Farmers’ Market, a seasonal market that expands residents’ access to local fruits and vegetables. Often, low-income individuals lack options for healthy foods, and when availability exists, produce is more expensive than unhealthier choices.55 The farmer’s market in East Lake responded to these barriers by providing another option besides Publix for buying produce and by doubling the value of food stamps.56 By increasing access to healthy foods, the array of wellness programs can help to improve the diet of residents, which can ameliorate overall health and reduce obesity.

While the farmers’ market received significant financial support from ELF, the plan originated with residents—and affirmed ELF’s belief that improving conditions in the neighborhood would instill in residents a greater sense of ownership and possibility, and empower them to develop initiatives on their own that would further enhance their quality of life.

**Intentional alignment**

Research demonstrates strong and visionary leadership is essential for engaging stakeholders, setting clear goals, devising theories of change aligned with these goals, and effectively implementing strategies.57 As the lead organization, ELF spearheads the effort and oversees the crucial alignment of partners. “In typical urban development, the school and Y would be separate,” explained former Mayor
Franklin. “Here [we have] a combined Y and school. [These] relationships didn’t happen by chance; they happened because the foundation said we wanted to maximize relationships.” Greg Giornelli, chief operating officer of Atlanta-based Purpose Built Communities, observes “[Our approach] takes mixed-income housing, directly connected to a cradle-to-college pipeline, and all of those directly connected to thoughtful community wellness programs ... these things do not organically spring up.”

The joining of Drew to the YMCA—and, more importantly, the integration and alignment of their programs and activities—exemplifies ELF’s philosophy of intentionality. “The work is so integrated and connected that it has to be coordinated and seamless, like an ecosystem all working towards a shared goal,” said ELF’s Shoy. The YMCA’s executive director, R.C. Pruitt, echoes that sentiment: “What makes a great collaboration are entities with similar missions.”

ELF also cultivates intentionality through mutual support among the foundation’s partners. For example, Drew is able to address the myriad needs of students who live in The Villages by working with ELF’s Resident and Community Support Program. “Because of the support services that [ELF] provides, it can position us and increase our chance to be successful with students,” said Kuhlman. “The wrap-around services that [ELF] provides to build community, like their community garden and urban farm, help us, too, because we want to build a sense of community in the school.”

In addition to forging and maintaining partnerships, ELF facilitates collaboration by brokering solutions among stakeholders. For example, ELF enhanced safety and efficiency in the neighborhood by helping to coordinate security patrols among Drew Charter School, the Charlie Yates Golf Course, and The Villages. As the lead organization of the CCI, ELF is responsible for ensuring accountability among its partners. ELF accomplishes this formidable task by developing shared goals among partners. For example, the YMCA and Drew support and depend on each other, which builds accountability.

To complement its strong alignment of partners and community residents, ELF has strategically developed relationships with powerful public and private entities. It is no coincidence that its 14-member Board of Directors represents diverse sectors of the wider community. The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) partnered with ELF to redevelop East Lake Meadows. When it applied for its initial charter school, and later to expand the charter to include a high school, ELF enormously benefited from Drew’s strong ties to (and ongoing respectful relationship with) the Atlanta Public Schools (APS). Don Doran, the principal at Drew, previously served as a principal in an APS school. He argues, “It really is all about relationships.”

Drew’s partnerships include not only local universities and The Westminster Schools, but also The Rollins Center for Language and Learning at The Atlanta Speech School. ELF has cultivated strategic alliances in the corporate community. The foundation possesses a longstanding relationship with The Coca-Cola Company, headquartered in Atlanta, whose sponsorship of the annual PGA TOUR Championship at the East Lake Golf Club financially benefits ELF and the First Tee of East Lake.

The East Lake Foundation has been serving junior golfers since 1995, and established one of the country’s earliest First Tee programs in 2005.
Community engagement and community-building

Consistent with best practices of CCIs, community engagement and community-building efforts in East Lake have stimulated positive relationships among the neighborhood’s diverse partners and residents, bolstered individuals’ active involvement in various community and youth development projects, and increased leadership capacity. From the beginning, resident engagement was a legal requirement for the redevelopment of East Lake Meadows. Although the Atlanta Housing Authority stipulated the broadly defined mixed-income guidelines, the community was allowed to determine more specific elements, such as the ratio of public housing to market-rate units.

From 1994 to 1998, ELF regularly met with AHA and the Resident Planning Committee, a formal entity created to represent East Lake residents. According to Carol Naughton, who at the time headed AHA’s development team at East Lake, residents were rightly skeptical, based on previous experience, about the housing authority’s ability to provide safe and decent housing. “AHA was unable to fix a toilet, let alone drive community revitalization,” she candidly remarked.

Building mutual trust and respect would therefore be an important first step. According to Naughton, “keeping small and big promises” played an instrumental role in fostering trust between ELF and East Lake residents. The foundation demonstrated its commitment by participating in community-wide events, such as celebrations and clean-up activities, and deliberately nurturing relationships. When Naughton suddenly needed to pick up her sick kindergartener from school, she brought him along when she accompanied a group of residents to look at properties that could serve as a blueprint for the redevelopment of East Lake Meadows. “I was seen as a working mom for the first time,” she said.

In addition to engaging residents directly through the Planning Committee, ELF reached out to surrounding neighborhoods. For example, former Mayor Franklin raised awareness about specific aspects of the project—such as the ability of all East Lake residents, not just those in the mixed-housing development, to utilize the neighborhood’s amenities.

The four-year community engagement process culminated in the Planning Committee’s approval of the Redevelopment Cooperative Agreement, which “represented a milestone that things were moving forward,” said Naughton.

ELF has continued to actively engage residents in a variety of ways. During its charter school application process, the foundation reached out to residents to gauge support for the new school.

This support, coupled with the support of the Atlanta Public Schools, was crucial to the eventual opening of the Drew Charter School in 2000. When ELF partnered with the Southeastern Horticulture Society, the latter worked closely with residents to help design the East Lake Community Learning Garden. SHS employed “outside-of-the-box solutions” to nurture community engagement, such as offering a variety of vegetables and herbs to residents of The Villages, who later planted them and grew, among others, tomatoes, kale, and collard greens.

Building mutual trust and respect would therefore be an important first step.

A resident of East Lake since 2002, Doug Williams recounted another vivid example of how community engagement became embedded within the neighborhood’s revitalization work. Williams, formerly president of the East Lake Neighbors Community Association, worked closely with ELF to address issues affecting the neighborhood. An initial project involved resurrecting a decrepit park known more for drug dealing than for its playground. Williams reached out to both long-term and newer residents to launch a collective visioning process.

Residents conceived ideas for a new park, and their vision became reality thanks to a successful grant application. “[It became] our park, not the city’s park. We did that; it’s nice...
for our families,” Williams said, describing residents’ sense of ownership and empowerment stemming from their involvement. “Instead of just doing it, [ELF] is going back to the community,” he added.

Leveraging and learning from data
To take advantage of research that shows the benefit of using data to guide strategy, ELF is implementing an integrated system that can link data across agencies. “This system will allow us to best understand how these different interventions are strengthening each other,” explained Evan Smith, community development advisor at Purpose Built Communities, which is overseeing the implementation of the data system. Partners will be able to access data across the participating organizations, allowing them to better leverage resources. For instance, if two siblings are performing at different levels academically, partners will be able to see which school each child attends, whether they participate in The First Tee and/or Drew’s after-school enrichment programs, and whether they are residents of The Villages and therefore have access to community wellness supports.

Flexible and diverse funding
The relationships that ELF so intentionally cultivated have enabled the foundation to secure financial support and other resources from private and philanthropic funders that allocate flexible sources of support. In 2011, the foundation raised $3.5 million. Longstanding support has come from Coca-Cola, which has provided more than $13 million, and the East Lake Golf Club. (See Appendix I for a list of the foundation’s supporters.)

While ELF already possesses a strong and diverse cadre of supporters, the Foundation is steadily expanding its group of funders. “The goal is to diversify funding streams in order to become a self-sustaining organization,” said Amy Macklin, who directs the foundation’s fundraising department as vice president of resource development.

Building a youth system
In creating its three pillars of transformation—an educational continuum, wellness, and mixed-income housing—the East Lake Foundation and its partners also enabled the neighborhood’s young people to experience a multifaceted “youth system.” As noted earlier, because children develop across varied and overlapping contexts (family, schools, neighborhood), extensive research suggests that aligning key supports across these contexts and applying them to the needs and strengths of each young person will produce positive effects in their lives. Reducing the concentration of deep poverty through mixed-income housing, for example, can reduce poverty and build social capital from which children benefit. Enhancing wellness boosts school attendance and performance, reinforcing schools’ efforts to improve academic achievement (as do extended school hours, after-school programs, early learning opportunities and other programs available to children and youth during out-of-school time).
School success, in turn, over the long term contributes to wellness and to lifting young people out of poverty. They are all connected. East Lake’s experience has only reinforced the importance of embedding each young person within such a system. The transformation of East Lake from a neighborhood with few elements of a youth system into an area where all children have access to the advantages of such a system’s holistic and mutually reinforcing effects should be viewed as a critical factor in the improved outcomes for East Lake’s young people.

Measuring success

Recent studies have already revealed significant improvements in the greater East Lake neighborhood. An economic analysis by the University of Georgia’s Selig Center for Economic Growth found that East Lake’s revitalization generated more than $347 million in economic output in 2007. The researchers’ analysis showed that this benefit was the result of a number of factors: economic development that created jobs and raised revenue, capital expenditures in the neighborhood, anticipated economic advantages to Drew Charter School graduates, net growth in residents’ income, housing market appreciation, revenue from the PGA Tour Championship, and savings from reductions in crime.

Another study, focusing on similar factors in the community, found that East Lake’s revitalization produced a net benefit in social welfare services of $30 million during a 15-year period. At the same time, despite these overall gains, the study indicated that both fixed-income and low-income homeowners and renters experienced net losses due to rising property values in the neighborhood.

East Lake’s educational outcomes are even more striking. Drew Elementary School ranks first among 58 elementary schools in Atlanta Public Schools; the middle school ranks third in the city. The most recent results on Georgia’s Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) indicate that 97 percent of Drew students in grades 3-8 met or surpassed state standards in all subjects, while an even higher number (98.5 percent) met or exceeded expectations in math and reading. The state of Georgia recognized Drew’s excellence with a $1 million Race to the Top grant in 2012 that will enhance the school’s STEAM curriculum.

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Meanwhile, Drew earned a top honor as the Georgia Charter School of the Year in 2012. “Drew is demonstrating that you can be successful regardless of zip code, income, or race,” Doran said.

Such success has led to an unanticipated challenge: increased student demand for spots in the school. Drew uses a lottery system and, for the first time this year, lacked...
enough slots to accommodate not just the students in the Villages at East Lake but all youth in the two surrounding neighborhoods. Fortunately, the school recently received a grant from the Georgia Department of Education to disseminate best practices to other district schools. “We want to lift all the schools up,” emphasized Doran, who is hopeful that Drew’s progress can be translated to local schools that will benefit all students in East Lake.88

Catalyzing change beyond East Lake

East Lake’s extraordinary story illustrates how approaches and lessons learned from other initiatives not only can inform comprehensive community change efforts but help them succeed. As the number of such efforts has expanded, and as awareness of an urgent need to improve outcomes for young people has grown, organizers of community coalitions have taken a keen interest in East Lake’s work.

Just as ELF’s leaders were intentional about following a model whose key features were validated by research and experience, they also have been intentional about bringing that model to others. In 2009, Tom Cousins, along with mutual fund manager Julian Robertson and Warren Buffett, co-founded the nonprofit consulting firm Purpose Built Communities, and former mayor Shirley Franklin, Greg Giornelli, and Carol Naughton joined the leadership team. The firm’s mission is to share the lessons of East Lake and help other communities apply its model for “holistic revitalization” of troubled neighborhoods. To date, Purpose Built Communities has partnered with organizations in Birmingham; Charlotte; Indianapolis; New Orleans; Omaha; Rome, Georgia; and Spartanburg, South Carolina. It plans to expand to a total 25 communities in the years ahead.89 Through these partnerships, the firm offers comprehensive consulting services, at no cost to the communities, based on ELF’s coordinated holistic revitalization model.90 Professional services include a community advisory team, connections to partners and support organizations, best practices, and immersion in a community of practice.91

Purpose Built’s founders recognize that their model, which has worked so well for East Lake, might not represent the right approach for every community. Based on their experience, they believe the model is poised to operate most effectively in communities that are able to implement mixed-income housing, possess strong leadership capacity, can leverage relationships with partners from diverse sectors, and are focused on a geographically-defined area. As Purpose Built Communities continues to share the East Lake model, its lessons may inform other communities that are striving to become places where young people and families alike lead healthy, thriving lives.

Dramatic neighborhood transformations do not mean that communities can expect to achieve dramatic results quickly or by following an easily replicated, cookie-cutter formula for change. Though no two neighborhoods are exactly alike, East Lake offers a compass that can point organizers in the most promising direction. Because the remarkable turnaround occurred through a process characterized by systematic intentionality—a rigorous reliance on what research and the experiences of other communities revealed as best practices—East Lake’s experience suggests that other neighborhoods facing challenges that may seem intractable can experience their own long-term transformations by aligning their efforts with a set of guiding principles.

