Positive Results for Children, Youth, and Families:

A Ten-Year Initiative in State/Local Collaboration that Brings Together Education and Human Services

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Summary

Positive Results for Children, Youth, and Families is the final report of a ten-year effort by the Danforth Foundation, working with the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislators, and the National Governors' Association, to improve the delivery of educational and human services to children and youth in need of services and to their families. Against a backdrop of widespread skepticism about government competence and the value of many public programs, the Policymakers' Program set out to encourage horizontal coordination of services across education and human service agencies, including health, mental health, public assistance, and employment. And it aimed to stimulate vertical integration between units of state and local government.

At its heart, the Policymakers' Program encouraged a new way of thinking about collaboration to achieve results for children and families, one that emphasized services to valued, respected customers instead of clients, results linked to resources and prevention not corrections. As it struggled with customs deeply engrained in government thinking at the executive, legislative, and local levels, the program turned to nine local sites to implement this new way of thinking: Bangor, Maine; Barre, Vermont; Clearfield and Midvale, Utah; DeSoto, University City, and Walbridge, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; and Newport, Rhode Island. Although the work at these sites was not always smooth, several important lessons have been learned from these efforts.

After ten years, ten guiding principles appear to light the way ahead for other grantmakers and units of government intent on improving service delivery:

1. The focus is on results.
2. Collaborative planning processes are valuable.
3. It all begins with leadership.
4. Collaborative structures are critical.
5. Collaboration depends on relationships.
6. Building capacity is the key strategy.
7. Planning and accountability are essential to success.
8. Data provide the road map.
9. The emphasis is on assets, not deficits.
10. Resources and their alignment require attention.

As the United States enters fully into a new millennium, public confidence in the competence of government appears to be increasing. In this context, this report from the Policymakers' Program adds another small measure to the accumulating evidence of government integrity and efficacy. Indeed, one of the more remarkable results of this program is that, in several states, it is evident that the work continues despite 2002 budget pressures on state and local government. The Policymakers' Program demonstrates that when committed leaders at the state and local level convene to improve the quality of life in local communities, positive results follow for children, youth, and their families.

Preface

This report about the Policymakers' Program is a tale of policy success. In an age of skepticism about government at all levels, we try to document how coalitions of dedicated state and local educators and officials from several different states and communities set out to tackle serious, apparently intractable, social problems in their jurisdictions. They took on high rates of school dropouts and teenage pregnancy and similar bad news about child abuse and neglect. And they made a difference. The work in these communities over several years has started to turn these rates around.

Early in 1992 the Danforth Foundation convened a group of policymakers and experts to explore establishing an "Education Policymakers' Institute" to help state leaders improve schools. The institute idea grew out of a key recommendation from the Foundation's Future Directions Advisory Committee which urged strengthening executive leadership and policymaking to create more productive and responsive schools.

As these discussions proceeded, it became clear that the effort should be broader, extending well beyond children, education, and a single institute. To be genuinely effective, school-improvement efforts needed to take parents and families into account. Confident children are developed in strong families. And families are stronger if they're embedded in healthy communities. For many children and families, the community infrastructure to sustain learning also needed to be examined—child care, job opportunities, economic development, health and mental health services, and child protective services and the juvenile justice system.

It was clear that a one-time institute could hardly take up and address this multitude of issues in a thorough or thoughtful fashion. Unless the Foundation was willing to redefine its focus and examine learning through these broader lenses—families, communities, and what these challenges mean in terms of professional growth for policymakers—an education institute itself would accomplish little.

Thus was launched the Policymakers' Program, a concept with an ambitious mission: **engaging state policymakers in the task of ensuring that all children and youth succeed in developing into healthy and productive citizens,** capable of learning not only in school but throughout their lives. The Foundation made a ten-year commitment to this effort.

Within that broad umbrella, the Policymakers' Program was designed to focus on improving five results for children and families:

1. A safe environment for children
2. Children coming to school ready to learn
3. Improved student achievement
4. Strong families
5. Healthy and productive communities

Working with a blue-ribbon advisory board and in cooperation with the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association, the Foundation created a careful balance of "top-down" support for "bottom-up" reform to address these challenges. The Policymakers' Program was designed to help state and local leaders create a vision for children and families—and define a process for achieving their vision that respects the unique traditions of each state and its communities.

As the Foundation noted in a report on the first five years of the program (The First Five Years, Danforth Foundation, 1998), the program's mission and goals, so easy to state, have proven frustrating and difficult to attain. The program highlighted a new way of thinking about achieving results for children, youth, and families, one that emphasized services to valued, respected customers instead of clients, results linked to resources, and prevention not corrections. It encouraged replacing compliance with deregulation; turf protection with collaboration and coordination among agencies; and business as usual with large-scale change in how government functions. In doing so, it struggled with customs deeply ingrained in government thinking at the legislative, executive, and local levels.

The use of data to aid decision making and evaluate results has been a central component of the program from the outset. The most effective initiatives have turned out to be those which built data usage into their plans to monitor the conditions of children, youth, and families and to tie data to specific benchmarks of achievement. As this report makes clear, sound data helped launch efforts in several states and communities to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. We have learned that when data and results are presented in a user-friendly fashion, policymakers and citizens immediately see their value. Hence, the lesson learned is that data must be comprehensible; evaluations must be related to policy questions; and citizens must participate in selecting the indicators—because that way they come to understand what is being measured and why it is important.

After ten years, the Policymakers' Program has helped about 500 legislators, agency heads, and governors and their advisors from 40 states rethink service organization and delivery in their communities. From those 40 states, the program has also selected 15 state teams (ranging in size from 12 to 27 people) and helped them develop comprehensive and coordinated action plans tailored to their specific needs. Recently, the program has refined its focus further, moving, in its final four years, to an effort to help nine local/state teams, directed by local leaders, develop community-specific agendas. The work of the local communities was designed to inform state policymaking and create state policy that stimulates local leadership, action, and results.

The five-year report described how and why the Policymakers' Program was created, explored how the program operated, and included brief overviews of state action plans before developing some lessons learned. This report builds on that earlier volume and an evaluation of the program completed in 2000. This report describes how the program changed in recent years; it provides brief vignettes of the nine participating communities; and it develops some guiding

principles to help foundations, state leaders, and others interested in supporting similar efforts.