At a time when poverty rates are as high as they were in the mid-1960s, when the so-called War on Poverty began; when achievement gaps between children living in affluence and those living in poverty remain wide; when the consequences of those gaps are more extreme; and when communities find themselves still searching for ways to break the vicious circle of intergenerational poverty; the story of East Lake’s resurrection and its implications should come both as welcome news and as a catalyst for concerted local action on behalf of America’s young people.
APPENDIX 1

East Lake Foundation engages wide range of partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Housing Authority</td>
<td>Partnered with ELF to create The Villages of East Lake, a mixed-income housing development, in 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta Public Schools</td>
<td>Supported ELF’s founding Atlanta’s first charter school in 2000, Charles R. Drew Charter School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Yates Golf Course</td>
<td>Nine-hole public golf course whose net proceeds support ELF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles R. Drew Charter School</td>
<td>In partnership with the Atlanta Public Schools, ELF opened the city’s first charter school in 2000. Drew enrolls 1,200 pre-k –9th grade students and provides a science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) curriculum grounded in literacy</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Residential, Inc.</td>
<td>Property manager of The Villages of East Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lake Golf Club</td>
<td>A historic golf club where the annual PGA TOUR championship occurs. In addition to these proceeds supporting ELF, the founding sponsor companies contribute to ELF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publix</td>
<td>East Lake’s first grocery store in 40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coca-Cola Company</td>
<td>Chief sponsor of the annual TOUR Championship, which benefits ELF</td>
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<tr>
<th>PHILANTHROPIC</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola</td>
<td>Proceeds from the TOUR Championship support ELF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousins Family Foundation</td>
<td>The family foundation of philanthropist and developer Tom Cousins, which created ELF</td>
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<tr>
<th>NONPROFIT</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Lake Family YMCA</td>
<td>Connected to Drew Charter School, the YMCA provides recreational, community, and health and wellness programs, in addition to early learning education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lake Farmers Market</td>
<td>Provides healthy produce to residents, while also promoting community relationships and the local economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lake Neighbors Community Association</td>
<td>A volunteer organization comprised of residents who advocate about issues affecting the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Center</td>
<td>Infant, toddler, and pre-k early education and care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Horticultural Society</td>
<td>Manages community learning garden and urban farm, engaging youth and families in various educational and recreational activities</td>
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Source: Adapted from “East Lake Partners” on the East Lake Foundation website.
## APPENDIX 2

### List of Key Informant Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE &amp; ORGANIZATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie Carisle</td>
<td>Professor, Georgia State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Chura</td>
<td>Director, Southeastern Horticulture Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Doran</td>
<td>Principal, Charles R. Drew Charter School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Franklin</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer, Purpose Built Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Giornelli</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer, Purpose Built Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Knight</td>
<td>Former Co-Director, Rollins Center for Language &amp; Learning, Atlanta Speech School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Kuhlman</td>
<td>Director of Educational Achievement, Charles R. Drew Charter School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Lindholm</td>
<td>Resident, East Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsey Luckzynski</td>
<td>Director of Strategic Partnerships, Charles R. Drew Charter School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Macklin</td>
<td>Vice President of Resource Development, East Lake Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer McCrary</td>
<td>Resident and Community Support Program Manager, East Lake Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Naughton</td>
<td>Senior Vice President, Purpose Built Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sejal Patel</td>
<td>Community Development Advisor, Purpose Built Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC Pruitt</td>
<td>Group Vice President and Executive Director, The YMCA/East Lake Family YMCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TJ Ragan</td>
<td>Facilitator, Rollins Center for Language &amp; Learning, Atlanta Speech School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Ryshke</td>
<td>Executive Director of Center for Teaching, The Westminster Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Shoy, Jr.</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer, East Lake Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Smith</td>
<td>Community Development Advisor, Purpose Built Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna Whiting</td>
<td>Associate Director for Teacher Education Partnerships, Georgia Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Williams</td>
<td>Resident, East Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyrevere Williams</td>
<td>Director, The First Tee of East Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comer Yates</td>
<td>Executive Director, Atlanta Speech School</td>
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Transforming East Lake


Developmental Systems Theory


*East Lake, Atlanta*


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About the Center for Promise
The Center for Promise, in collaboration with Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences, is the research center for America’s Promise Alliance. The mission of the Center is to develop a deep knowledge and understanding about what is needed to help create the conditions so that all young people in America have the opportunity to succeed in school and life. The Center’s work will add to the academic exploration of these issues and help give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to effectively work together to support young people.

Our Vision
Every child in America has the opportunity and support to reach their full potential and pursue their American Dream.

Our Mission
Inspire, engage, and unite individuals, institutions, and communities to create the conditions for success for every child in America.

The Five Promises

Caring Adults
Young people need to be surrounded by caring adults providing love, challenge, active support, a vision for a brighter future and opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own lives.

Safe Places
Young people need physical and psychological safety at home, in school, online and in the community.

Healthy Start
Young people need the conditions that make it possible to grow physically, socially and intellectually starting at the earliest ages.

Effective Education
Young people need not only a high school diploma, but a high-quality learning experience that prepares them for college and career.

Opportunity to Serve
Young people need service opportunities to help them develop belonging in their communities, empowerment to be positive contributors and a sense of personal responsibility.
Parramore, Orlando: Leveraging Local Strengths

When a city invests in local strengths, young people in under resourced neighborhoods can be put on trajectories toward a successful future.
The Center for Promise, in collaboration with Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences, is the research center for America’s Promise Alliance. The mission of the Center is to develop a deep knowledge and understanding about what is needed to help create the conditions so that all young people in America have the opportunity to succeed in school and life. The Center’s work will add to the academic exploration of these issues and help give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to effectively work together to support young people.

Foreword

Great progress has been made in the United States on increasing academic proficiency and high school graduation rates, and reducing teen pregnancy rates and homicides. In the low-income, urban centers of our nation, however, progress often stagnates. When a high school diploma becomes less of a norm than violence and incarceration, more needs to be done to transform the lives of young people. Our belief is that this transformation occurs when government, schools, non-profits, and community members come together a common goal, plan together around a common agenda, and act together around common tactics to support their young people.

The Center for Promise series on comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) is meant to provide guidance to communities ambitiously seeking to embark on and currently pursuing these multi-sector, community-wide actions. In the case studies, the reader will find the stories about the why and the how. Why the community decided to create and implement a CCI and how the community was able to move from an idea to substantive action.

We know that those working day-to-day and week-to-week to implement a CCI can often feel hopeless and disheartened, not seeing that progress is being and often feeling as if they are taking two steps back for every step forward. Our goal is for the lessons from these case studies to help communities strengthen their work and, maybe more importantly, give communities hope that hard work can, in fact, result in success. The lives of young people in economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities can be transformed. We do not believe, nor would evidence suggest, that there is one way for a community to support its young people. Rather, there are overarching principles that increase a community’s chance for success. Here, we start to tell the story of how.
The aptly named Division Avenue remains a demarcation line between predominantly white and predominantly black neighborhoods—and a stark reminder of the city’s segregated past.

In the beginning of the 21st century, approximately 73 percent of children and youth in Parramore, Orlando’s historically African American neighborhood, lived below the poverty line, with alarmingly high rates for child abuse and neglect. The neighborhood’s high school had received five consecutive Fs on its performance, and only 66 percent of youth graduated from it during the 2007-08 academic year. Teen girls were more likely than girls in the rest of the city to become mothers, and the juvenile arrest rate in Parramore was 250 percent higher than the rate for Orlando overall.

The majority of babies and toddlers were not enrolled in early learning programs or pre-kindergarten. Few resources were available for high quality early childcare or youth programming. With few other opportunities, children resorted to their own games, often playing along the streets. Teens congregated on corners. Two gangs pitted youth from either end of the neighborhood against each other. According to Parramore teens, violence was so rampant that young people ventured outside at their peril.

Today, statistics and stories illuminate real progress. Although poverty remains a problem, a sense of hope permeates the 1.4 square-mile neighborhood. In one part of the neighborhood, a mixed-income housing development replaced dilapidated, crime-ridden public housing. Families enjoy afternoons at the refurbished Z.L. Riley Park. More young children in Parramore attend childcare and pre-k. Academic achievement and graduation rates have improved. Fewer girls are having babies. Rather than gathering on street corners, youth regularly fill the community centers, where they tackle school assignments, work with tutors in “homework roomz,” conduct online research for school in modern computer labs, or practice with a basketball league in a gym or with a football team at the well-maintained field across from the center. Juvenile crime has decreased precipitously. Gangs, while still present, are less territorial and co-exist more peacefully. In fact, members from opposing gangs now play basketball together at the community centers’ gyms. “One Parramore, one PKZ,” said a young male who has lived in the neighborhood since he was a child.

How did conditions for young people in Parramore improve so quickly? In this case study of community change—based on interviews with community members, reviews of documents, relevant research and observations from a site visit, and reflections on existing research on community efforts to promote child and youth well-being—we will distill key lessons from the experience of Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ) that can inform other community change efforts across the country. As more communities attempt to develop their own initiatives, the community-level outcomes in Parramore, with a focus on outcomes for young people and their families, provide an especially important guide to how such an effort unfolds and what it can achieve.
How and why the Parramore Kidz Zone began

Prior to the 1960s, Parramore boasted a robust African-American middle class. Wallace’s Beauty Mill, Washington Shore Savings and Loan Association, and Prices’ Sewing School were among the neighborhood’s many flourishing, African American-owned businesses. South Street Casino attracted patrons for its arts performances, and the Wells’ Built Hotel hosted famed musical performers such as Ella Fitzgerald and Ray Charles. Mount Zion Baptist Church has served as an anchor for the faith community since it became the neighborhood’s first African-American congregation in 1890. Jones High School has educated generations of Parramore residents since its founding in 1895; for many years it was the only high school in Orange County that African-American students could attend.

Neighborhood leaders are memorialized in the names of Parramore institutions: The Dr. J.B. Callahan Neighborhood Center honors the first African-American doctor at Orange General Hospital, and the John H. Jackson Community Center and Pool recognizes the city’s first African-American recreation superintendent.

During the 1960s, Parramore followed a pattern familiar in many urban communities struggling with wider socio-economic trends. Desegregation enabled the neighborhood’s African-American middle class to move to more affluent areas. The construction of Interstate 4 isolated Parramore from downtown Orlando. Unemployment and poverty became widespread. Seven homeless shelters opened in the neighborhood, and two elementary schools closed. Between 1960 and 2010, Parramore’s population shrank by nearly two-thirds, from almost 18,000 to just over 6,000. Today, the neighborhood’s much smaller population is still predominantly African American, though its demographics are more diverse with a visible Haitian Creole, Caucasian, and multiracial presence.

Efforts to revitalize Parramore began in the 1990s, when city commissioner Nap Ford galvanized support for a comprehensive plan targeting education, social services, safety, training, housing rehabilitation and construction. Unfortunately, progress was difficult and conditions remained bleak. Following his election in 2003, Mayor Buddy Dyer again summoned the city’s political will to address the neighborhood’s needs. He convened the Parramore Task Force, comprised of both residents and city government officials, which outlined key areas for improvement. In 2005, Mayor Dyer and District 5 City Commissioner Daisy W. Lynum joined together to start Pathways for Parramore, a city-led initiative that translated the task force’s recommendations into five core vehicles for comprehensive change: safe and affordable housing, public safety, business development, children and education, and quality of life. Orlando addressed each of these core areas through the city department whose responsibilities most closely aligned with the work; for instance, the Housing and Community Development Department focused on producing new affordable housing and restoring older units in Parramore.
During this time, Lisa Early, who now oversees the entire Department of Families, Parks, and Recreation, was serving as the Mayor’s Director of Children & Education. Prior to that, she worked at a local child welfare organization. In this role, she led a study that spotlighted the prevalence of child abuse and neglect, culminating in a “call to action” presented to Mayor Dyer. Early’s deep commitment to children echoed the mayor’s vision; he soon appointed Early to a new children and education position within his office.

In this new position, Early embarked on an extensive two-year planning process, identifying the current needs of children and families as well as effective models for addressing them. With Mayor Dyer’s backing, Early led a visit to the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) in New York City to learn how HCZ had been created, developed, and begun to have an impact on the children, youth and families in its 100-block footprint.

After returning, Early experimented with pilot projects while simultaneously setting the stage for a formal, community-wide initiative.22 Pilot projects included an effort to enroll hundreds of Parramore youth in summer camps, a youth advisory committee to shape programming and recruit their peers, and field trips and events. While some projects were successful (camp enrollment was hugely popular, and youth were eager to share their perspectives on the advisory committee), others saw lackluster responses. For instance, an event organized at one of the community centers aimed at publicizing childcare subsidies drew only a few families. Of the residents who did attend, Early noticed that they flocked to one table where a local nonprofit played upbeat music, offered coffee and held a raffle. “That place had a buzz,” Early recounted. To remedy the issue of low attendance, she contracted with the nonprofit to manage recruitment and marketing, and adapted similar grassroots outreach as HCZ. The nonprofit broadcasted programming by driving a colorfully painted car throughout the neighborhood that blasted music, and disseminated fliers to residents, as well as deploying tactics such as door knocking and peer-to-peer marketing.23

During this pilot period, the mayor tasked Early with launching an official initiative called Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ) in 2006. This initiative became the primary pathway for addressing the needs of children (even as city officials recognized that the other core areas of focus, such as housing and public safety, also impact children).

A $500,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, matched by local charitable foundations, provided essential seed funding. After the three-year grant expired, Early not only sustained the effort but also gradually built up the organization’s capacity so that by 2014, PKZ employed a nine-person staff (not including youth employees), which she refers to as a “team of insiders,” conveying their level of connection to the community. Brenda March works closely with Early as the manager of the initiative.

The larger landscape: Applying the potential of CCIs as change agents

Efforts to transform distressed communities are hardly new; in fact, they go back more than 100 years.24 In the 1990s, comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) began to gain popularity.25 Recently, CCIs have been implemented more widely, through both federal efforts such as the Promise and Choice Neighborhoods grant initiatives and place-based initiatives26 funded and run by local organizations throughout the country.27 Because CCIs foster cooperation, instead of allowing programs to operate in individual silos, and because they recognize that the work must occur within broader, structural and interrelated systems, they offer the potential to bring about transformative change.

This collaborative approach aims to create what is now often referred to as “collective impact.”28 Moreover, empirical evidence has identified the defining attributes of CCIs as essential to successful community transformations.29,30 Drawing on this information and on the experiences of other communities, the leaders of PKZ sought to achieve collective impact by integrating these evidenced-based CCIs best practices into the structure and processes of their initiative.
Parramore Kids Zone  |  Case Study

PKZ youth participate in book club

A blueprint for change

Starting with the research-supported general principles for comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), Early and her team ultimately developed a blueprint for improving youth outcomes through Parramore Kidz Zone that would be built atop several foundational pillars:

- Assessing and understanding the community’s needs;
- Evaluating other comprehensive, place-based efforts—most notably, the HCZ—and developing a theory of change for Parramore;
- Leveraging existing resources and local supports to the greatest extent possible;
- Bringing in additional supports as needed;
- Engaging the broader community—including and especially residents of the Parramore neighborhood—into the effort;
- Creating a “cradle-to-career pipeline” of supports to help young people succeed;
- Relying on a lead organization to coordinate the work of partners, provide administrative support, drive the overall effort and promote accountability;
- Leveraging and learning from data; and
- Securing flexible and diverse funding.

Assessing and understanding the community’s needs

Before establishing a model for supporting Parramore’s youth, PKZ recognized that it was necessary to understand the specific needs of the community. Early initiated a process of systematic research, collecting data from the census, city and state government departments, and neighborhood resident surveys, and documenting multiple, interconnected barriers to success for local young people. In addition to cataloging the high rates of crime, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy and obesity, and lack of access to quality youth programming noted earlier, her team found complex challenges that included a learning gap that began soon after birth and persisted through high school. Families also struggled to meet basic needs such as food and health care.

Early and her colleagues recognized that previous efforts at revitalizing Parramore had fueled distrust among residents because conditions did not visibly improve and residents experienced few concrete benefits. Locals also suspected that earlier efforts to gather data on poverty and academic achievement (among other indicators) made residents little more than subjects to be studied and shamed rather than active participants in neighborhood improvement. “That data is their suffering, [and there was a sense that] that data was being used for the benefit of outsiders,” Early explained. Sensitive to this history, PKZ has diligently strived to ensure that resources remain in the neighborhood for the long-term rather than be used to pay outsiders to come into the neighborhood, only to leave once funding evaporates.

Early’s team also engaged a diverse set of stakeholders, including Parramore residents, child services organizations, school officials, and the private and philanthropic sectors, to understand pressing needs and generate ideas. This collaborative planning stage was facilitated by Early’s familiarity with, and existing relationships within, the field of child welfare.
The data from this research shaped PKZ’s decision to focus on education. As PKZ has matured, the emphasis on education has deepened. An analysis by the Health Council of East Central Florida, which has conducted an external evaluation of the initiative since its beginning, revealed that the percentage of Parramore youth who performed at or above grade level generally lagged behind both the district and state. Initially, PKZ concentrated on building capacity for youth programming by coalescing partners so it could leverage neighborhood resources and enhance them when necessary. Once these relationships were crystallized, the initiative used multiple forms of data to guide its strategic focus on education.