The Danforth Foundation is pleased to have played a role in encouraging communities to improve results for their most vulnerable children and families. We are deeply indebted to our partners, the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference on State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association, and to the staff who represented them. A special thanks goes to Julie Bell of NCSL and Gerrit Westervelt of ECS for the constancy of their representation of the partners throughout many years of the program. The program could not have succeeded without the committed support of an engaged and active advisory committee. I want to acknowledge the debt we owe to Bill Purcell, Mayor of Nashville. As Mayor and, before that, as a state legislator, Bill has served as chairperson of the advisory board for nine years and as an unwavering supporter and champion of this work.

The program also benefited from the outstanding service provided by its staff and consultants over the years, Sharon Brumbaugh, James Harvey, and Beverly Parsons. Harvey wrote all the highlights of our January meetings, provided initial drafts of our five- and ten-year reports, and helped advise us on program strategies. Brumbaugh and Parsons helped design the program and served as its evaluators. The last three years of the program were immeasurably helped by the presence of Debbie Miller and Sharon Carter at the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University. Miller served as overall director of the program, bringing greater coherence to the effort in its final years. And Carter made sure that the ubiquitous meetings involved with a task of this nature developed smoothly and ran well.

The Danforth Foundation wants to acknowledge the continuity and support provided by the advisory committee, staff, and consultants. Their efforts made this important work possible.

Robert H. Koff
Senior Vice President
The Danforth Foundation

Positive Results for Children, Youth, and Families

The Inheritance of Problems from the Past

In designing the Policymakers' Program, planners from Danforth, the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association were keenly aware that today's policymakers have inherited many problems from the past. Indeed, the policymaking process has, over the years, left state leaders with a fragmented and diffuse set of programs.

In some ways, policy fragmentation is a natural consequence of defining who's in charge. At one level, this problem is little more than the familiar issue of turf protection. Different legislative committees jealously guard their policy jurisdictions from each other. Executive and legislative leaders keep a wary eye on each other to ensure their individual prerogatives are respected. Frequently partisan differences contribute to policymaker tensions.

At a more fundamental level, the challenge involves profound policy and philosophical issues. Education is traditionally understood to be a state responsibility and a local prerogative. Parents bear the major responsibility for their children, not government agencies. Protecting children is a complicated and sensitive thing, requiring clear bounds on government's relationship with families.

Whatever the cause or causes, over the years fragmented policymaking has led to fragmented policy. Most states now have many disconnected program and funding streams with a cumulative impact that is much less powerful than it should be. The results are predictable. Program participants heard about many of them. During a program review some years ago, for example, Florida officials identified one family that, in a single 30-month period, experienced:

- 40 referrals to different community providers;
- 17 separate evaluations;
- 13 different case managers; and
- 10 independent treatment plans, including three family support plans, a foster care plan, and a protective services plan.

A similar tale was recounted by a Pennsylvania woman. Over several weeks, she had to endure 55 different interviews with social workers from 30 different agencies, all demanding a separate case history which they refused to share with each other because of concerns about confidentiality. Recalling her efforts to maintain a consistent account for each of these caseworkers, the woman commented: "You know, you have to be smart in Philadelphia to be poor."

A New Way of Thinking

At the heart of the Policymakers' Program is a new way of thinking about how social systems function. Although the philosophical basis for change is sometimes lost in the midst of battles about turf, budgets, and the press of daily activities, certain theoretical perspectives run through the program.

In brief, after ten years of operating the program, it has become increasingly clear that a major reorientation of policy thinking is required to improve the delivery of education and other services. In the main, the shift encourages state and local agencies and personnel to become more entrepreneurial, active, and flexible (see Table 1. A New Way of Thinking about Service Delivery). They are asked to move away from old service models emphasizing crisis intervention, state direction, and the ad hoc delivery of discrete, isolated services (which paid little attention to documenting the changes made) to a new model focused on prevention, cooperation and coordination, and locally driven, results-oriented, data-based decisionmaking.

From	To
Crisis intervention	Prevention through recognizing and developing capabilities of youth
Little attention to documentation of impact of changes	Documentation of changes in conditions as the basis of determining whether there is movement toward the desired results for children, youth, and families
Isolated services	Coordinated services for children, youth, and families with multiple needs
Public assistance	Emphasis on workforce, community, and economic development
State decisions	State-local collaboration in which state works as an equal partner with communities
State directives	Emphasis on empowering communities to identify needs and design systems to meet community-specific needs
Defined programs	Broad initiatives designed to provide flexibility at local level
Activities detached from results	Results-oriented decision making and budgeting
Categorized funds	De-categorization, flexibility of state and federal funds

Table 1.
A New Way of Thinking about Service Delivery

How the Policymakers' Program Operates

At the core of the Policymakers' Program are multi-role state teams. The Program provides two types of support for the teams. The first is two meetings on an annual cycle; the second is made up of financial support and technical assistance, also funded by the Foundation.

The Annual Meeting Cycle

Two meetings are held annually: a January meeting for state legislators and governors and a summer meeting for a broader team.

January Legislative Chairs' and Governors' Meeting

In the early years of the Program, the Legislative Chairs' and Governors' Meeting acted like a funnel. A large number of states and their officials began the cycle at a major meeting in January (typically, as many as twenty states a year, each with a team of maybe three to six people). From that group, a much smaller number of states (usually three) with considerably larger teams (12-15 people) were selected via an application process to participate in a major "Summer Institute." At the Institute, state legislative and executive-branch leaders were encouraged to develop a specific state plan.

Each of these meetings was intensive and demanding, beginning early in the morning and running late into the evening. During the meetings, state teams had the opportunity to hear from experts on a wide variety of issues—ranging from demographics, poverty and social trends, to polling and the theoretical underpinnings of social change. Participants were also active presenters in their own right, so that the programs incorporated many practical, on-the-ground examples of working initiatives.

The value of these meetings to participants was indisputable, but it was difficult to capture when trying to tie it to results for children and families. In the first years of the program, many participants commented that the program represented their first opportunity as legislators from (for example) the education committee to come together to discuss the constituents they shared in common with their colleagues on the human services committee. In some cases, it was the first time these legislators had ever talked together about issues involving children and families. Today, the idea of collaboration between education and human services policymakers is no longer a foreign concept.

Summer Institutes

By 1996, the program's emphasis had shifted. It had become increasingly obvious that unless states were able to mobilize local action they would never be able to do much about achieving results for children, youth, and families. State government, like its national counterpart, was just too far away. Local change required community action. The program's advisory committee concluded that a local action mechanism, one that simultaneously informed state leaders of the need for policy change and empowered communities to act, was required.