These data included statistics compiled during PKZ’s planning stages, as well as from evaluation efforts and families’ own perspectives.

Evaluating other comprehensive, place-based efforts and developing a theory of change

During their trip to HCZ, Early and her team evaluated to what extent adapting elements of that model might be appropriate for Parramore, focusing on HCZ’s cradle-to-career support pipeline. The model is grounded in the theory of positive youth development (see box on page 8), which recognizes and seeks to build upon the strengths of young people and targets multiple developmental contexts (family, school, community) and the “whole child” (cognitive, social, emotional, physical). Early’s team proposed a similar model for PKZ, with cradle-to-career supports focusing on education, expanded learning opportunities, and health.

In other ways, PKZ departed from the HCZ model. Most notably, Early and her team decided to leverage, invest in, and, as much as possible, scale up the nascent, under-resourced assets that already existed in the neighborhood. Only when resources in the neighborhood did not align with the needs derived from the ongoing assessment of the neighborhood did PKZ draw on additional supports. Moreover, instead of paying well-funded outside organizations to come into the neighborhood to serve Parramore children, these organizations were offered matching funding and/or free or low-cost space to locate their services in the neighborhood—but only if they also invested their own resources. This balance of leveraged and new resources was meant to enhance community strengths, bringing outsiders into the community only if needed; and to ensure that outside organizations working in the neighborhood had “skin in the game.” In addition, PKZ determined that the city would serve as the lead organization to align the work of various partners involved in the effort and to promote greater accountability.

“That someone else that you don’t even know wants to see you do good and provide something for you...that was like a homerun for me... I took off with it.”

In order to guide neighborhood transformation, PKZ followed a concrete theory of change: if a critical mass of young people experience the benefits of data-driven investments from cradle to career, then a community can positively affect a range of outcomes, improving education while reducing juvenile crime and teen pregnancy. A parenting education program, for example, would boost school readiness. Expanded health and wellness programs would address the child obesity and teen pregnancy rates. In a fashion similar to HCZ, PKZ would employ grassroots recruitment strategies to engage young people and their families. Since every facet of the educational pipeline is interconnected, PKZ channeled resources into each component simultaneously rather than sequentially.
Leveraging existing resources

In making their decision to leverage (and strengthen) local resources—and to identify which new resources they might need to bring into Parramore—Early and her team located assets already in the neighborhood. These included the two community centers (Callahan Neighborhood Center and Jackson Community Center), the Downtown Recreation Center, youth development organizations, early learning providers, and local schools, including a charter elementary school and a public middle and high school. The community and recreation centers represented a natural alliance since they operated within the city’s Department of Families, Parks, and Recreation, which Early directed. Her city-level position also enabled her to successfully recruit other organizations and schools as key partners.

PKZ established a formal governance structure and processes. For example, to create clear expectations for partners, the initiative decided to allocate grants to partners through a trust established by the city at the Community Foundation of Central Florida, and to utilize contracts that stipulated specific reporting requirements that align with PKZ’s goals. In this way, expectations of partners and specific responsibilities (such as the number of PKZ youth they must serve per year) are explicitly defined. As lead partner, PKZ meets with other partners mostly on an individual, as needed basis, and shares updates about resources, events, and other important information through informal channels, such as via telephone.

Creating cradle-to-career supports

Early childhood

Recognizing that quality early learning represents a significant component of a cradle-to-career pipeline, PKZ sought to target children’s readiness to succeed in school. Its earlier needs assessment had shown that Parramore families encountered a long wait list for early learning programs, with little chance of securing a slot. Less than half of young children were enrolled in childcare or pre-kindergarten. To increase enrollment, PKZ expanded childcare subsidies, providing matching funds that brought in available federal and state childcare dollars. The money was managed through a public-private partnership led by the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County, an umbrella organization. This greatly expanded the number of vouchers available for Parramore families. PKZ also offered additional space to the Orange County Head Start at the Callahan Neighborhood Center, effectively doubling the number of Head Start slots in the neighborhood.

Bolstering enrollment in childcare and pre-kindergarten programs (and enlarging the pool of available providers, as in the example of Head Start) became PKZ’s primary early childhood focus during its first several years. However, data demonstrated that young children continued to lag behind their peers on district and state benchmarks that measure school readiness. In response, PKZ partnered...

Positive youth development and building a ‘supportive youth system’

In thinking conceptually about the work, the organizers of Parramore Kidz Zone were guided by the theory of positive youth development. Rather than focusing solely on “deficits” to be ameliorated, a positive youth development perspective views young people from a strengths-based perspective, seeking to build upon their individual human assets and the resources in the community to help them lead healthy, successful lives.

This theory, moreover, rests on a recognition that children develop across such varied and overlapping contexts as family, schools, neighborhood; what we call a “youth system.” Extensive research suggests that enabling children to experience a “supportive youth system,” which aligns key supports across these contexts and applies them to the needs and strengths of each young person, will produce positive effects in their lives. For example, PKZ leveraging local organizations and programs both inside and outside of school delivers a seamless, sustainable continuum of support.

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with the Early Learning Coalition to explore the possibility of emulating HCZ’s parent education series known as Baby College.

A visit to Harlem and participation in technical assistance training for community-based organizations offered a blueprint for starting a similar program in Parramore.

In 2011, expanding its partnership with the coalition, the University of Central Florida (UCF), and Nap Ford Community School, PKZ launched the Baby Institute, a nine-week parenting education session offered three times per year. “We’ve been able to build a strategy that’s much broader than what any of us could have done by ourselves,” remarked Karen Willis, chief executive officer of the Early Learning Coalition, which operates the Baby Institute. Like similar programs that range from structured parent groups to one-on-one home visiting services, the Baby Institute focuses on improving school readiness by engaging parents of young children. In addition to enhancing parents’ knowledge about their children’s cognitive and social-emotional development, the Baby Institute equips families with important information about choosing high quality early learning providers.

During Pilot Year 3 in 2012-13, a total of 57 infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-aged children and 79 parents “graduated” from one of the three series.

The UCF partnership was instrumental in designing the Baby Institute’s evidence-based curriculum, which integrates research on cognitive and social-emotional development. Dr. Judy Levin, a professor at the University of Central Florida’s College of Education and Human Performance and an early childhood expert, translates relevant research into applicable lessons. On a rainy Saturday morning, parents in one classroom watched an educational video about infant language development, while others joined in a dynamic conversation about various disciplinary practices and their effects on toddlers’ cognition and emotional regulation. Meanwhile, their children participated in supervised activities with similar-age peers.

Additionally, addressing parents’ psycho-social needs, the Baby Institute brings in a psychologist to offer support. “We knew that our focus was child [school] readiness, but we [also] needed to strengthen the parents,” explained Dr. Nina White, manager of the Baby Institute.

**Elementary, middle, and high school**
PKZ invested in local programs and Parramore’s two community centers in ways that expanded their capacity to serve school-age children and create a comprehensive educational pipeline. Funding from PKZ enabled the programs to hire tutors to offer free academic support to elementary, middle, and high school students in both after-school and summer programs at neighborhood organizations such as Page 15, a literacy-based nonprofit, and New Image Youth Center, which offers an array of youth programming, as well as at the two community centers. Additionally, the initiative provides funding for FCAT (the mandatory state standardized test), SAT, and ACT preparation courses. Before PKZ was formed, only two neighborhood sites offered youth programming; now, 10 do. Greater capacity in turn enables increased enrollment.
New Image Youth Center provides a seminal example of working symbiotically with community organizations to create a continuum of support for the youth of Parramore. New Image served only a handful of children in a dilapidated Parramore church in 2005. The organization lacked non-profit status and had neither staff, board, nor funders. Although the founder, Shanta Barton-Stubbs, was an outstanding children’s services practitioner beloved by Parramore children and their parents, the lack of non-profit status, annual audits, and grant writing staff presented barriers to mainstream public and philanthropic funding. As a result, Barton-Stubbs paid for New Image’s work from money she earned at her night job. Without better funding to maintain the facility, New Image regularly faced the threat of closure due to building code violations. By 2011, because PKZ had leveraged its relationship with donors, New Image had a robust array of donors and served some 55 children daily in an expanded, renovated facility.

These programs are conducted in alignment with Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) to bolster schools’ ability to meet students’ needs both inside and outside of the classroom. Educational partners include Grand Avenue Primary Learning Center, Nap Ford Community School (an elementary charter school that opened in 2000), Howard Middle School, and Jones High School.

**Student advocates: Caring adults to help young people overcome obstacles**

In addition to forging a connection between school and after-school programs, PKZ sought to integrate academic assistance into Parramore’s schools. Here, PKZ’s leaders made caring adults a core element in the transformation of the neighborhood and the improvement of outcomes for young people. Importantly, PKZ’s definition of a caring adult goes beyond protecting or supervising youth; caring adults also help young people navigate their way through school, the broader community and life.

This effort involved adapting another component from HCZ’s model, the Student Advocate program, which PKZ piloted during the 2013 spring semester at both Howard Middle School and Jones High School. Each week during the regular school day, advocates (who are paid PKZ staff) provide tutoring and advising, both one-on-one and in small groups, to caseloads of 15-26 students.

Advocates consult teachers to find the most feasible and least disruptive period to meet with students and work with youth mostly in “pull-out” sessions. Each semester, in addition to academic assistance, advocates help students identify “SMART” (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) goals, and devise effective strategies for attaining them through an “Academic Success Plan” (ASP). SMART goals relate to both academics and social development (such as healthy decision-making and organizational skills). Advocates track progress along key indicators such as attendance, grades, and suspensions, as well as monitor their ASP growth.

Developing a rapport with students entails simple but crucial steps: listening and offering a consistent presence...
in their lives. Others build this relationship by personally connecting with students' experiences. “I grew up in a similar situation,” said Marvin Peoples, a student advocate at Jones High School. “That’s my unique way to relate to them.”

In a neighborhood where the student population has acute needs, the program appears particularly helpful. “There are so many opportunities for [students] to say, ‘I can’t do it,’” said Latasha Greer-Adawale, coordinator of the program, noting that some face chronic homelessness and live in families that are unable to provide basic resources. “It’s the advocates’ job to help them identify roadblocks ahead of time and navigate around them.” For instance, one advocate noticed that a student was frequently missing school. When she investigated, she learned that the student was living in transitional housing lacking a washer and dryer. If the student didn't have time to take his laundry elsewhere, he often skipped school out of embarrassment over his unwashed clothes. The advocate helped to resolve the issue by informing the student’s family that they could use laundry machines for free at the Rec Center.

“**It’s the advocates’ job to help them identify roadblocks ahead of time and navigate around them.**”

In another case, a student was struggling with her assignments. The advocate soon noticed that she was missing important instructions because she could not clearly see the board in her classroom. The advocate linked her family to a resource for free eyeglasses. “A lot of our students need that extra care,” said Dr. Valeria Maxwell, principal of Jones High School. “[The advocates] are very supportive of our students with the greatest needs.”

The advocate program’s benefits are not restricted to students who are struggling academically. Stronger performing students also sometimes require a greater level of individual attention. For example, advocates can encourage these young people to enroll in more challenging classes or expose them to opportunities that align with their interests and strengths, such as accompanying a stellar math and science student to a magnet school fair to learn about high schools specializing in these subjects.

**Post-secondary education and career**

Recognizing that many students will need continued support to succeed after high school graduation, PKZ provides additional resources. These supports include college tours, college and financial aid application support, and granting scholarships. “Growing up, I didn’t think about college,” one youth said. “[The tour] gave me a college experience that I never had.” The initiative also assists youth with the college registration process, and even drives some to campus. Once students enroll in college, PKZ continues to interact with them.

For instance, a young woman currently attending an Orlando-area college works part-time as a PKZ intern, enabling her to continue working with her student advocate on areas such as writing. Accountability is embedded into this relationship. If the student does not maintain her grades, she will not be able to work as many hours at her internship. PKZ also retains regular contact with students attending college beyond the Orlando area. A 22-year old who attended college in another state received regular care packages and phone calls about his grades, creating a sense that “someone cares about you.” In 2013, a record 27 PKZ youth participants entered post-secondary education programs.

PKZ’s paid internship program also helps to prepare youth for careers by equipping them with marketable skills and linking them to job opportunities. Interns, who receive a stipend from the city, provide administrative support, tutor younger children, and assist with childcare for parents participating in the Baby Institute, among other duties. A male youth shared that he finds a sense of purpose in his intern role that stems from his own childhood. “It’s more than just being an intern,” he emphasized. “Growing up, I didn’t have an older sibling to look up to. ... I want to be able to show the kids that you can do whatever it is that you put your mind to.” The Simeon Resource and
Development Center for Men is another resource for Parramore youth, offering GEDs, vocational education referrals and enrollment support, and job placement assistance.

PKZ partners also offer enriching artistic experiences for school-age youth. For instance, youth can participate in the Digital U Program, a digital media course that teaches video production and editing skills at the University of Central Florida’s Center for Research and Education in the Arts (CREATE). “I’ve always liked to write, so this was right up my ally,” said a female teen who created a digital story that juxtaposed a recent experience with both violence and faith. “It felt good to release everything,” she added. “That’s when I knew I want to do digital media.”

PKZ also enables youth to explore interests that might not be offered by partner organizations. For example, the initiative enabled resident Lacary Williams’s son to develop his dance talent by providing tuition to participate in a professional studio. “He fell in love with [dance],” she said.

“That’s how I got him to take school seriously.” Williams’s son went on to earn fifth place in the national America’s Got Talent competition. Other options for artistic expression include an after-school piano program at the Steinway Society of Central Florida, pottery classes at the Orlando Pottery Studio, a summer slam poetry camp at Page 15, and the Parramore League of Artistic Youth (PLAY), which supports budding artists.

Beyond academic, postsecondary and career support, PKZ connects youth to recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities—all of which can have a positive impact on school performance. School-age children can participate in mentoring, life skills support, and community service projects at the New Image Youth Center. Simeon Resource and Development Center for Men provides a “Rites of Passage” program for 12-17 year-old boys. The Callahan Neighborhood Center and Jackson Community Center have greatly expanded their offerings and more than doubled the number of Parramore participants since 2006, when PKZ began. They now offer numerous opportunities, including the Boy Scouts, a girls’ empowerment group, a piano program, the Boys & Girls Club, various games, arts and crafts, summer camps, and access to modern computer labs.

Beyond schools: Youth development throughout the community

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PKZ connects older youth to an array of age-appropriate activities, including mentoring, educational and cultural experiences, and community service projects. PKZ’s partner, Simeon Resource and Development Center for Men offers mentoring and case management support for youth up to age 24. “What does a boy need? What does a man need? We make adjustments as necessary,” said Bobby Lyons, a consultant at the organization. PKZ also arranges field trips that expose young people to new opportunities, such as an “eco-safari” in which high school students traveled to a wildlife conservation park in Central Florida with PKZ staff and their science teachers and rode horses for the first time. Outside of structured activities, teens

Montaius Stewart of New Image Youth Center, a PKZ partner, proudly displays his full scholarship award letter from Claflin University, alongside New Image’s executive director Shanta Barton-Stubs.
can enjoy their own “hang-out” spots at both community centers and the Rec Center.