Hence, a Summer Institute focusing on state and community leaders was born. The first was held in July 1997. This Institute differed from the earlier

The Summer Institute

The Institute was an intensive five-day work and decision-making process to create an action agenda for change. It provided a series of activities designed to challenge traditional thinking about policies that affect the delivery of education and human services.

The major outcome was a written action plan that the team committed to implement. The plan normally defined the problem(s) the team planned to address, established a long-term vision, identified specific goals, strategies, action steps, timelines, and responsibilities, articulated short- and long-term results, and described effectiveness criteria that would be used.

Team Composition — Experience indicated that the best teams had a broad range of people on them, reflecting the full diversity of the community, and ideally representing all the following:

- Front-line personnel such as teachers, principals, social workers, and school counselors
- Parents, students, and other stakeholders such as business
- Corrections, legal services, or community health agencies
- School superintendents and local human services agency heads
- County and municipal governments
- State and local boards of education members
- Education and human services commissioners
- Governor's education, human services, and budget advisors
- Legislative chairs from education, human services, and appropriations committees

In preparation for the Institute, each team was normally required to meet at least once to establish group processes, improve its understanding of the purposes of the Institute, and develop a shared vision of desired outcomes for children and families.

Additional information about the processes and tools used during the Summer Institute are available at *http://www.muohio.edu/forumscp/policymakers* in Volume II of the program's five-year report.

ones in the larger proportion of local vs. state participants and in the focus of their work. Instead of focusing on changes at the state level, the focus of the team's work following 1997 was on change at the community level that would also inform future state policymaking. From 1997 to 1999, the Summer Institute was held in successive years with local teams from the following communities:

- 1997 – Barre, Vermont; University City, Missouri;
- 1998 – Walbridge, Missouri; De Soto, Missouri; Midvale, Utah; Clearfield, Utah;
- 1999 – Bangor, Maine; Newport, Rhode Island.

The Summer Institute was not held in 2000 or 2001. In 2000, funds were used to support collaboration in Nashville, Tennessee through The Madeline Initiative, which was developed locally. In 2002, funds were used to convene six teams from the nine projects (the eight listed above plus Madeline) for an extended two-day focus group that served as the basis for the report.

Teams at these new Summer Institutes were made up predominantly of local leaders representing communities that were committed to change and to the use of data about children and families to drive change. The teams also included key state leaders who participated both to give specific assistance to the community leaders and to understand better what modifications were required in state policies, structures, and practices if other communities in the state were to benefit and take similar steps.

Technical Assistance and Mini-Grants

The second element of support to state/local teams in the Policymakers' Program was made up of technical assistance (supported by Danforth) to help community teams develop their plans combined with mini-grants to begin implementing them. To tailor the program more to the needs of individual com-

munities, the program encouraged early identification of team members and extensive pre-institute planning with the assistance of consultants and facilitators. Following attendance at the Summer Institute, teams were encouraged to apply for a Foundation mini-grant, normally no more than $15,000, to be used to begin implementing their action plan and documenting the results for children.

The program's five-year report outlines major program aspects of the Policymakers' Program. Volume II of the five-year report incorporates complete meeting agendas and outlines processes such as those used for selecting state teams. It also has information on the role of facilitators and the types of assistance provided by consultants. The complete report is available at *http://www.muohio.edu/forumscp/policymakers.*

Guiding Principles

The Foundation's five-year report describes key elements contributing to the success of the Policymakers' effort and draws out several lessons learned. Given the nature of the work attempted, it is hard to be specific about what policies are needed. Contexts are different; similar challenges play themselves out differently in distinct communities; and the complexity of these problems is too great for single-shot solutions.

Despite those challenges, it is possible to draw out broader principles that might serve as a basis for action in other states and policy arenas. These are "guiding principles" that state and local leaders and policymakers could use as they develop their own strategies for action. Based on the experience of the Policymakers' Program, ten principles might serve as a guide to action:

Identifying Core Community Values

In both Bangor, Maine and Barre, Vermont, program participants decided their efforts had to be grounded in community values. Working with Seattle consultant Sherry Wong, they worked on a ten-part process to reach agreement on core values.

"The first time I heard 'community values' I thought this could become a mess. When we got into it, we found out there were powerful values the community shared." —Steve McKenzie, School Board Member, Barre, Vermont

Here's the process:

- *Identify Stakeholders:* Who should participate? List should include formal organizations (e.g., schools, churches, businesses) and diverse group of local residents.
- *Determine Process:* How will stakeholder advice be sought? Determine process for soliciting input on core values, including guidelines for facilitating discussions.
- *Establish Timeline:* Process without a schedule is counter-productive and potentially endless. Create a timeline for soliciting stakeholder comments.
- *Locate Responsibility:* Who will compile the results? Identify the individual or group responsible for compiling the results.
- *Agree on Process:* Who will define final list and how? Decide on how the final list of core values will be selected (by whom, using which process, and how many core values) and select the final list.
- *Develop Plan:* How will the list be communicated to the community? Develop a communications plan to introduce core values into all areas of community, using key stakeholders to carry the message.
- *Encourage Use:* Encourage all stakeholders (schools, families, churches, coaches, businesses) to use core values to develop and communicate clear expectations about behavior, as well as consistent and appropriate consequences for meeting (or not meeting) expectations.
- *Provide Assistance:* Help parents, teachers, coaches, service providers and others apply behavioral standards through training and support.
- *Identify Barriers:* What stands in the way of meeting the values standards? Are such things as neighborhood transience or parental substance abuse blocking progress? Develop and implement plans to overcome barriers.
- *Celebrate Success:* Actively seek out and celebrate examples of youth and adults living the standards in all areas of community life.

Results-Based Planning and Accountability

Mark Friedman is a consultant from Baltimore who has worked with a number of states and communities in the Policymakers' Program on results-based planning and accountability. Friedman defines two major variables in accountability: Results Accountability and Performance Accountability. In each, several key questions need to be addressed:

Results Accountability

- Results: What do we want for our children, families, and communities?
- Indicators: How will we know if we have achieved what we want?
- Strategies: What do we think works to achieve what we're trying to accomplish? (This is a bridge question because it can also be applied to the major question asked under performance accountability.)

Performance Accountability

- Performance Measures: How do we know that the elements of our strategy are performing as well as possible?

"Results-based decision making requires an investment approach to make good, 20-year budget decisions, rather than decisions that get us through one year at a time. —Mark Friedman

For additional information, please see the following websites: *http://www.raguide.org* - The Results and Performance Accountability Implementation Guide - sponsored by The Foundation Consortium, The Colorado Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Finance Project, and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation; and *http://www.resultsaccountability.com*, the website of the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute.

1. The focus is on results.
2. Collaborative planning processes are valuable.
3. It all begins with leadership.
4. Collaborative structures are critical.
5. Collaboration depends on trusting, respectful relationships.
6. Building capacity is the key strategy.
7. Planning and accountability are essential to success.
8. Data provide the road map.
9. The emphasis is on assets, not deficits.
10. Resources and their alignment require attention.

Principle One: The Focus Is on Results.

From the very outset, an emphasis on results, on improving conditions for children, youth and families, has been a hallmark of the Policymakers' Program. In that regard (see Principle #8 below) numbers and data have been integral aids to helping improve local/state decision-making and evaluation of results.

Although several states (e.g., Maine, Vermont, and Iowa) had been using data to define outcomes and set benchmarks very early in the Policymakers' Program, this results-oriented approach was often a challenge to the communities that participated in the program in its last five years. In essence, the program challenged localities to define what it is they wanted for local children, youth, and families; and to establish priorities among a number of different, apparently equally desirable, results. Raise community literacy levels? Improve the proportion of students arriving at school ready to learn? Reduce the incidence of alcoholism? Spousal abuse? Child neglect?

As the Summer Institute developed, it became apparent that local/state teams could use assistance working with this results-oriented approach. In effect, the program was asking state and local leaders to do something that most people have little experience with: work backwards from desired results. Working with consultant Mark Friedman, the institute began offering training in Results-Based Planning and Accountability. These seminars distinguished between results and performance accountability, insisting that worrying about

such things as the number of clients served (a measure of agency performance accountability) could not be used as a substitute for defining results such as "all five-years-old children ready to read" (a potential measure of results accountability).

In effect, the Friedman approach asked communities to define the results (outcomes) they wanted for their children, youth, and families; define strategies to get there; and select indicators to measure progress. Ideally, each agency in a collaboration that the Policymakers' Program helped establish would be working toward the same results. But since they would be delivering different services, each would have different performance measures. Thus, the defined outcome for "all five-year-old children ready to read" would be the same for all agencies. But the performance measure for "all five-year-old children ready to read" would be different. For example, the community mental health agencies might be expected to ensure that home visits were performed for all preschool children, but libraries might be expected to provide special reading programs in the community, and schools might be expected to provide developmentally appropriate assessment.

Clearfield, Utah: Pockets of High-Risk Children

Clearfield, Utah, located about 30 miles north of Salt Lake City, has two communities that are demographic pockets full of high-risk indicators. In these two communities, 18% of the residents live in poverty, 46% live in rental housing, 6% are teen parents, and 27% of households are headed by a single female. Overall, 33% of single-female-headed households live in poverty. Health indicators for Clearfield residents generally are below state averages; reported domestic abuse assaults are high.

A committed and hard-working team of government and community leaders—the Family Connections Center, United Way of Davis County, South Clearfield and Wasatch Elementary Schools, Parks and Recreation, Workforce Services, the Health Department and the Office of the Mayor—has tackled these challenges with the help of the state's Families, Agencies, and Communities Together (FACT) Steering Committee.

The primary tool developed by the committee was a Family Home Visitor program. It used a Welcome Wagon model to tell families how to register in the local schools and to distribute information on the importance of reading to children.

While the initiative increased the level of collaboration among schools and state and local agencies, maintaining momentum over the long haul has been challenging.

Principle Two: Collaborative Planning Processes Are Valuable.

Participants in the program invariably described the value of their participation in glowing terms. "This time was a gift," said one state director of social services. One legislator called the Policymakers' Program "the most innovative program available to state officials. The state government equivalent of winning the Publisher's Clearinghouse Sweepstakes." Another legislator said, "I can't think of a single piece of legislation we've passed as a result of participating in this, but I know that what I've learned at these meetings has touched every citizen of my state."

Over the years of the program, participants identified five major impacts in their states. The program benefited their states and communities by:

- building relationships among key leaders who, in their own arenas, could support the new desired directions;
- establishing a shared conceptual framework among leaders about the assumptions, structures, norms, and practices that must be changed to achieve better results for children, youth, and families;

The Madeline Initiative: Nashville Envisions French Heroine as Model

With a new mayor, support from the Danforth Foundation, and an explicit effort to encourage city-state collaboration, things have been changing in Nashville, a city of about half a million. The Madeline Initiative is named after a storybook French girl who lives in a boarding school. The project aims to make children in out-of-family placements in Nashville just as self-sufficient as the French heroine.

"When Bill Purcell ran for mayor, he made it very clear that, if he won, our schools were going to get better. Another thing that he made clear was that government was going to get better." —Bart Perkey, Metropolitan Health Department, Nashville, Tennessee

Vanderbilt University's Child and Family Policy Center provided city agencies with troubling data. The numbers indicated that children's programs were poorly managed, that the number of children served was actually declining, that huge gaps in services existed in Davidson County (surrounding Nashville), and that high caseworker turnover was related to stress and lack of support on the job.

What developed, with Danforth support, is an initiative that encourages prevention and interagency collaboration. Over 150 community program directors and service provision staff have participated, either on the Steering Committee or on one of the Working Committees. Key players include the Mayor, the Metropolitan government, the Department of Children's Services, Metro Social Services, Caring for Children program, and the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University. (See report in Appendix D.)

The Madeline Initiative is also working hard to involve the non-profit and faith-based world, according to Debbie Miller, Director of the Policymakers' Program and of the Madeline Initiative. "We don't try to tackle the issue of the need for 1,000 foster parents in Davidson County. We look at each ZIP code and we say there are 15 kids here in a neighborhood with 45 churches. Then we go to the pastors and say, 'Surely here in the buckle of the Bible Belt we can find 15 foster parents in 45 congregations.' Normally, we can."

- helping leaders produce a concrete action plan that moved theory to action to results for children, youth, and families;
- providing leaders with specific examples of what worked (or shows promise of working) in other states and communities; and
- beginning to document the effects on children.

Principle Three: It All Begins with Leadership.