**Health and wellness**

Knowing that healthy children perform better in school, PKZ’s health and wellness initiative aims to address pediatric health concerns in the community. When PKZ launched in 2006, approximately 32 percent of Parramore youth were obese (the rate for adults was even higher). In response, the Health Council of Central Florida formed a consortium—including PKZ, Hebni Nutrition Consultants (HNC), and Get Active Orlando—to identify barriers to healthy lifestyle behaviors and propose recommendations. This collaborative effort documented 22 convenience stores in the neighborhood but not a single full-service supermarket.

HNC, which has offered nutritional services in Parramore since 1995, sought to address the lack of access to affordable, healthy food by partnering with Sunlife Grocery, a local convenience store, to expand its offerings to include fresh produce. Today, shoppers find a variety of vegetables and fruit strategically located at the front of the store, where shelves formerly were stocked with chips and other junk food. HNC is working to provide even greater access to fresh food through a mobile farmer’s market, adapted from a similar program in Chicago.

In close cooperation with PKZ, HNC also teaches classes on healthy eating and cooking specifically for the African-American community, which is disproportionally affected by diet-related diseases. In a gleaming, state-of-the-art industrial kitchen, Parramore residents—both young people and their parents—learn basic nutrition facts and cooking techniques.

During a recent class, PKZ youth prepared their own turkey burgers, following a recipe dubbed “porcupine sliders” that included an intriguing combination of spinach, cranberries, and brown rice (students were surprised that the final product was so delicious). Meanwhile, parents in the Baby Institute learn about healthy alternatives to red meat and the nutritional value of brown rather than white rice. PKZ reinforces these dietary lessons by providing a wholesome snack to all students in its after-school programs. Recently, as part of a federal grant award, the initiative began to offer a full meal after school in addition to the snack. Students also receive opportunities to learn about nutrition during activities at the community centers. Addressing nutrition in another way, PKZ encourages Parramore’s young people to participate in two community gardens that they helped design and several youth now grow vegetables there. Youth also help maintain a modest garden plot behind New Image’s building.

In order to stimulate more physical activity by young people, PKZ established basketball, baseball and football leagues in the neighborhood. It also enhanced students’ access to cheerleading, golf and swimming, among other activities. Partners like New Image complement PKZ’s health and wellness programming with their own fitness activities, such as karate and yoga.

Finally, PKZ works to expand neighborhood residents’ access to health care by granting referrals. A teen pregnancy prevention program offers safe-sex education at five sites, while the Simeon Resource and Development Center for Men, which serves approximately 50 PKZ youth, provides STD prevention and counseling and individualized case management.
Economic assistance

While focusing on young people, PKZ recognizes that families often need additional support to navigate unexpected financial challenges. The persistently high poverty rate in Parramore further attests to families’ ongoing economic needs. Accordingly, the initiative offers up to $500 per year to families in order to help them cover past due rent and utility bills, among other things. In 2011-12, the families of nearly 300 Parramore children benefitted from this service.

Relying on a lead organization to align the work of partners

Empirical evidence underscores that strong, visionary leadership is vital for setting concrete goals, articulating theories of change aligned with these goals, mobilizing stakeholders and effectively implementing strategies.

PKZ serves as the lead organization that coalesces partners synergistically around a collective goal of promoting positive outcomes for young people. This approach also creates a system of accountability among partners.

The initiative promotes collaboration through mutually supportive relationships among its partners. The initiative has cultivated a close relationship with Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), allowing PKZ to deliver its Student Advocate program at neighborhood schools and to facilitate the implementation of OCPS-instructed academic programs at the community centers after school and during the summer. Prior to PKZ, students at Nap Ford Community School attended non-academic after-school activities at the Callahan Neighborhood Center. After deciding to focus on education, the collaboration explored strategies for partners to reinforce each other’s work. To this end, PKZ approached the Nap Ford Community School and proposed that teachers identify struggling students who were attending after-school programs at the Callahan Neighborhood Center—a step that would enable these programs to work more effectively with the young people who needed the most academic help. The Jackson Community Center and Grand Avenue Primary Learning Center work together in a similarly structured public-private partnership.

In another instance, OCPS collaborated with the community centers in Parramore to offer summer academic programs at Callahan and Jackson rather than in the traditional school environment. This shift appealed to parents, whose schedules did not always coincide with summer programs available at schools, and to youth who preferred the project-based learning format offered at the centers. “We’re giving students the option to explore their own thinking and knowledge, at their own level, at their own pace,” said Katrina Summerville, OCPS specialist, who hopes to extend this approach to after-school programs during the year. In this way, schools and youth programming strengthen each other’s work.

“We’re giving students the option to explore their own thinking and knowledge, at their own level, at their own pace”

Another example of reciprocal relationships involves PKZ’s partnership with the University of Central Florida (UCF): PKZ participants benefit from UCF’s expertise, while university students acquire practical professional development experience.

Parramore youth participate in the university’s digital media program, while UCF students volunteer in many PKZ programs, such as tutoring youth in after-school programs and assisting at the Baby Institute (whose curriculum was designed by a UCF professor). UCF students pursuing master’s degrees in elementary education augment youths’ literacy skills during a Saturday “Reading Camp” and a summer reading loss prevention program at the community centers (while both of these literacy programs existed before 2006, PKZ helped to expand them).

In addition to forging and maintaining partnerships, PKZ fosters collaboration by brokering solutions among stakeholders. For instance, many Nap Ford Community
School students said they felt unsafe traveling on foot to the after-school program at the Callahan Neighborhood Center from their school, about a five-minute walk away. Nap Ford’s principal communicated this concern to PKZ, which facilitated a meeting between the principal and the Callahan Neighborhood Center director. Together, they strategized a feasible solution: Callahan staff would walk Nap Ford students to the center after school.

**In addition to forging and maintaining partnerships, PKZ fosters collaboration by brokering solutions among stakeholders.**

One of the inevitable challenges that accompany managing a broad network of partners is that their level of collaboration varies. An example of intensive connection is Parramore’s Head Start program, which is situated in the Callahan Neighborhood Center. This co-location leads to regular interaction; the partners refer families to each other’s programs and to other resources available through PKZ. Toinette Stenson, director of the Head Start program, described the partners’ collaboration as a “constant rotation of open communication.” “It’s almost a seamless transition,” echoed Callahan director Joseph Caesar. “We all work together.” Some programs, however, function more independently. Julia Young, executive director at Page 15, an after-school, literacy-based program that serves approximately 100 PKZ youth, observed that communication can be challenging among so many partners, and she is not always aware when another organization is offering a program similar to hers. “[There’s an] opportunity to share more info so [we’re not] operating in silos,” she said.

To complement its strong alignment of partners and community residents, PKZ has developed relationships with diverse public and private institutions (see Appendix 2 for the complete list). One notable partnership involves the local NBA franchise, the Orlando Magic, which has helped sponsor several capital projects. The basketball team remodeled the computer lab, renovated the outdoor basketball court, rebuilt the playground in collaboration with KaBOOM!, and built a brand new Teen Room at the Jackson Community Center. It also funded renovations to New Image’s space; among the improvements is a colorful mural that brightens the façade of the otherwise plain building.

PKZ has also initiated a close partnership with the Orlando Police Department and launched an innovative activity dubbed “Cops and Kids” that pairs cops and youth together in dragon boat races. “In the past the only relations I’ve had with cops was arresting someone I know,” said one Parramore youth. “[This allows me] to get to know them and build a relationship.”

**Engaging the broader community**

Community engagement efforts in Parramore reflect a number of CCI best practices. Prior to PKZ’s inception, Mayor Dyer solicited community input regarding the needs of Parramore’s children and youth through resident participation in the Parramore Task Force, while Early and her team reached out to a wide range of sectors. As noted earlier, in addition to engaging neighborhood adults, PKZ organized a youth advisory committee through which young people could shape programming and recruit their peers.

PKZ continues its commitment to engaging families and youth today. In 2007 and 2012 the initiative surveyed neighborhood households in order to assess current needs.
and priorities, and findings directly influenced programming. For example, in response to the surveys, PKZ created a mechanism for offering economic assistance to families. Surveys also revealed tutoring as a number one priority for residents—a finding consistent with neighborhood-level data indicating a need for more academic support. As it did during the planning phase, PKZ strives to empower youth to steer programming. “Kids inform all our work; our older youth programs have always been youth-driven,” Early said. She pointed to an example. At one time, she said, teens had packed the cramped PKZ office because they had no other space at the Rec Center where they could casually spend time. After discovering an old locker room that was no longer being utilized, the youth suggested transforming the musty area into their own hangout headquarters.

Next, they presented a formal plan to PKZ’s partner, the Orlando Magic, and obtained a $25,000 grant from NBA basketball star Dwight Howard to redesign and paint the space. Today, the Teenz Shack is seldom empty except during school hours; youth relax with their peers and regularly host movie and game nights.

Finally, PKZ builds community by investing in neighborhood-based organizations. Strategic investments cultivate local leadership. In some instances, the initiative provided crucial resources to help a program, such as Page 15, to establish itself. “[PKZ] was instrumental in helping us get off the ground,” said Julia Young of Page 15. In other cases, PKZ scaled up longstanding organizations like the Simeon Resource and Development Center for Men, which has served Parramore for decades. With new funding from PKZ, the center has reached more young people in the neighborhood, and its leaders have been able to enhance their knowledge and skills by attending national conferences and availing themselves of other professional development opportunities.

**Leveraging and learning from data**

From the beginning, and in keeping with CCI best practices, PKZ has followed a data-driven approach. As noted previously, Orlando conducted research on neighborhood-level indicators to ascertain which community within the city had the gravest needs.

“All data pointed to Parramore,” Early said. In similar fashion, PKZ relied heavily on data to inform programming once the initiative began, contracting with the Health Council of East Central Florida to monitor aggregate academic performance, juvenile crime, and teen pregnancy.

PKZ’s decision to focus more and more on education, as described earlier, was driven by data. As another example of the ongoing role of information, PKZ initially collaborated with a partner on youth workforce development. However, mandatory reports revealed that few youth in the program had secured jobs. As a result, PKZ terminated the relationship, instead opting to execute its own employment program (discussed in the Postsecondary education and career section).

Soon, data will facilitate programming in Parramore even more systematically. PKZ is working with its evaluators to implement a database that will provide the central team—and all partner organizations—with readily accessible information about program participation. This information in turn will enable more targeted interventions. For instance, participant records stored in a shared location will permit an after-school program like New Image to know if a youth is participating in the Student Advocate program; if not, New Image can refer the student to the program. In this way, partners can more effectively ensure that young people benefit from the full range of PKZ resources. The new database will also enhance both accuracy and efficiency in record-keeping. “When you spend a lot of time manually manipulating data, it takes away from the analytics,” said Renee Jackson, fiscal manager at PKZ. “As we move forward into a more automated environment, we will be able to step back and say, ‘We know this now, so what else do we do?’”
Flexible and diverse funding

As the principles behind effective CCIs dictate, PKZ aims to build a broad base of funders to secure sustainability. Thus far, the initiative receives the majority of its support—an estimated two million dollars—from the city of Orlando. AmeriCorps represents another government funder, and recently awarded PKZ an approximately $280,000 grant to expand its Student Advocate program. PKZ garners about $400,000–$500,000 annually from corporations and foundations. The initiative’s association with Mayor Dyer has also sparked other sponsorship opportunities. Early and her team express a steadfast confidence in PKZ’s long-term viability because the program aligns with the city’s data-driven approach and is demonstrating its ongoing impact. Nonetheless, fundraising presents challenges; city government possesses limited capacity to engage in development activities and apply for grants.

Further, PKZ has worked to create a sustainable model by leveraging local resources in Parramore. For instance, PKZ has augmented the capacity of organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club at the Jackson Community Center. This illustrates a powerful example of PKZ’s use of assets already present in the neighborhood, rather than funneling funding into brand new programs (except for the Baby Institute and Student Advocate programs, which did not exist previously). In turn, PKZ strives to ensure that youth participate in these program, which possess a greater number of slots for Parramore youth.

CCI principles also underline the importance of utilizing sources of flexible funding, working with funders to gain some leeway in how their financial support is used. PKZ discovered the importance of such flexibility firsthand when a grant award prohibited money from being spent on food. However, as most youth development organizations have learned from experience, offering snacks increases youth participation.
Measuring success

Since PKZ’s inception, evaluation reports have consistently shown positive trends across a number of key indicators, including juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, and educational performance.57,58 The most recent report available (fiscal year 2011-12) documented a 56.5 percent decline in the proportion of Parramore juvenile arrests as a percentage of juvenile arrests for Orlando as a whole.59 This significant shift parallels a changing dynamic for gangs and even for what it means to live on opposite ends of Parramore.

“Now I go to the other side of Parramore and see someone I used to fight every day in middle school, and it’s like, ‘Let’s go play basketball,’” said a young male who has lived in the neighborhood since he was nine years old. “That didn’t change until the PKZ program came.”60 Meanwhile, the teen pregnancy rate declined by nearly 30 percent between 2006 and 2012 (this drop also mirrored a similar pattern in Orange County as a whole).61

“Now I go to the other side of Parramore and see someone I used to fight every day in middle school, and it’s like, ‘Let’s go play basketball.’”

Evaluating the changes in educational outcomes is more complicated. The state assesses school readiness according to the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener, which utilizes the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR).62 ECHOS data showed that Parramore’s school readiness gap closed from 2008-09 to 2011-12, with scores surpassing the district and state averages (though Parramore’s significantly smaller sample size, compared to the district and state, might have affected the validity of results).63 On the other hand, FAIR revealed that the gap in reading had widened compared to both the district and the state.64 Again, a small sample might have affected these outcomes.65

The Florida ACT (FCAT) reading and math scores from 2010 (based on a score of 3 or above, signifying either at or above grade level) offer the most recent data for examining year-over-year progress at the elementary and secondary levels.66 FCAT scores between 2007 and 2010 reflect generally positive trends, evidenced by reduced reading and math gaps between Parramore students and the averages for students at the district and statewide levels (for detailed comparisons see Appendix 1).67,68

The improvement was especially dramatic at the elementary school level, where the math and reading gaps shrank by roughly 50 percent.69 In fact, in both math and reading, the gaps narrowed between Parramore students and the district and state averages across the entire K-12 spectrum, with one exception: the middle-school reading gap actually widened slightly.70 Despite the gains across all grade levels between 2007 and 2010, Parramore students’ scores sank when FCAT revisions were introduced in 2011, similar to results for both the district and state.71

The graduation rate at Jones High School (where roughly half of Parramore youth attend72) has increased by 26 percentage points since the early years of PKZ.73 During the 2011-12 academic year (the most recent year available), 92 percent of students graduated at Jones High School compared to only 66 percent in 2007-08.74

The Early Learning Coalition monitors the impact of the Baby Institute through pre- and post-tests and by videotaping parent-child interactions. The most recent evaluation report observed measurable gains related to parents’ knowledge, especially among infant and preschool parents, as well as increased positive behavior between parents and their children.75 Reflections from parents during an informal group conversation about their experiences in the Baby Institute also illustrate this growth. For instance, one mother has noticed that she exhibits greater patience with her young children, while another parent shared that she reads more often to her daughter as a result of the program.76
Recently, ELCOC introduced new standards to measure provider quality.77 Once these benchmarks are uniformly utilized, the coalition will be able to track more rigorously outcomes related to school readiness. However, PKZ children attend nearly 80 early learning programs; many are located outside of the initiative’s designated zone, making them difficult to evaluate.78 Arguably, a clear need exists to better assess provider quality given that only 20 percent of PKZ children were enrolled in high quality child care during 2012-13 (this was the same percentage for the Baby Institute parents).79 The coalition is optimistic that providers will improve their quality once they adapt the new assessment tools; it plans to train PKZ staff to refer families only to programs working toward these standards.80 Meanwhile, the Baby Institute has developed an alumni portion of the program in order to sustain gains made by its graduates.

For health and wellness, the most recent evaluation report showed that 818 youth—representing the largest number of participants in all types of PKZ programming (including academic, early childhood, and youth development)—participated in athletic and related activities.81 However, program participation is currently the only factor assessed. When the initiative is able to further extend programming in this area, PKZ expects to monitor health indicators, such as body mass index (BMI).82 “We need to drill into the data and see how effective we are,” Early said, adding that PKZ plans to hire a health and wellness coordinator to strengthen this work once funding has been identified.

Reflecting on PKZ’s success to-date, Early attributes progress to both “investing in community strengths and building the capacity of those strengths,” which she concludes are key to the initiative’s sustainability.83 Other lessons for communities considering a similar initiative include starting small in order to target resources in neighborhoods with the greatest needs (PKZ serves a 1.4-mile radius), employing simple strategies such as providing space (often free of charge) to organizations (in Parramore’s case, Page 15 and Head Start are prime examples) to attract programs to the neighborhood and enhance available resources, and pursuing long-term solutions that recognize the depth of problems that low-income communities face.84

At the same time that PKZ has helped to address the educational needs of children, Pathways for Parramore, Orlando’s broader neighborhood revitalization effort, has produced important strides for the overall community. For example, a neighborhood park has been restored and beautified, a Hope VI mixed-income housing development replaced former decaying public housing, and construction and transportation projects to connect Parramore to the rest of the city are underway.85

Parramore’s place-based model in the midst of neighborhood change

Currently, the city of Orlando is spearheading several upcoming large-scale projects in Parramore—including a major-league soccer stadium, a dynamic mixed-use development showcasing the digital media industry, and new public transportation infrastructure—which will likely transform both physical and economic dimensions of the neighborhood. The city has also contracted with an urban planning firm to produce a new comprehensive plan for the neighborhood (slated for completion later this year). These multiple forces of change elicit varied responses from community members. Some residents and youth
have voiced concern about potential negative effects from the projects, such as fear of losing their homes; others have expressed tentative hope that these investments might revitalize the Parramore community.

As a city-level initiative, PKZ is well-positioned to advocate on behalf of children and youth in Parramore, ensuring that the neighborhood’s comprehensive plan prioritizes projects that help young people thrive. To that end, PKZ will engage with the city’s urban planning team during its one-year planning process, and propose ways to enhance the lives of children and youth in Parramore. For example, Early recommends educational linkages that connect the new mixed-use, digital-media space to opportunities for local youth.87

Looking ahead—and beyond the neighborhood

Looking forward, PKZ aspires to replicate its place-based model to serve more young people throughout the city. First, the initiative would expand to Holden Heights, a neighborhood that abuts Parramore, but not currently included in the zone. On a broader scale, Early envisions the model outgrowing its name. “This has never just been about kids in Parramore,” she said. “It’s about all kids struggling in the city.” However, funding remains a formidable obstacle for executing these plans.

Meanwhile, PKZ remains committed to leveraging local resources to improve outcomes and prospects for Parramore’s young people. Specifically, the initiative aims to fortify facets of its current programming—including programs to improve health and wellness, more programming for older youth, and greater academic support and wraparound services.88 Previous economic analyses of similar place-based efforts that have invested long-term in education demonstrate tremendous savings from reduced juvenile crime and anticipated higher earnings from educational attainment.89

Although a cost-benefit analysis has not yet been conducted in Parramore, these findings suggest that PKZ would experience gains similar to those achieved by other such initiatives. The initiative embodies a promising model for other communities inspired by HCZ’s approach but that share PKZ’s financial constraints and lack access to Harlem’s level of private funding. Leveraging local resources and strengths offers a powerful pathway toward strengthening communities for children, youth and families.

The lessons of Parramore

Parramore’s remarkable experience suggests several overarching lessons:

1. **Concentrating investments in a defined area drives neighborhood transformation.** Place-based community change models have multiplied in recent years, inspired by the examples of the Harlem Children’s Zone and others. Parramore Kidz Zone reveals that starting small and investing resources in a defined geographic radius that displays the greatest need can “move the needle” on community-level outcomes, such as juvenile crime, education, and teen pregnancy.

2. **Investing in local resources is a sustainable pathway toward neighborhood transformation.** Place-based initiatives can leverage community strengths and augment capacity to deliver key programming. Parramore’s experience demonstrates that such a strategy avoids reinventing the wheel by utilizing and scaling up existing community assets, as well as builds a financially sound model that is consistent with the economic reality of many communities. Additionally, local investment nurtures long-lasting community relationships based on mutual trust.

3. **Change efforts should be based on what research suggests will work yet adapted to local conditions.** The PKZ team applied a data-driven approach to develop its theory of change, undergirded by best practices from the Harlem Children’s Zone and other efforts, as well as sound empirical evidence. This research led to the initiative implementing a cradle-to-career pipeline model that has been systematically monitored. At the same
time, PKZ was not merely an attempt to replicate the model of Harlem Children’s Zone that had so influenced their thinking. Instead, PKZ adapted the model—and in some areas departed from it significantly—because they recognized that conditions in Parramore were not exactly like those in Harlem. While low-income neighborhoods face many similar challenges, no two are precisely alike.

4. **A youth system is important to improving outcomes for young people.** All young people grow up multiple contexts (families, schools, and all aspects of a community) that potentially possess the key developmental supports they need to thrive. Parramore’s experience reinforces the importance of putting young people at the center of their planning, ensuring that they are embedded within these developmental supports and that these assets are applied to the needs and strengths of each young person. PKZ’s transformation of a neighborhood with few supports to one with numerous resources has profoundly impacted the young people of Parramore.

5. **Finally, Parramore’s experience demonstrates that, when a city invests in local strengths, young people in impoverished neighborhoods can be put on trajectories toward a successful future.** Parramore’s story is especially relevant to the work of youth-focused organizations such as America’s Promise Alliance. Our theory of action has always centered on the belief that improving outcomes for young people with limited resources and opportunities necessitates drawing on the entire community to infuse neighborhoods with more of the Five Promises—the fundamental resources all children need to succeed: caring adults in all areas of their lives, safe places, the essential elements that make for a healthy start and healthy development, an effective education and opportunities to help others. Some have wondered whether systematic attempts at such neighborhood revitalization were practical, or even possible—and whether, if successful, they could yield the results for young people that proponents sought. The answer from PKZ is an emphatic “yes,” which should give both encouragement and guidance to those urgently seeking to change the odds for the least advantaged young people in other cities.
Postscript: A Point of Community Pride

Late in the BCS Championship football game on January 6, 2014, freshman Levonte Whitfield returned a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown that put Florida State ahead of Auburn. The Seminoles went on to win the game and the national championship.

Levonte, who is affectionately known as “Kermit,” is a longtime participant in Parramore Kidz Zone and a graduate of Jones High School. In a way, the whole community had helped Kermit get from Parramore to Pasadena, California, where the championship game was played.

Numerous donors had helped cover the cost of Kermit’s participation in PKZ’s youth football program since 2007. For the past three years, contributions from the Heart of Florida United Way had financed tutoring, mentoring, college prep classes and a job for Kermit (and others) so he could attend a university like Florida State.

After Kermit’s touchdown, wrote Lisa Early, cell phones buzzed all over Parramore. “Orlando must have heard me screaming from my home, because I was just that excited,” said Valeria Maxwell, the principal at Jones High School.

When Kermit scored, Early wrote, “It was a dream come true for a young man who faced many challenges but dared to dream anyway, and for all the people who were there for Kermit along the way. It is hard to put into words how much that play meant to Kermit and to his friends in the neighborhood.”

Because so many in the community had invested in the success of PKZ, the cheers in Parramore that night were not only for Kermit Whitfield but for a neighborhood where young people now have real hope of reaching their dreams.
APPENDIX 1

Parramore, District, and State FCAT Scores, 2007–2010


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006–07</th>
<th>2009–10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary School FCAT English Scores</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramore</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Elementary School FCAT Math Scores** |          |         |
| Parramore                         | 40%      | 58%     |
| District                          | 63%      | 70%     |
| State                             | 70%      | 72%     |

| **Middle School FCAT English Scores** |          |         |
| Parramore                          | 38%      | 42%     |
| District                           | 57%      | 60%     |
| State                              | 58%      | 63%     |

| **Middle School FCAT Math Scores** |          |         |
| Parramore                          | 25%      | 40%     |
| District                           | 55%      | 61%     |
| State                              | 57%      | 62%     |

| **High School FCAT English Scores** |          |         |
| Parramore                          | 12%      | 20%     |
| District                           | 38%      | 41%     |
| State                              | 38%      | 44%     |

| **High School FCAT Math Scores** |          |         |
| Parramore                         | 27%      | 49%     |
| District                          | 62%      | 66%     |
| State                             | 62%      | 71%     |
APPENDIX 2

Parramore Kidz Zone’s broad base of partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Orlando, Downtown Recreation Complex, John H. Jackson Community Center, and the Dr. J.B. Callahan Neighborhood Center</td>
<td>Offers free academic tutoring, after-school, and summer programs to PKZ youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County Public Schools</td>
<td>Collaborated with PKZ to offer academic support at the community centers, and to launch the PKZ Student Advocate program at Jones High School and Howard Middle School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nap Ford Community School</td>
<td>Students attend PKZ academic programs and the school offers free space to the Baby Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Learning Coalition of Orange County</td>
<td>Partnered with PKZ to launch the Baby Institute, a parenting education series to increase school readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County Head Start</td>
<td>Offers early learning care and education to Parramore children in PKZ-provided space at the Callahan Neighborhood Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orlando Magic NBA team</td>
<td>Generous supporter of numerous capital projects, including a “Teenz Shack” and updated computer labs at the community centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steinway Society of Central Florida</td>
<td>Offers a free after-school piano program to PKZ youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHILANTHROPIC</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Way of Central Florida</td>
<td>A supporter of PKZ programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne M. Densch Charities, Inc.</td>
<td>Donations to PKZ enable the initiative to expand resources for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando Community and Youth Trust, Inc.</td>
<td>A chief supporter of PKZ’s Youth Employment program, as well as provides emergency economic assistance to families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Foundation of Central Florida</td>
<td>Grants enable PKZ to deliver funds to key partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Parramore Kidz Zone’s broad base of partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NONPROFIT</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Florida</td>
<td>Partnered with PKZ to offer youth programming at the John H. Jackson Community Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Think! Foundation Page 15</td>
<td>Enhances literacy-skills of PKZ youth in PKZ-provided space at the Downtown Recreation Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simeon Resource and Development Center for Men</td>
<td>Provides mentoring, case management, health education and counseling, and GED and job search assistance to PKZ youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Father’s of Central Florida</td>
<td>Offers pregnancy prevention and other health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Start Coalition</td>
<td>Another partner that provides pregnancy prevention services to PKZ youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Central Florida (UCF)</td>
<td>The University provides student volunteers to support PKZ programming, PKZ partners with UCF to offer the Baby Institute, PKZ youth participate in UCF’s digital media program, as well as enrich their literacy skills in a UCF reading camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Image Youth Center</td>
<td>Offers an array of free after-school and summer programming, including tutoring, mentoring, and recreational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebni Nutrition Consultants, Inc.</td>
<td>Offers hands-on classes to PKZ youth and parents on healthy cooking and nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge to Independence</td>
<td>Provides after-school academic assistance to PKZ youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc.</td>
<td>Maintains PKZ’s database and has evaluated the initiative from its inception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc. (4C)</td>
<td>Partners with PKZ to distribute childcare vouchers to families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando Pottery Studio</td>
<td>Enriches the artistic skills of Parramore youth with free pottery classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 3
### List of key informant interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE &amp; ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shanta Barton-Stubbs</td>
<td>Director, New Image Youth Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Caesar</td>
<td>Center Manager, Dr. J. B. Callahan Neighborhood Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Cauthen</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Cartee-Kennedy</td>
<td>Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha Dial</td>
<td>Student Advocate Coordinator, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Early</td>
<td>Director, City of Orlando, Families, Parks, and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Elam</td>
<td>Student Advocate, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latasha Greer-Adawale</td>
<td>Academic Coordinator, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Jackson</td>
<td>Fiscal Manager, City of Orlando, Families, Parks, and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Judy Levine</td>
<td>Professor, University of Central Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby Lyons</td>
<td>Consultant, Simeon Resource &amp; Development for Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacy Mahar</td>
<td>Executive Assistant, City of Orlando, Families, Parks, and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda March</td>
<td>Children and Education Manager, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valeria Maxwell</td>
<td>Principal, Jones High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Roundtable</td>
<td>Baby Institute parent participants, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marvin Peoples</td>
<td>Student Advocate, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jennifer Porter Smith</td>
<td>Principal, Nap Ford Community School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ericka Ransom</td>
<td>Student Advocate, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toinette Stenson</td>
<td>Director, Orange County Head Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina Summerville</td>
<td>Program Specialist for NCLB Services, Orange County Public Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participant</td>
<td>Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Nina White</td>
<td>Baby Institute Director, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacary Williams</td>
<td>Resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Williams</td>
<td>Executive Director, Simeon Resource &amp; Development for Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Willis</td>
<td>CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Orange County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Young</td>
<td>Founder and Director, Urban Think! Foundation, Page 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participant</td>
<td>Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participant</td>
<td>Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth participant</td>
<td>Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Roundtable</td>
<td>10 youth participants, Parramore Kidz Zone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Interim findings from Chicago’s New Communities Program (n.d.). New York, NY: MDRC.