Changing traditional ways of doing things in government always begins with leadership, a concept most people are comfortable with but very few define. In *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Harvard analyst Ronald Heifetz writes of leadership as effective action on behalf of values shared within a community. Leadership is more and more understood as values based and future oriented and less and less as managerial and directive. Leaders are able to look over the horizon, but they have to have their feet on the ground, too.

One of the United States' great visionaries about human services, John W. Gardner, founder of Common Cause and a former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, perhaps summed it up best: "Attention to leadership alone is sterile," he said. "The larger topic of which leadership is a subtopic is *the accomplishment of group purpose....*"

Accomplishing group purpose has to begin with bold, inclusive, dynamic, and committed leadership. It can start with one person or several, but a broad effort to reform the delivery of essential human services must eventually include a leadership cadre that extends across public agencies (e.g., health care, human services, and education) and across government levels (from state to local).

In many ways, this principle defines a conundrum. As author Lisbeth Schorr told Policymaker participants, people who like to break rules invariably lead the best local programs. Local leaders often step on toes and ignore sacred cows. But at the policy level, many people in authority like to make the rules.

Respected leaders will be respectful of the group they are trying to lead. They will understand that change is about defining a vision first, with structure and rules bringing up the rear.

Heifetz writes that leaders are often like figures on the dance floor, so engrossed in following the music that they lose sight of the flow of the dancers. He urges leaders to leave the floor and go up on the balcony periodically to keep their eye on the broader picture (as well as who is dancing with whom and what new steps are being tried out). Leaders have to pay attention to the new steps, because that's how they remain current, while modifying and reinventing the strategies employed to reach the community's goals.

At all levels, leaders have to burrow into the bureaucracy to make sure that people are convinced that change is for real. Turf and protectionism are genuine challenges to policy change at all levels of government. Visionaries have to bring the troops along. The late Governor of Missouri, Mel Carnahan, understood this when putting Caring Communities into practice. With the assistance of social service director Gary Stangler he insisted that Caring Communities funds be appropriated separately for each of the six participating departments, but that department leaders make a joint request for the money from the appropriations committees in the legislature. In Maine, the governor (or his wife) attended planning meetings of the Children's Cabinet to take attendance. When Bill Purcell was elected mayor of Nashville with a commitment to improve schools, one of the first things he did was visit every school in the city to make sure everyone knew he was serious. Leaders lead – and they make sure everyone knows they are serious.

When programs go beyond conception to implementation, it is probably fair to say that local leadership is even more essential than champions at the state level. State policymakers need to find communities with leaders who are ready to act and then support them in doing what they determine is best. In Nashville and Bangor, Mayor Bill Purcell and United Way official Jeff Wahlstrom helped shape the initiative. Mayor Purcell insisted that the govern-

The Seven "P's" in University City, Missouri

Missouri's Caring Communities program calls for interagency collaboration at the state level and the local level. Politically it is very difficult to pull off, because, to most state agency personnel, collaboration is akin to consorting with the enemy. And, for state-level politicians, there's often little political mileage in backing away to encourage local communities to solve their own problems. Technically, it is equally challenging, since it demands both horizontal and vertical cooperation – collaboration across agencies at both the state and local level and coordination of services vertically between the state and localities.

State leaders in Missouri were determined to make "devolution" work. The point was not to have different people making the same decisions, but to have genuine decision making at the community level. Both legislators and administrators struggled with the reality that Caring Communities was a concept, not a government agency, and that it required joint funding of agencies, not an appropriation to a single agency that would dole out the money to the rest.

"What we're really trying to do here is demonstrate that the phrase 'entrepreneurial government' is not an oxymoron." —Gary Stangler, Director of Social Services, State of Missouri

After several years of the effort, child abuse and neglect were down in Caring Communities across the state. Juvenile commitments were down. Crime was down. Student attendance was up. Next, the Caring Communities effort went to University City to try to develop some new approaches for improving student achievement.

Under the leadership of then-superintendent Lynn Beckwith, Jr. and special projects director Betty Walls, University City encouraged the community surrounding the Barbara Jordan School to take Barbara Jordan's "bold, courageous journey" and "dare to dream, dare to believe, and dare to achieve. "It's going to take seven 'P's," said Walls—"people, politics, patience, pacing, perseverance, pride, and passion—but we're going to get it done." However, changes in leadership and a piecemeal vision hindered the work.

Midvale, Utah: Families, Agencies, and Communities Together

Midvale, Utah, a suburb of Salt Lake City, has a diverse and transient population. In the mid-1990s, key indicators showed that 20% of expectant mothers had late or no pre-natal care; 25% of births were to single mothers; 24% of births were to mothers with less than a high school education; and fewer than half of elementary school students performed at grade level or above.

In 1995, a Danforth statewide Utah team helped encourage a state appropriation of $900,000 to fully fund existing Families, Agencies, and Communities Together (FACT) initiatives. FACT is a framework for collaborative service delivery at the local level.

Subsequently, in Midvale, a local team operating within the FACT framework helped sponsor a health information fair, establish an outreach effort to provide information on health care issues, provide information on community services, and establish a reading and literacy program for pre- and elementary school children. The state Department of Health provided baseline data by ZIP code and collaborated with local partners to improve community service.

"The residents were a vital part of the work of the team….It wasn't the agency deciding what was best for the community, it was the community telling the agencies what they needed and how best to serve their needs." —Ellen Betit, Community Coordinator for Boys and Girls Clubs, Midvale, Utah

The main message from Midvale is that a large group of agency heads, school administrators, service providers, and residents continues to meet on a monthly basis to monitor progress and move forward toward better results for children and families. Having a skillful coordinator who is assigned to keep this collaborative focused and working together has been a key factor in their success.

ment and schools in Nashville had to work better. In Bangor, Wahlstrom's agency served as a central cog around which important local literacy services were able to revolve.

Mayor Paul Dupre served a similar role in Barre. Shocked at local data showing widespread alcohol and spousal abuse, he let the numbers speak for themselves, convinced that his community would find the results unacceptable.

Conversely, when leadership turned over, once-promising efforts could find themselves without champions. When leadership failed to excite community commitment, results were disappointing.

In every successful local community involved with this effort, the central truth was that there had to be someone who woke up every morning worrying about the success of the effort. Frequently that took the shape of worrying about the care and feeding of whatever collaborative structure had been put together to improve service delivery to children and families.

Principle Four: Collaborative Structures Are Critical.

Leadership is just one step. Leaders alone can't get the job done. Part of the leadership role is encouraging the community to organize itself to get the job done.