INDEX

2. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
7. Parramore’s child poverty rate decreased from approximately 73% in 2000 to 55% during 2007-11 which is likely attributable to the construction of a Hope VI development that replaced former public housing with mixed-income housing. PKZ determined the most recent child poverty level from the 2007-11 American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates, Parramore, Census Tracts 105, 106, 189. During the 2000 U.S. Census, Parramore constituted three census tracts; however, the federal government modified census tract boundaries between 2000 and 2010. Consequently, a census tract containing affluent blocks not part of the neighborhood has been added to Parramore. This has resulted in skewed data on Parramore from the 2010 U.S. Census. PKZ staff have attempted to perform a block-by-block analysis to elicit more accurate data. In comparison to Parramore’s most recent child poverty level, 21% of children in Florida and 26% in Orlando were below the poverty level in 2012 (L. Early, personal communication, December 17, 2013; 2012 American Community Survey, One-Year Estimates, Selected Economic Characteristics Orlando; 2012 American Community Survey, One-Year Estimates, Selected Economic Characteristics, Florida).
13. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. These efforts include the Settlement House movement of the early 1900s, the War on Poverty in the 1960s, and the rise of community development corporations (CDCs) in the 1980s.
27. The Bridgespan Group, 2011.
29. Several key attributes distinguish CCIs from previous approaches to community change:
   - a collaborative, comprehensive approach, with carefully constructed alignment contexts (e.g. family, school, the broader community) and across institutions (e.g., after-school programs, community health centers, community recreation centers, schools, early child-care facilities), instead of piecemeal, uncoordinated efforts;
   - participation by diverse partners instead of single-sector initiatives;
   - a lead organization that drives the effort instead of a leaderless coalition;
   - a theory of change aligned with the effort’s goals and use of evidence-based strategies/programs;
   - ongoing use of data to guide the effort;
   - an asset-based approach that builds on existing resources and strengths of a community and its residents;
   - engagement of residents as active participants in the effort rather than as passive recipients;
   - a focus on geographically defined areas instead of being too broad in scope; and
   - flexible, non-categorical funding from diverse sources instead of restricted funds that constrain nimble actions.
31. Discussed in Engaging the Broader Community section.
33. While all PYD frameworks espouse a similarly asset-based approach to youth development, its theoretical underpinnings are conceptualized differently by various scholars. For example, the “Five Cs” emphasize the principles of competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring as critical to optimal youth development (J. Lerner et al., 2012; Lerner et al., 2005), and the Search Institute in Minnesota has identified 40 key internal and external developmental assets to collectively benefit young people (Benson, Leffert, Scales & Blyth, 2012).
35. For a review, see Zaff & Smerdon, 2009.
36. A meta-analysis of 77 evaluations on parent training programs documented positive effects related to improved parenting skills and fewer child behavioral problems (Kaminski et al., 2008). However, these effects were associated with specific program components, such as time-out strategies and parent-child role-playing (Kaminski et al., 2008). A home visiting program, the Nurse-Family Partnership is widely recognized for its long-term effectiveness in ameliorating parent and child outcomes (Olds, 2006). Generally, the track record of parent education suggests positive effects from some types of programs.
This graduation number does not include parents who may have graduated and participated in another session (Early Learning Coalition of Orange County, 2013). 

L. Early, personal communication, November 1, 2013.

Parramore Kidz Zone internal document, 2013.

Ibid.

A complete list of PKZ partners is provided in Appendix 2.

L. Williams, personal communication, November, 25, 2013.


Ibid.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013.


Kubisch et al., 2010.

CCI best practices suggest that community-building and community engagement efforts are important for stimulating positive relationships among partners and residents, increasing resident involvement, and expanding local leadership capacity (Kubisch et al., 2010; Trent & Chavis, 2009; Walker et al., 2010).


L. Early, personal communication, December 20, 2013.

Ibid.

R. Jackson, personal communication, October 31, 2013.

L. Early, personal communication, October 31, 2013.


When assessing community-level outcomes, it is important to consider a neighborhood’s mobility (representing the percentage of residents who move in and out of a neighborhood) since a high rate can distort the actual effects that have occurred (Auspos, 2012). Parramore’s mobility rate is approximately 14% and is derived from the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) district and includes schools that serve Parramore youth, including six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school (L. Early, personal communication, December 17, 2013).

Even more striking, juvenile arrests in Parramore decreased by 87.5 percent, with a similar though slightly smaller downturn of 71.3 percent in Orlando from 2006 to 2012 (Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc., 2013).

PKZ youth, personal communication, October 31, 2013.


Ibid.

Ibid.

The gap in reading had widened by 17% compared to the district and by 29% compared to the state (Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc., 2013).


Ibid.

Ibid.

Parramore elementary, middle, and high school students faced a set of revised standards when the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was updated in 2011. In 2014, they will again be evaluated under new, more demanding criteria when Florida bases its curriculum on the Common Core State Standards (Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc., 2013).

Specifically, the elementary school reading gap between Parramore and the district shrank by 50 percent; the gap between Parramore and students statewide decreased by 56 percent between 2006-7 and 2009-10. In elementary school math, the gaps between Parramore students and their counterparts in the Orange County School District and statewide diminished by 48 percent and 53 percent respectively (Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc., 2013).

Similarly, among middle schoolers the gap in math scores between Parramore students and the average scores for OCPS and the state during this same period decreased by 30 percent and 31 percent respectively. At the same time, the middle school reading gap broadened by 11 percent compared to the district’s scores and by 5 percent compared to the state average. At the high school level, the reading gap between the neighborhood’s students and those for the district as a whole declined by 19 percent; it shrank by eight percent compared to the state. Compared to district and state averages, the math gap contracted by approximately 51 percent and 37 percent (Health Council of East Central Florida, Inc., 2013).

About 50 percent of Parramore youth attend Jones High School, while the remaining attend Edgewater and Boone High School, as well as other high schools and charter schools (L. Early, personal communication, December 17, 2013).

Florida Department of Education, 2007-08.


Ibid.


Early Learning Coalition of Orange County, 2013.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


L. Early, personal communication, November, 26, 2013.

L. Early, personal communication, October 31, 2013.

L. Early, personal communication, October 31, 2013; Parramore Kidz Zone presentation, 2012.

87  L. Early, personal communication, November 26, 2013.
88  Parramore Kidz Zone presentation, 2013.
89  Selig Center for Economic Growth, 2008.
90  America's Promise Alliance e-newsletter, 2014.
About the Center for Promise
The Center for Promise, in collaboration with Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences, is the research center for America’s Promise Alliance. The mission of the Center is to develop a deep knowledge and understanding about what is needed to help create the conditions so that all young people in America have the opportunity to succeed in school and life. The Center’s work will add to the academic exploration of these issues and help give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to effectively work together to support young people.

Our Vision
Every child in America has the opportunity and support to reach their full potential and pursue their American Dream.

Our Mission
Inspire, engage, and unite individuals, institutions, and communities to create the conditions for success for every child in America.

The Five Promises
Caring Adults
Young people need to be surrounded by caring adults providing love, challenge, active support, a vision for a brighter future and opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own lives.

Safe Places
Young people need physical and psychological safety at home, in school, online and in the community.

Healthy Start
Young people need the conditions that make it possible to grow physically, socially and intellectually starting at the earliest ages.

Effective Education
Young people need not only a high school diploma, but a high-quality learning experience that prepares them for college and career.

Opportunity to Serve
Young people need service opportunities to help them develop belonging in their communities, empowerment to be positive contributors and a sense of personal responsibility.

America's Promise Alliance
1110 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 900
Washington, DC 20005
202.657.0600
www.americaspromise.org
New Orleans Kids Partnership: Bolstering supports, brightening futures

For nearly a decade since Hurricane Katrina, a community comes together to support its children and families.
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Foreword

Great progress has been made in the United States on increasing academic proficiency and high school graduation rates, and reducing teen pregnancy rates and homicides. In the low-income, urban centers of our nation, however, progress often stagnates. When a high school diploma becomes less of a norm than violence and incarceration, more needs to be done to transform the lives of young people. Our belief is that this transformation occurs when government, schools, non-profits, and community members come together a common goal, plan together around a common agenda, and act together around common tactics to support their young people.

The Center for Promise series on comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) is meant to provide guidance to communities ambitiously seeking to embark on and currently pursuing these multi-sector, community-wide actions. In the case studies, the reader will find the stories about the why and the how. Why the community decided to create and implement a CCI and how the community was able to move from an idea to substantive action.

We know that those working day-to-day and week-to-week to implement a CCI can often feel hopeless and disheartened, not seeing that progress is being and often feeling as if they are taking two steps back for every step forward. Our goal is for the lessons from these case studies to help communities strengthen their work and, maybe more importantly, give communities hope that hard work can, in fact, result in success. The lives of young people in economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities can be transformed. We do not believe, nor would evidence suggest, that there is one way for a community to support its young people. Rather, there are overarching principles that increase a community’s chance for success. Here, we start to tell the story of how.
Fourteen year-old David lives in New Orleans with his father, who is not permanently employed and struggles to meet the family’s basic needs. His father sometimes cannot, for example, afford gas to pick him up from activities such as sports and a church youth group.

Unsurprisingly, David’s participation is sporadic. At school, he is often bored and has been suspended numerous times. He recently moved within the city, and feels unsafe in his new neighborhood. Despite these formidable obstacles, David appears hopeful about the future, aspiring to succeed academically and in basketball. However, a lack of consistent supports across all facets of his life—family, school, and community—threatens these ambitions. “I don’t know who I could trust and who I can’t trust. … I don’t trust nobody but myself,” he said.

The Big Easy’s vibrancy—food, music, and letting “les bon temps roulez”—collides with the harsh reality for too many young people growing up in the city. Nearly 40 percent of youth—approximately 30,000 boys and girls—live below the federal poverty level. Families frequently move, which can disrupt their access to services, and safety is a strong concern among caregivers. Additionally, a lack of reliable transportation can impede access to quality schools—school choice has been a central component of local education reform—and to other activities.

The New Orleans Kids Partnership (NOKP), a cross-sector collaboration of over 40 partners, is driving a large-scale effort to address these complex challenges that David and many other youth and their families face. Nationally, the federal government and community-based organizations are championing collaboration as a tool to meet young people’s varied and overlapping needs. This strategy is far from a silver bullet. Coalescing diverse partners for a common cause is rarely easy. Encouragingly, research has identified a set of common practices that can help sustain such efforts, including carefully aligning the strengths of a diverse group of partners, the selection of a lead organization, ongoing use of data, and a focus on a specific geographic area.

This case study highlights lessons from NOKP’s work to create a comprehensive, integrated approach to serving young people; an approach being implemented within a context of decentralized services, such as schools, that is similar to the context of a growing number of American cities. It draws on multiple sources, including interviews with NOKP leadership, partner organizations, front-line providers (who directly work with young people), caregivers, and local youth; an organizational review; and broader research on community efforts to improve child and youth well-being. We focus on the dynamic evolution of NOKP, from its beginnings as an initiative designed to respond to the impacts of Hurricane Katrina on the well-being of New Orleans’ youth to its emergence as a comprehensive community initiative with a backbone organization leading a broad, but tightly knit collaboration. While NOKP’s history illustrates the challenges that any community faces
when implementing a collaborative effort, it also shows the benefits of:

- producing early “wins”,
- planning carefully,
- creating a clear governance structure and transparent processes,
- building accountability systems and fostering trust, and
- adapting strategies to the local landscape.

As NOKP has strived to catalyze systemic change that benefits New Orleans’ youth, it has made tangible progress toward integrating many of the evidence-based elements that are essential for organizations working together effectively. Lessons from its experiences can inform similar efforts to use collaboration as a transformative tool for supporting young people, as well as uncover the uncomfortable realities of jointly pursuing a common goal. This case study offers hope for communities trying to develop effective collaboratives, showing them that the almost-inevitable trials and tribulations can eventually translate into successes.

**Hurricane Katrina**

**A Catalyst for Collaboration**

In 2005 Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent massive levee failures flooded approximately 80 percent of New Orleans, causing $135 billion in damage, killing nearly one thousand residents, and displacing over a million more—including all of the public school system’s 64,000 students and 7,500 teachers and personnel. Thirty-five percent of public school facilities were damaged.

The storm exacerbated already challenging conditions for the city’s young people. The Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), which oversaw New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS), had long struggled to provide a quality education. NOPS was one the lowest performing systems in the nation, the turnover rate among district leadership was more than three times the national average, school buildings were dilapidated, and it was nearly bankrupt.

Katrina also devastated the New Orleans nonprofit community. Ninety percent of health and human service organizations either lost staff, experienced damage to buildings and/or equipment, and/or lacked necessary supplies. Rebuilding this infrastructure was essential for helping young people and their families recover. An influx of organizations and resources posed another challenge, as efforts were frequently uncoordinated and new nonprofits often lacked the local knowledge necessary to reach residents. It became clear that sharing resources was critical. “Every organization was broken; many didn’t have staff or income,” an early organizer from a local agency recalled. “Everybody was forming collaborations because it was the only way anyone could stand up straight.”

90% of health and human service organizations either lost staff, experienced damage to buildings and/or equipment, and/or lacked necessary supplies

By August 2006, it had become increasingly clear that even an unprecedented disaster response was not meeting the needs of local youth. America’s Promise Alliance explored ways to support recovery efforts. Since its founding in 1997, America’s Promise has encouraged and catalyzed communities to employ a multi-sector, collaborative approach to support young people throughout the country. America’s Promise began conversations with several nonprofit organizations in New Orleans, as well as with state and local officials. These early discussions focused on ways that America’s Promise could enhance efforts to help those displaced by the storm, especially by expanding access to the Five Promises. In order to leverage existing resources and help rebuild local capacity, America’s Promise brought together government agencies and six nonprofit organizations—the Louisiana Children’s Museum, Communities In Schools New Orleans, United Way of Southeast Louisiana (formerly United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area), HandsOn New Orleans, City
New Orleans Kids Partnership

Year New Orleans, and Second Harvest Food Bank—to launch an initiative called Katrina’s Kids.

Some organizations were already well established in New Orleans (such as Louisiana Children’s Museum), while others were new to the area (like City Year). Each was chosen based on its existing infrastructure, its alignment with the Five Promises, and its leadership’s willingness to participate. By collaborating, Katrina’s Kids sought to bring the Five Promises to children and youth. “None of us were whole. …It seemed like a really wonderful time for those of us whose missions involved children to come together and to try to help,” described a staff member at one of the groups involved in Katrina’s Kids. In addition to nearly $500,000 in funding over a two-year period, America’s Promise provided staff support and technical assistance during several months of planning. The local United Way became the coalition’s fiscal agent.

“None of us were whole. …It seemed like a really wonderful time for those of us whose missions involved children to come together and to try to help.”

Katrina’s Kids in the Lower Ninth Ward

Early Momentum Leading to Sustainability

Katrina’s Kids began operating in spring 2007, concentrating its efforts on the Lower 9th Ward. Historically a high-poverty community, the area was flooded by the storm surge following the levee breaches. The neighborhood experienced deep devastation: homes, businesses, schools, churches, and infrastructure were all severely damaged, even destroyed.

In 2007 the initiative hired its first director, who split time between the coalition and United Way. Katrina’s Kids also established a formal governance structure, including a chair and vice chair, a steering committee, a council comprised of representatives from partner organizations, and several working groups.

Katrina’s Kids partnered with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology, the only school to have reopened in the Lower 9th Ward at the time. This relationship helped the initiative reach many of the neighborhood’s most vulnerable students and families, with partner organizations providing a range of resources through the school. The Second Harvest Food Bank addressed basic needs by supplying students with meals to take home, while HandsOn New Orleans engaged youth in community projects, such as painting murals, constructing outdoor classrooms, planting a garden, and cleaning streets near the school. Staff from the Louisiana Children’s Museum organized arts activities through its Play Power program—drama, storytelling, music, among other activities—during the school day. Communities in Schools and City Year New Orleans offered after-school programs and connected students to mentors and tutors. United Way equipped teachers with a career awareness curriculum to enhance their lessons. In addition to programming during the academic year, the initiative’s partners operated camps. For instance, the Louisiana Children’s Museum’s Play Power program enrolled 1,650 youth during the summer of 2007 at sites located at Catholic Charities, Operation Reach, and the New Orleans public libraries.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Katrina’s Kids served nearly 600 students. An evaluation conducted by Policy Studies in Education at the end of that year assessed the attitudes of the youth served by Katrina’s Kids. Although the evaluation was not designed to evaluate causal relationships, the youth reported positive attitudes related to school, helping others at school and home, work, future career opportunities, high school graduation, and the presence of caring adults at school. The results provided preliminary evidence that youth benefited from the supports provided by the collaborative partners.
New Orleans Kids Partnership      Case Study

Growth, Struggles, and Adaptation

Katrina’s Kids next sought to expand services beyond the Lower Ninth Ward to reach more young people. To reflect this broader geographic focus, the group renamed itself the New Orleans Kids Partnership. During this period of growth, NOKP gained 12 new partners, including the Children’s Bureau, Urban League of Greater New Orleans, Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, New Orleans Outreach, the Partnership for Youth Development (formerly the Afterschool Partnership), Kids Rethink New Orleans, Kid smArt, and the Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

America’s Promise continued to play an active role within this new collaboration. In 2008 it awarded NOKP a five-year, over $800,000 grant through its Promise Zone initiative, which focused on strengthening community collaborations connecting underserved youth to the Five Promises. In addition to the grant, America’s Promise assisted with planning, shared best practices (for example, it paid for NOKP partners to attend trainings on topics such as the community schools approach and evaluation), and helped to identify indicators to measure the ongoing work.

During this period, the state sought to improve public education in the city by instituting dramatic changes to NOPS. Post-Katrina, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), which managed NOPS, first laid off almost its entire staff, and later fired them. The state soon passed legislation that authorized the Recovery School District (RSD) to operate 112 of the 128 OPSB schools for a five-year period. (RSD was created in 2003 to manage persistently low-performing schools.) As RSD took over these schools, it hired teachers from organizations such as Teach for America rather than former NOPS teachers, an action that incited considerable anger, leading to a lawsuit that eventually ruled that the local school board had wrongfully terminated them.

Under the state’s control, the number of charter schools in New Orleans grew exponentially, some converted from traditional public schools and others opened by national and local networks. School choice replaced the neighborhood school approach, with the goal of expanding students’ options by enabling them to apply to public schools throughout the city rather than automatically attending their neighborhood school. This process has turned RSD into the country’s first all-charter school system. During the 2013-2014 academic year, 91 percent of public school students in the city were enrolled in charter schools, and only six traditional public schools remain in New Orleans.

NOKP explored strategies for delivering the Five Promises to young people within this decentralized landscape. The coalition decided to implement a community schools model, an evidence-based approach that forges partnerships between schools and community programs and services to offer wraparound supports to students, their families, and local residents. The partnership integrated best practices from leaders in the community schools movement, such as carefully choosing sites, setting clear goals, and using onsite coordinators from NOKP partner New Orleans Outreach to manage the program delivery, and selected schools to pilot the model based on their location, open enrollment policy, student need, and long-term commitment. Partner organizations were also already working at some of the schools, making them a natural match,
Leading the introduction of this model was the community schools working group that NOKP had established to guide this area of work.

The coalition extended its reach by partnering with the John Dibert Community School in 2008, the Arthur Ashe Charter School in 2009, and Sci Academy in 2010; all with the goal of eventually expanding the community schools strategy to other schools. NOKP provided schools with $25,000–$50,000 in services chosen from a list of partners based upon the needs of the students the schools served. It identified several indicators to track, including student attendance and behavior, family involvement in children’s education, and mental health services, among others.

As NOKP was piloting the model, internal tension about the coalition’s structure surfaced. There was uncertainty about whether NOKP or United Way could make final decisions. Additionally, there was an overall lack of understanding about the collaboration’s budget. Dissatisfaction persisted, sparking a decision by NOKP to depart from United Way and find another fiscal agent. However, the coalition’s director resigned unexpectedly in June 2010, prompting the partnership to assess its viability and determine its future direction (for instance, did the collaboration want to proceed with its original plan to identify another fiscal sponsor, or should it become its own nonprofit?). NOKP realized that it needed to act quickly to retain partners. It decided to continue the restructuring process begun under its former director and leave United Way. This transition marked “a big turning point,” according to a staff member from a partner organization. Although NOKP functioned without a leader for nearly a year, partners perceived this decision as ultimately beneficial for the collaboration, remarking “what a strong group we are,” that the coalition “emerged a little bit stronger than we were before,” and that its perseverance was “pretty incredible.” However, this transition was not always easy, with communication problems among partner organizations emerging.

(Re)shaping NOKP’s Structure and Processes

Rebuilding and Reengaging

After leaving United Way, NOKP secured a new fiscal sponsor (Interfaith Works, later switching to Good Work Network) and embarked on a search for a new director. In March 2011, NOKP hired its first full-time executive director, Mathew Schwarzman. He engaged partners in discussions that led the collaboration to refine its structure and adopt new processes to advance its work. This commitment to clear structure and processes reflects a key principle of collaborating effectively.

The coalition decided to modify partners’ roles and responsibilities, dividing them into two categories: members and allies. Members are nonprofit organizations that serve youth, and comprise the leadership for the collaborative
(known as the council). They participate in working groups and project teams (both of which are explained below), and vote on questions of strategy. Members sign a formal agreement that outlines expectations for both them and NOKP. While the coalition has not yet limited the number of members, it can choose to do so if staff—now expanded to include a data manager and an administrative assistant—determines that it cannot coordinate that many partners. NOKP became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2014. On the other side, allies encompass schools, government, universities, research institutes, advocacy and civic groups, businesses, and funders, all of which support the collaboration’s projects in a variety of ways, but which do not have decision-making responsibilities. Currently, NOKP includes 25 members and 18 allies (See Appendix A for complete list of members and allies).

Schwarzman has considered two main factors as he has built membership. first, he focused on recruiting larger organizations in order to augment the coalition’s capacity to undertake projects. For instance, the New Orleans Public Library has assigned 10 percent of its staff representative’s time to NOKP, the first partner to do so officially. Second, the director has sought to enlist partners so that NOKP offers a full spectrum of supports. He recently engaged the Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans, for example, as the coalition’s first medical provider. NOKP’s drive to broaden its membership strategically demonstrates a salient characteristic of effective coalitions.48

One benefit of being a member is access to professional development opportunities. NOKP enables staff at its member organizations to hone their skills by participating in a working group, where they acquire a variety of competencies in areas such as leadership and project management. Schwarzman plans to launch an online professional development calendar to facilitate information about available trainings, offer workshops for partners (they are particularly interested in cultural competency and individual donor campaigns), and provide technical assistance for working group chairs.

Codifying the Governance Structure
Recently, NOKP has instituted governance changes such as creating a 7-to-15 member Board of Directors and forming an executive committee. NOKP’s council elects “inside” board members from the member organizations to serve as the chair, vice-chair, and past parliamentarian; while “outside” board members, including the treasurer, are nominated by ally agencies and the community and approved by the other board members. The board develops policies, directs planning and fundraising, raises the profile of the collaboration, and supervises the executive director. The chair, vice chair/secretary, treasurer, and past chair comprise the executive committee, which has the primary responsibility of board development, overseeing the executive director, and approving annual plans and budgets.

NOKP Organizational Chart

According to NOKP, working groups serve as “the leading unit of collaboration.”49 As part of the reorganization begun when Schwarzman joined the coalition, members decided to reduce the number of groups in 2011 from five to three in order to maximize their capacity to produce successful projects. They chose to focus on family
engagement, mentoring and tutoring, and community schools. “[We were] spreading ourselves thin,” a representative from a partner agency explained, when copious groups targeted everything from events to evaluation. They added a fourth Working Group focused on Early Childhood in 2013 as part of a long-standing commitment to work in this area. The number of organizations per Working Group varies, generally from five to 15. Each member must have one of its staff on at least one working group and participate in one of that group’s projects, which collectively align with NOKP’s overarching goals.

In addition to consolidating to a more manageable and strategic set of working groups, NOKP established clear parameters for their work, requiring that they produce annual plans and budgets, since the coalition allocates a modest amount of funding to the groups. (See Appendix B for the format of the working group annual plan.) Led by a chair (and sometimes a vice chair), a group jointly plans, executes, and evaluates projects. “We restructured ourselves so there was no ambiguity,” reported one partner. For another staff member from a partner organization, delineating defined goals has helped attract more members to his working group.

Continuing to Empower Members

Even though a traditional board of directors was formed, NOKP members continued the council of all member organizations, which has historically guided the working groups’ programmatic activities. The council has adhered to a consensus-based decision-making process since the coalition’s inception. NOKP’s director further codified the process. Members “vote” by expressing whether they are satisfied with a particular proposal. If any member is dissatisfied, the council continues discussion until agreement is reached. To take this kind of vote, 25 percent of members must be present. According to Schwarzman, this approach enables partners to make better decisions since they all contribute ideas, and it facilitates implementation because members are more “fully invested” in the decision. Members echo his view, with partners strongly believing that NOKP’s leadership can and does build consensus, and most affirm that mutual agreement is reflected in decisions.

Setting Goals and Creating Accountability

During this process of refining NOKP’s structure and processes, the initiative also identified long-term goals to guide its work—another feature of well-functioning collaborations. These goals are:

- All children in the Greater New Orleans Area are connected to a comprehensive and coordinated system of support services ages 0-26
- All children understand the importance of healthy habits to academic, vocational and personal success
- All children graduate high school or equivalent

NOKP is trying to improve accountability related to these long-term goals, as well as to shorter-term benchmarks, through more systematic use of data—an essential practice of successful collaborations. To this end, it created
a dashboard on its website that compiles annual goals for activities and outcomes, and measures progress on a monthly basis. NOKP’s data manager maintains this tool, ensuring that data is consistently and correctly entered.

In addition to creating clear data procedures, NOKP has strived to embed accountability within its structure. Working group chairs and project leaders, for instance, monitor attendance and participation, reporting any issues to the executive committee. The council recently approved a guide that clearly outlines all roles and responsibilities, and partners report that they understand these expectations. Defining roles and processes has helped to establish accountability, which one representative from a member organization says was largely missing when it operated at United Way. “[Previously,] we were working within an unknown zone. Now that we have full reign over what happens, there’s a lot more accountability,” she said. Another individual from a partner agency agreed, observing that communication and transparency have substantially improved under the new leadership.

Building Trust

Another important result of changes to NOKP’s structure and processes has been trust, something Schwarzman has tried to cultivate since joining the collaboration. “Trust is the single most important factor to determining whether people want to keep coming back,” he believes. The director strives to engender an inclusive space that enables members to communicate, and consistently follows up about items raised during meetings—even if that means informing them that NOKP is not moving forward with a suggestion. Other mechanisms to foster trust include sharing financial reports with partners and an open door policy in which members are invited to attend executive committee meetings. Coalescing multiple mentoring and tutoring organizations—which are technically competing for volunteers—to organize collectively an event to recruit more volunteer illustrates the trust that has developed, according to a representative from a partner agency.

Coordinating Services for Children, Youth and Families

Community Schools and Wraparound Services

While NOKP was reorganizing its governance structure and key processes, it continued to coordinate wraparound services at the three school sites. Partnering with schools produced both successes and challenges. For instance, one school director credited NOKP with “providing students with resources and experiences that they normally wouldn’t have in their day-to-day lives,” such as academic, health and wellness, and enrichment programs. This integrated, cooperative model helped providers more effectively meet the needs of young people. According to a member from a mental health service agency, “[Being] part of a network of providers helps me do my job because I can connect that child to supports that go beyond therapy.” She added that offering services to schools through NOKP was especially beneficial for smaller organizations with limited staff capacity, since they could use the partnership’s already-established relationship with the school.

Although NOKP was able to coordinate partners to offer supports at these schools, it encountered challenges that highlight some of the difficulties of working in a collaborative. The schools focused on serving their students rather than their students and neighborhood youth, which impeded the coalition’s goal of enhancing access to resources for all young people in the neighborhood, regardless of where they attend school. As an example, NOKP sought to deliver programming at a partner school to all young people in that area, but the school’s expanded learning time—during which the activities were provided—prevented local youth who did not attend the school from participating during weekdays.
NOKP’s ability to serve young people through partner schools was also limited because of inadequate transportation. Students often attend school far from their home, creating challenges for some parents and caregivers whose work schedules and/or finances may inhibit their ability to drop off and pick up their children. Adults also want more affordable and reliable public transportation, which would enable them to participate in more activities.

“providing students with resources and experiences that they normally wouldn’t have in their day-to-day lives”

The fragmented education landscape made scaling NOKP’s community schools model challenging, since no single authority governed the public school system. NOKP’s community schools working group considered two options: it could either partner with a single charter management organization that was willing to integrate the model and locate schools throughout the city, or it could enlist multiple charter management organizations that would agree to coordinate services at the schools that they operate. NOKP decided that neither option was feasible given both the competitive nature of the charter operators and the limited capacity of one charter management organization to reach a majority of students across the city.

Ultimately, the model became unsustainable. One challenge was funding, since this work mostly relied on the five-year grant from America’s Promise that ended in 2013. The decentralized system also limited NOKP’s ability to measure impact, since data was generally inconsistent and unreliable.

These challenges encouraged both the community schools working group and the broader coalition to rethink its approach. The coalition led a strategic planning process to discuss other models for delivering a continuum of supports. At the end of the 2012-2013 academic year (during which it served a total of 850 different elementary, middle, and high school students at the Arthur Ashe Charter School and Sci Academy), it formally ended its community schools work with those schools and abandoned this programming as its core strategy.

Harnessing Community Hubs for Collective Impact

Reshaping strategies according to the local community context is another CCI best practice. NOKP looked at its experiences and decided to expand its locations. Instead of using schools as the primary vehicle for delivering services, it began to partner with other community institutions to help students receive the resources they need. Both libraries and the recreation department, for example, are well-known, making them key sites to engage families. “[NOKP is] seeing where the hubs are already in the community and how we can support them,” Schwarzman noted.

As the coalition adapted its work, it also refined its theory of change in order to attain “collective impact.” This strategy codifies a decades-old approach that has multiple sectors pursuing a common agenda to address a social problem. The idea gained popularity in the 1990s with the growth of comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), which target the multifaceted needs of marginalized neighborhoods, such as housing, economic development, health care, and education. Recent examples include the federal Promise and Choice Neighborhoods initiatives, as well as locally led efforts such as the East Lake Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, East Durham Children’s Initiative in Durham, North Carolina, and Parramore Kidz Zone in Orlando, Florida. As part of using a much broader roadmap to drive its work, NOKP revised its theory of change to state the following: If the coalition implements a collective impact strategy, then it can deliver high quality, comprehensive, coordinated supports to children and youth from infancy to adulthood to help them graduate from high school, ready for college, work, and life.
NOKP’s theory of change recognizes that young people develop in what the America’s Promise calls a “youth system,” the interconnected contexts of family, school, and neighborhood. Numerous studies from the fields of developmental science, public health, and economics shows that aligning essential supports—such as the Five Promises—across these contexts from birth to adulthood and according to a young person’s needs and strengths will increase the likelihood that the youth will succeed academically and socially, as well as engage in civic life. NOKP’s goal of coordinating a seamless pipeline of services across school and community settings exemplifies a supportive youth system. Both NOKP members and front-line providers share this vision.