Practically every successful effort under the Policymakers' umbrella involved creating collaborative structures that pulled together key elements of the government and community. For example, public assistance directors are responsible for welfare, while public health professionals are charged with threats to the public health. Left to their own devices, agencies such as these do not have a policy reason for cooperating with each other. Indeed, there is often significant incentive to feud since budgeting at the state and local levels often involves taking from Peter to pay Paul.

Collaborative structures, therefore, became important in the Policymakers' Program. These were far more than perfunctory advisory committees or rubber-stamps for plans developed in the bureaucracy. Their task was to create the

focus on children and families and then sustain the work through changes in leadership and priorities (and developing emergencies) at the state or local levels. Most of them held tightly to the goals of their collaboration, but maintained a light touch on structure. These structures might come into existence before a program was actually mounted (Utah's Families, Agencies, and Communities Together initiative), or afterwards (Missouri's Caring Communities program). But the important thing was that these groups made the work of collaboration their fundamental task.

These collaborative structures operated in different ways. Six agency heads in Missouri had to work together to develop joint proposals for legislative approval under the Caring Communities program. In Utah, two appropriations committees in the 1980s—one in education, the other in human services—directed a modest amount of money ($100,000 annually) to encourage these two large agencies to plan some joint work together. From this modest beginning evolved the Families, Agencies, and Communities Together (FACT) program. By 1995, the Policymakers' Program helped support a Utah team of 27 people at the Policymakers' Institute. There the team developed the basis for state legislation, which eventually appropriated $900,000 to fully finance existing FACT initiatives and establish a framework for collaborative service-delivery systems.

Although it is essential that these collaborative arrangements be created, they can be structured in multiple ways. Many, at the state level, are likely to define specific agencies and positions that must be involved. At the local level, in places such as Midvale and Bangor, the structures are likely to be much more flexible, involving different people and even agencies as local conditions change and priorities evolve. Apart from that, it is essential that they ensure broad-based involvement of agency leaders and employees, as well as representatives of the general public and constituents to be served and that they focus on results for children, youth, and families rather than on issues such as turfism.

Many of the collaborations reached out explicitly to involve academics and experts. Nashville's Madeline Initiative was housed at Vanderbilt University, and both Barre and Bangor brought in community consultant Sherry Wong to help map community values. As in most successful enterprises, form followed function and committee make-up mirrored community challenges.

Just as the makeup of state and local collaboratives was likely to differ, so too the collaborative relationships at each level had a different character. At the state level, the collaboration was likely to concentrate on setting directions, budgets, and planning. While state concerns were important at the local level, local leaders were likely to be much more focused on immediate challenges and operational difficulties. So if state collaborations in Missouri and Vermont were likely to revolve around broad systems thinking and big strategic moves, the action at the local level would turn on much more practical issues. For example, a state and local community might decide that collaboration is important and that it makes strategic sense to focus on literacy. Following through on that, local leaders might worry about how to provide books to readers at recreation

Newport, Rhode Island: "America's First Resort"

Nationally and internationally, Newport is known for the wealth of its residents. Rarely ostentatious, Newport is envied for its glittering summer society, but few ever stop to think that the mansions and leisurely yachting ambience of "America's First Resort" are supported by a small army of domestics, gardeners, waiters, valets, and boat crews, many of them living on minimum wage jobs, without benefits, or worse. In fact, 20% of the children in this city live in low-income families and this city of 28,000 houses two-thirds of the state's poor children.

A large and enthusiastic Newport team participated in the 1999 Summer Institute. As a result of the mutual learning and planning that occurred at the institute, Newport asked the state to respond with resources, both financial and technical, when needed and requested. Respecting the work that had already gone on and the very strong local community support that already existed, state child-serving agencies worked over the next two years on the action plans developed at the institute, utilizing the existing community structure that Newport preferred. The following positive initiatives were among the results realized:

- Newport's emphasis on family economic well-being and parental employment as a critical factor in assuring children's well-being led the state to expand its nearly ten-year-old vision for children to include a focus on family economic well-being.
- The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Newport Partnership for Families worked to solve the intra-city travel needs of low-income families. Their work resulted in 24/7 bus passes for eligible families as well as bus routes and schedules that better served low-income families. DHS and RIPTA continue to participate in the Newport Partnership Transportation group.
- The establishment of a new regional DHS office in Newport was a direct result of the issues raised and discussed at Danforth.
- Both Newport and the state instituted a series of outcome measures and indicators of child well-being.
- One of the women who participated from Newport, a consumer, was hired at Covering Kids at a staff level and over time became the executive director for the statewide effort. She recently left Rhode Island's effort to join the national staff of Covering Kids.
- The Sullivan School in Newport, as a result of greater awareness of state level initiatives and resources, competed successfully for a major establishment grant from the DHS to create before and after school programs for an elementary school that serves the most at-risk children in Newport. Collaboration continues to provide continued support for this effort.
- The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), collaborating with the Newport Partnership for Families, has sought and received federal support to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for Newport to address serious, violent, and chronic juvenile crime.

centers and swimming pools and how to organize celebrations to keep everyone's spirits up.

It's not that one type of activity is necessarily more important than another. It's that strategic thinking at the local level happens in the context of a need to deliver programs and services that will have the greatest impact on results. As State Representative Lloyd Frandsen of Utah told a Policymakers' meeting, it's that state officials make policy at 10,000 feet, while local caseworkers touch families.

Principle Five: Collaboration Depends on Trusting, Respectful Relationships

In the end, the wisdom of an old truism was reinforced: Collaboration depends on relationships. Throughout the life of the Policymakers' Program, it was driven home again and again that working collaborations require mutual trust and respect. No matter how the specifics of the program changed over the decade of its existence, it was invariably true that unless people found effective ways to share information, trust each other's judgment, and respect each other's challenges, the collaboration was likely to founder. In the often-partisan world of state policymaking, the human element in building collaboration cannot be overlooked.

Newport, Rhode Island is a case in point. At the time of the Danforth Summer Institute, major welfare reform, health care reform, and early care and education reform initiatives and investments

had been enacted at the state level. At the same time, Newport had already developed its own strategic vision for its children and families. That vision had been established organizationally with paid staff as the Newport Partnership for Families which enjoyed wide support within the Newport Community. The Danforth experience provided an opportunity for state people and Newport people to clarify that these separately developed missions had much in common; to develop personal contacts and the beginnings of relationships; to identify common themes for action; and to formulate strategies for bringing state resources to bear to achieve local community goals.

Another illustration of the importance of relationships to successful collaboration is seen in the achievements of a statewide program to improve early childhood programs in Vermont. The entire effort came about because two key executive agency heads, in education and in human services, came together around the conclusion that the early life experiences of Vermont children could be substantially improved with pre-natal care, early screening and literacy programs. Their statewide efforts, supported by the early Policymakers' emphases helped lay the groundwork for the later Barre work.

In Utah, the statewide FACT council helped improve local programming by providing technical assistance from state agencies at local sites. A similar joint effort in Missouri required the six Caring Communities agencies at the state level to work together jointly on the Caring Communities budget submission. In Missouri, also, the involvement of a key state legislator (Steve Stoll) in both supporting appropriations for Caring Communities statewide and working with his local Caring Communities leadership helped provide an exchange link between the state and community.

Perhaps because, at its heart, collaboration depends on the human element, not simply the policy process, collaboration at the local level is facilitated with celebration and praise. Even food takes on major symbolic importance. The Barre collaboration launched an enormous town celebration at the end of the summer, complete with food and entertainment, to mark the progress of its efforts. When Bangor began its process to key in on community values, it found that providing meals for volunteers as they went through the training brought everyone together.

Policymakers make policy. Human beings create change. It stands to reason that if policymakers are interested in encouraging change, they need to pay attention to the human need for appreciation, celebration, and recognition.

Principle Six: Building Capacity Is the Key Strategy.

Building capacity at the local level should perhaps be the fundamental tactic of efforts such as the Policymakers' Program. As this effort matured, it became clearer and clearer that without committed, solid capacity on the ground, all the good intentions in the Governor's mansion or state capitol would make little difference. So capacity building became key in states such as Vermont, Missouri, and Utah.

Caring Communities in Missouri's Vineland/DeSoto Area

The Vineland School is located in the DeSoto School District in the Vineland area about 50 miles south of St. Louis. DeSoto is primarily a white, middle-class community, but despite its homogeneity, there is wide variation in school readiness. Fewer than 20% of three- and four-year olds have access to quality preschool programs. Parents as Teachers (which works with families) reaches only 21% of eligible children.

"Six-months difference in skill level is a lot when you're 52 months old. We have many children who come to school and don't even know how to use scissors. They have never had a crayon in their hands. Then we have this other group who have been in pre-school and day care and probably are reading already." —Connie Gooch, Kindergarten Teacher, Vineland, Missouri

The Vineland Caring Communities Site Council, working with the DeSoto schools set out to change that. Caring Communities, a statewide effort encouraging collaboration among state and local efforts in health care, mental health, education, and social services, had a specific mission. It was designed so that children can have strong families in communities where parents are working, and children are succeeding in school, growing up healthy, safe and prepared to enter productive adulthood.

DeSoto/Vineland set out to concentrate on pre-school preparation and early school experiences. It developed a pre-school in the DeSoto school district and began screening all three- and four-year-olds for school readiness. It established a family resource center and expanded practical workshops on parenting. It inaugurated "A Day in the Life of a VIP (Very Important Pre-Schooler)" to introduce children and parents to their new school.

For the early elementary grades, the program launched an attack on head lice to improve school attendance, implemented structured tutoring in grades one and two, and encouraged Americorps Vista workers to volunteer in schools and implement parent training.

So far, results are promising. The proportion of children judged "not ready for school" has dropped from 51% in 1997 to 20% in 2000. And compensatory education teachers supported under Title I report that the children in their classes are better prepared.

The amount and nature of assistance required for capacity-building varies substantially across communities, states, and agencies. The size of the state is often a factor; population density is an issue; and often the size and sophistication of the community comes into play. The challenges of finding capacity in small, fairly isolated communities such as Barre and Bangor are different from the challenges faced in Nashville or University City, both of which enjoy access to the cultural and educational assets of a major city. At the same time, building capacity in small, homogenous communities is often less complex than in large metropolitan areas.

Most groups greatly value capacity-building activities in the early stages of their work. They need examples of what other people have done and opportunities to talk with others who have started to move in the desired direction. As they develop experience and confidence, their capacity-building needs change. As the community moves more deeply into the change process, different types of assistance are required.

Facilitation assistance during the program's Summer Institutes was important because it helped teams work as a group; develop a clear set of goals defined by results for children, youth and families; identify appropriate indicators of success; and establish an action plan. Once the work was under way, teams often needed assistance breaking down bureaucratic barriers, especially around categorical funding, data usage, and evaluation. Teams identified their greatest technical assistance need as having someone with the expertise to help them select and use appropriate indicators to measure results. At the local level, communities needed data that would help them make decisions about their focus and indicators of success. At the state level, one of the major needs was developing databases across agencies that could provide the data needed by local communities.

Local assistance and support can be provided from a variety of sources — cross-agency teams, outside consultants, and university researchers or other

experts. Program funds designated for securing outside assistance, as determined by the community plan, seemed to work well, a strategy that state policymakers should emulate. Often it seemed that the source and even the nature of the assistance were less important than the fact that the assistance was available. Sites frequently reported that simply having someone ask them about their progress and knowing that someone was interested in their work was important in keeping them moving ahead. In addition, local teams confirmed that developing a protocol to listen to local residents (and actually hearing and using what was said) was often critical.

Principle Seven: Planning and Accountability Are Essential to Success.

While serendipity often plays a useful role in the development of these collaborations, it can only carry a program so far. The challenges these programs set out to address are so formidable that solid planning and well-thought-out schemes of accountability are absolutely required.

The basic planning strategy in the Summer Institutes was to focus on outcomes (e.g,, healthy children arriving at school ready to learn) and then to align and streamline the resources and the actions targeted at those outcomes. When Barre, for example, drove its planning for children and families around outcomes of high priority to the community (promoting literacy while reducing alcohol and spousal abuse), it was able to align and release local energies in pursuit of those goals. Driving the work by focusing on outcomes for children and families was the distinguishing characteristic of the program. It was the basis on which collaboration worked.