Launching the GRoW Network
As part of its city-wide strategy, NOKP launched the GRoW (Great ResOurces Where Y’at) Network in 2013. This pilot program targets one of the Five Promises—a Healthy Start—with funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation. NOKP is one of twelve organizations statewide awarded a Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana grant, part of the foundation’s $10.2 million effort to reduce youth obesity, which affects a quarter of New Orleans children. Over a three-year period, NOKP will receive a total of $925,000. The grant requires a matching contribution, which NOKP is raising through partners.

NOKP has engaged both members and allies in GRoW, including the New Orleans Recreation Department Commission, Young Audiences, 4-H/LSU AgCenter, Ashé Cultural Arts Center, Playworks New Orleans, Start the Adventure in Reading, Up2Us, HandsOn New Orleans, Kids Walk Coalition, Louisiana Public Health Institute, Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools, and several schools. Partners receive funding ranging from $2,000 to $35,000 each year to offer free and low-cost activities, such as basketball, soccer, yoga, karate, healthy cooking, and community service projects, during a year-round series on Saturdays at recreation department centers and schools in the Gentilly neighborhood. Participation is open to young people ages eight through 18 who either live in the neighborhood or attend school there; nearly 500 youth have participated since the initiative began.

GRoW emphasizes systemic change. It is providing health and wellness workshops for parents and nurturing healthy habits among individual youth and families. It is partnering with schools to devise wellness policies and is participating in neighborhood efforts to enhance the surrounding environment, such as improving sidewalks, parks, and roads, and cultivating community gardens. This multi-pronged approach—including youth and families, schools, and communities—reflects NOKP’s theory of change underlying all of its work.

“Teachers are crucial access points for kids.”
Although GRoW focuses on health and wellness, Schwarzman envisions expanding the initiative so it offers the full array of promises, which include Caring Adults, Safe Places, Effective Education, and Opportunities to Help Others. As an example, recreation department sites could offer mentoring and tutoring, which would enable young people to form positive and productive relationships with adults, as well as enhance their knowledge and skills in a safe environment. As NOKP is building partnerships with community-based organizations like libraries and the recreation department, it continues to recognize the importance of including schools—and teachers—as part of
the coalition’s core strategy. “Teachers are crucial access points for kids,” Schwarzman said, adding that NOKP will focus more on ensuring that teachers are aware of resources such as Connect2Educate and GRoW programs.

Raising Awareness About Citywide Resources
In addition to developing a system of coordinated supports across New Orleans, NOKP produces materials about child and youth resources that are available in the city and plays a key role in events to disseminate information. For example, the family engagement working group publishes an annual directory called Connect2Educate Notebook: A Guide to Community Resources for Families and Schools. Connect2Educate is distributed to outlets such as community-based organizations and libraries and through the Schools Expo, an annual event sponsored by the Urban League of Greater New Orleans. The Schools Expo includes representatives from both schools and local agencies who share information with families about school options and available resources. NOKP’s family engagement working group oversees the provider part of the Expo. Seven hundred directories were distributed to parents, family members, and schools during the most recent fiscal year. In 2015 NOKP plans to revise the directory to increase its user-friendliness and develop a survey to capture the number of families and schools using the publication to connect young people to programs and services.

As another example of its efforts to share information, NOKP’s mentoring and tutoring workgroup spearheads an annual event called Mentorfest. It brings together organizations that promote mentoring as a tool for supporting youth and increases awareness about the mentor role and core characteristics of effective programs. During Mentorfest 2014, organizations identified 200 potential mentors and tutors.

Grappling with Current Challenges

Funding
Overall, generating diverse and sufficient funding—another core principle of effective CCIs—has been difficult for NOKP. For its first five years, America’s Promise was NOKP’s largest funder. About 30 percent of NOKP members believe to some extent that resources for the collaboration are not sustainable. Schwarzman acknowledges that securing adequate support to sustain NOKP is a legitimate barrier to the organization’s longevity.

NOKP not having its nonprofit status has compounded that challenge. Although NOKP now has the official designation, it still must wait to apply for some grants until it has built a financial history. NOKP has also limited the extent to which it competes with partners for local grants, mainly applying instead for regional and national funding. “There’s a strong commitment to creating a bigger pie rather than divvying up the existing pie,” Schwarzman said. Seeking transparency and mutual support from members, NOKP notifies them if the collaboration plans to apply for funding at least six months before a deadline.

The partnership has confronted these challenges in myriad ways. Recently, it established a backbone fund to build a stronger individual donor base and raise money for the working groups. The 2014 campaign set a modest goal of $10,000, and, as of this writing, is on track to exceed that target. NOKP has also forged beneficial relationships with...
corporations and foundations. Additionally, Schwarzman is leading the collaboration in a branding process to better define and publicize NOKP’s identity. He hopes greater clarity about its role will help attract new funders.

Beyond monetary support, in-kind contributions are integral to NOKP’s operation. Most staff at partner organizations donate time to participate in the collaborative above and beyond their salaried positions at their agency. While NOKP benefits from these contributions, high turnover at partners, which is characteristic of the youth services field, limits the coalition’s impact due to a constant need to familiarize new members with its role.

**A Need to Amplify the Voice of Youth and Families**

An area for future growth, according to some members, involves increasing the coalition’s racial diversity. A sample of New Orleans’ front-line providers found that their staff members are predominantly white, while the city’s population is 60 percent African American. More intentionally engaging youth and families in roles that empower them to help shape NOKP’s programmatic work is a concrete way that the coalition might deepen its diversity. Active involvement of local individuals and institutions—or what is operationalized as community-building and community engagement which encompasses another feature of well-functioning collaborations—helps to authentically represent a community’s needs and interests, as well as stimulate positive relationships among partners and residents.

However, identifying meaningful ways for young people, families, and community members to participate in NOKP’s activities and affect its direction is challenging. Currently, the main mechanism for involving youth and families are community forums in which young people and their families, as well as local providers and schools, discuss pressing issues affecting access to services and brainstorm potential solutions. Beyond these events, NOKP has deliberately sought to engage the community by expanding the number of partner organizations connected to its constituency. The coalition, for example, recruited the Ashé Cultural Arts Center, which is rooted in historic Central City and uses art and culture to bolster development and engagement in the African American community. NOKP is also exploring the possibility of electing youth to serve as members of its board, which would bolster their leadership skills—another characteristic of community engagement.

**Incubating Ideas, Catalyzing the Five Promises**

As NOKP looks ahead, the partnership is seeking to define itself as an “incubator of ideas.” For example, NOKP is participating in a larger process being led by the Partnership for Youth Development to design a city-wide blueprint called YouthShift to guide cross-sector efforts that support New Orleans’ young people. NOKP’s contribution has prompted the plan leaders to adopt the Five Promises framework to develop a coordinated pipeline of services.

The coalition is also seeking to integrate the Five Promises more systematically into its work—becoming “powered by the promises.” As a start, NOKP is conducting a “census” of members to identify resources that advance each of the Five Promises. The intention is for the results to be analyzed to identify potential gaps and/or duplication in services in the hope of having members complement

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**GradNation Community Summit—November 2014**

In November 2014, NOKP and the Partnership for Youth Development—an ally organization—jointly convened a two-day GradNation Community Summit at the Louisiana Children’s Museum. With participants ranging from young people to families to leaders from diverse sectors, the summit aimed to develop strategies for strengthening efforts to raise the high school graduation rate and enhancing supports to attain this goal.
New Orleans Kids Partnership

Case Study

...each other's work more efficiently. NOKP is additionally exploring the concept of aligning working groups with the promises, and organizing materials such as the Connect2Educate directory according to these fundamental resources.

Seven years into its work, NOKP continues its ongoing efforts to identify an optimal strategy for delivering resources to young people across New Orleans. Its experience in refining and adjusting can guide other communities that are engaged in collaborative efforts, underscoring the importance of early momentum for propelling an initiative forward, intentional governance planning, building accountability systems and fostering trust, and adapting strategies as necessary to maximize collective impact.
## APPENDIX A

### List of members and allies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBERS</th>
<th>ALLIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4H/LSU Ag Center</td>
<td>A’s &amp; Aces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashé Cultural Arts Center</td>
<td>Agenda for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broadmoor Education Corridor (BEC)</td>
<td>Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching/Tulane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s Bureau of New Orleans</td>
<td>Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives</td>
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<td>City Year</td>
<td>New Beginnings Schools Foundation</td>
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<td>Community Works of Louisiana</td>
<td>New Orleans Health Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for Greater New Orleans (CADA)</td>
<td>New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDC)</td>
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<td>Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)</td>
<td>NOLA for Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughters of Charity</td>
<td>One Hundred Black Men of NOLA</td>
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<td>Family Service of Greater New Orleans</td>
<td>Partnership for Youth Development (PYD)</td>
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<td>Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana, Inc.</td>
<td>Recovery School District</td>
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<td>Great Resources Where Y’At (GRoW)</td>
<td>Up2Us</td>
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<td>HandsOn New Orleans</td>
<td>Vietnamese Leadership Association (VAYLA)</td>
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<td>Interfaith Works</td>
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<td>Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools</td>
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<td>Louisiana Children’s Museum</td>
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<td>Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH)—Primetime</td>
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<td>Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI)—School Health Connection</td>
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<td>MEMBERS</td>
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<td>Mentor NOLA with Each One Save One</td>
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<td>New Orleans Outreach</td>
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<td>New Orleans Public Library</td>
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<td>Orleans Public Education Network (O.P.E.N.)</td>
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<td>Playworks New Orleans</td>
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<td>Son of a Saint</td>
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<td>Start the Adventure in Reading (STAIR)</td>
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<td>Urban League of Greater New Orleans</td>
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<td>Volunteers of America (VOA) Greater New Orleans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Audiences</td>
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APPENDIX B

Format for Working Groups’ Annual Plans

The NOKP Working Group annual plans will include the following information:

a. **Overarching Rationale and Statement of Purpose:** This is a brief statement of the fundamental purpose and rationale for the Working Group in the context of the mission of NOKP. It will include a statement regarding why NOKP is the best vehicle for the development of the collaborative activities of the Working Group. It is not anticipated that this will change from year to year, but it is an important part of the context for the Working Group’s annual plans.

b. **Assets and Needs Assessment:** This is an analysis of the existing assets and resources, as well as the gaps in resources, in the Working Group’s area of focus. It will include a brief description of the methodology and data used to form these conclusions.

c. **Projects and Programmatic Activities:** This is a description of the Working Group’s projects to be implemented during the upcoming year. For each project, there will be timeline of implementation activities, and a characterization of the program’s “stage of development,” i.e., planning, community engagement, pilot implementation, scale up, or institutionalization. In addition, for each project there will be designated a Project Team Leader and the Project Team members.

d. **Other Key Partners:** This is a list of the additional program implementation partners, beyond the Project Team, both currently involved and pending outreach. The list of prospective partners may include both specific organizations and more general types of organizations that will be recruited as program partners.

e. **Output and Outcome Targets, and Data Gathering Plan:** Each Working Group project will have concrete and measurable targets for level of activity, i.e., outputs, and impact, i.e., outcomes. These targets will be uploaded to the NOKP website Dashboard, where progress toward the targets will be reported monthly. The Working Group annual plan will also include a process and timeline for any data gathering activities necessary to document progress toward the output and outcome targets.

f. **Budget:** This is a basic expense budget for the projected activities of the Working Group that will guide the allocation of NOKP funds to the Working Group. Plans, if any, for generating additional revenues will be included.
REFERENCES


Center for Promise. (2014b). *NO youth and caregiver interviews*. Medford, MA: Coding analysis.


Coalition for Community Schools, & Institute for Educational Leadership. (2013). *Community schools results*. Washington, DC.


New Orleans Kids Partnership


ENDNOTES

1. David is a pseudonym of a youth interviewed as part of the America’s Promise Alliance study conducted by the Center for Promise from 2011-2014.

2. Center for Promise, 2014a.


4. This data is derived from interviews with youth and their caregivers that were conducted as part of a mixed-methods longitudinal study by the Center for Promise. Although the sample of youth and caregivers is not representative, it conveys the lived experiences of a selection of young people and families over a three-year period in New Orleans (Center for Promise, 2014b).

5. Center for Promise, 2014b.


7. The full set of CCI best practices include:

   • a collaborative, comprehensive approach, with carefully constructed alignment across contexts (e.g., family, school, the broader community) and across institutions (e.g., after-school programs, community health centers, community recreation centers, schools, early childcare facilities), instead of piecemeal, uncoordinated efforts;

   • participation by diverse partners instead of single-sector initiatives;

   • a lead organization that drives the effort instead of a leaderless coalition;

   • a theory of change aligned with the effort’s goals and use of evidence-based strategies/programs;

   • ongoing use of data to guide the effort;

   • an asset-based approach that builds on existing resources and strengths of a community and its residents;

   • engagement of residents as active participants in the effort rather than as passive recipients;

   • a focus on geographically defined areas instead of being too broad in scope; and

   • flexible, non-categorical funding from diverse sources instead of restricted funds that constrain nimble actions.


10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.


13. America’s Promise Alliance, n.d.

14. The Five Promises are the essential developmental resources that young people need to thrive: Caring Adults, Safe spaces and constructive use of time, healthy start, effective education, and opportunities to make a difference.


16. Ibid.


19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.


23. Ibid.


28. Ibid.


32. Ibid.

33. Coalition for Community Schools, n.d.a

34. Coalition for Community Schools, & Institute for Educational Leadership, 2013.


36. Coalition for Community Schools, n.d.b


41. Ibid.


43. Collaborative interview, April 11.


46. Collaborative interview, 2011, April 11.


51. Ibid.


53. Center for Promise, 2014d.

54. Arthur et al., 2010.

Member surveys were administered in 2012 and 2014 as part of America’s Promise Alliance’s study. The 2012 survey measured trust and openness by the following constructs: Social Investment which explored relationship building both within NOKP and externally; Sense of Community which examined how members interact with each other; and Interpersonal Interactions which assessed the climate within NOKP. The 2014 survey include Social Investment and Sense of Community as constructs, but didn’t use Interpersonal Interactions. Therefore, trust and openness is assessed in the 2014 survey according to only those two constructs (Center for Promise, 2014d, 2012).
About the Center for Promise
The Center for Promise, in collaboration with Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences, is the research center for America’s Promise Alliance. The mission of the Center is to develop a deep knowledge and understanding about what is needed to help create the conditions so that all young people in America have the opportunity to succeed in school and life. The Center’s work will add to the academic exploration of these issues and help give communities and individuals the tools and knowledge to effectively work together to support young people.

Our Vision
Every child in America has the opportunity and support to reach their full potential and pursue their American Dream.

Our Mission
Inspire, engage, and unite individuals, institutions, and communities to create the conditions for success for every child in America.

The Five Promises

Caring Adults
Young people need to be surrounded by caring adults providing love, challenge, active support, a vision for a brighter future and opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own lives.

Safe Places
Young people need physical and psychological safety at home, in school, online and in the community.

Healthy Start
Young people need the conditions that make it possible to grow physically, socially and intellectually starting at the earliest ages.

Effective Education
Young people need not only a high school diploma, but a high-quality learning experience that prepares them for college and career.

Opportunity to Serve
Young people need service opportunities to help them develop belonging in their communities, empowerment to be positive contributors and a sense of personal responsibility.