Most of the sites used existing statements of outcomes for children and families as a framework for their efforts. The value of approaching planning in this fashion is that it focused the attention of communities and their leaders. Once the community agreed on what it was trying to accomplish, it understood

Hard Times in Barre, Vermont

Barre is a blue-collar town famous for its granite and well-known for the population of hard-working men who quarry it. Like children everywhere, some of Barre's children have had to live with abuse. In Barre, a joint state and community effort was designed to improve learning and attack child abuse. It was planned at Danforth's 1997 Summer Institute as a wide-ranging effort involving schools and citizens intent on developing a learning community. It was launched with an assault on problems such as alcoholism and abuse.

"You had the state director of human services saying, 'Let's go for this.' You had the state commissioner of education and the superintendent of schools and the chair of the board behind it. The mayor comes down and says, 'I'm going to fight for literacy in my community just the way we filled those potholes.' " —Paul Costello, Executive Director, Council on Rural Development, State of Vermont

Barre has sustained the work over multiple years. The Steering Committee, a voluntary group who met regularly, focused its efforts around the theme "Learning for Life." Choosing this as an outcome contributed to their success because it was a result that all segments of the community could understand and embrace.

Quantitatively, most of the indicators policymakers would like to see go down have declined. And most indicators policymakers would like to see go up have increased. (See full report in Appendix C.) The positive results energized the volunteers and the presentation of data in trend line form helped them communicate their good results clearly to the media and the general public.

Among the lessons learned were:

- Leadership is key.
- Constancy is essential.
- Outsiders can play a vital role.
- Data can help drive the process.
- A brand name such Danforth is an important, intangible asset.

A foundation has been set up to continue the work in Barre.

what it should measure and how it needed to align and streamline resources to get there. It also determined who would lead the work. Agencies in Midvale appeared to be able to adjust their work, practically voluntarily, according to the contributions and needs of each agency. It should be noted as well that there was strong leadership from the mayor in Midvale and the city committed staff resources for coordination among all of the agencies. The enthusiasm, skill, and dedication of the coordinator were key factors in keeping the agencies focused. In Nashville, by contrast, pressure from the mayor's office often seemed to be what was keeping agencies focused and on task until they could get to the point of identifying desired results.

The planning meetings that were held as part of the basic Policymakers' Program experience appeared to make major contributions to the success of local efforts. The January meetings provided a safe environment to break down boundaries, away from the pressure of day-to-day demands. And the Summer Institutes built on that experience by providing a structured and productive way to explore how to attack issues of "turfism" and agency aggrandizement.

As the following section notes, data can be the foundation of accountability efforts. Building a monitoring mechanism into the effort (as Vermont did) permits state and local policymakers to document change related to the principal needs the collaborative addresses.

Principle Eight: Data Provide the Road Map.

The most successful collaboratives drove their work with meaningful data about children, youth, and families. In Vermont, for example, Barre started out with data from the state on local community indicators of family well-being. Local leaders didn't like the picture drawn by those numbers and set out to change them.

Few things at the local level, however, create as much anxiety about these collaboratives as the data requirements. Most communities require a lot of hand holding on these issues if they are to use databases for needs assessment and monitoring. A key reason why people don't use data is that they don't know which data are relevant to the results they are trying to improve.

Also, often a lot of community data at the local level are not easily aggregated or useable. Units of reporting differ, with each agency collecting data its own way. For example, education departments generate reports by school district, while social service agencies are likely to generate them by county. Reports generated by zip code or census tracts appear to be more useful at the community level – and were, in fact, key to focusing the Barre, Vermont effort.

At the state level, funding needs to be allocated for experts to work across agencies to determine the database structure. Decisions need to be made about the type of data to include. Not all data collected by the state are of equal value to local communities. Agreement across agencies on data needs – about surveys to be conducted on a regular basis, for example — is important. A structure for shared, ongoing administration of databases also is essential.

Providing easy access to data involves having the state publicly report data in a way that is supportive of local work. In all likelihood, it also involves providing technical assistance to local teams on how to access and use the data. Some of the most useful data for sites must be locally generated. Some states (like Vermont) have worked to develop a bank of indicators for each outcome and have provided assistance to local communities to help them select key indicators that match their priorities. Some sites have found that non-profit groups that draw on state data and do special analyses (such as Kids Count) are more useful than state databases.

Principle Nine: The Emphasis Is On Assets, Not Deficits.

As the tenure of the Policymakers' Program drew to a close, a new emphasis began to receive a lot of attention: policy and action developed around assets instead of deficits. Several of the local collaboratives very successfully adopted this approach.

Much of this work grew out of research completed at the Search Institute in Minneapolis. The Institute developed a list of 40 Developmental Assets in Childhood. These 20 external and 20 internal assets are important to young people as they grow up. (See Appendix B, Tables B-1 and B-2.) The assets-based approach fits hand-in-glove with the Policymakers' approach. The problem with school-based solutions to youth problems is that assets come from the home and the community, as well as the school, according to both the assets-based and the Policymakers' approaches.

Data Tell a Story

From the outset, the Policymakers' Program has encouraged data-driven change. The first key lesson of its five-year report was "Start with the Numbers," which encouraged policymakers to use data about the needs of children, youth, and families to define community needs. The final key lesson was "Finish with the Numbers." It encouraged data-based evaluation to quantify progress and note areas needing improvement.

The Barre project is an outstanding example of how states and communities can collaborate to use data to drive change and monitor improvement. City and community leaders were distressed when they saw the state-provided 1997 data indicators. They were determined to turn the situation around. And they succeeded.

Of the state-wide goals for Vermont, Barre selected a limited number. The program aimed at key results in six areas – pregnant women and newborns thriving, children ready for school, children succeeding in school, children living in stable families, youth choosing healthy behaviors, and families and individuals living in safe and supportive communities.

They can already point to impressive improvement over five years. Data tell the story.

- New-baby home visits have increased by 28% (to 81% of all babies).
- No infant or child deaths in 1997-98.
- 100% immunizations in 1996-98.
- 5% increase in 2nd-grade students meeting state developmental reading assessment norms.
- Continued decline in high school dropout rates.
- 27% decline in child abuse rates.
- Significant declines in use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana by 8th graders.
- 27% drop in teen pregnancy rates.

Numbers that Should Go Down…

Indicator	*1997*	*1999*
8th Graders Using Marijuana	*17%*	*8%*
8th Graders Using Tobacco	*28%*	*15%*
8th Graders Using Alcohol	*30%*	*22%*
Teen Sexually Transmitted Disease	*5%*	*3%*
Adult Abuse and Neglect	*35%*	*20%*
High School Dropouts	*3%*	*2.5%*
Child Abuse (victims per 1,000)	*73*	*63*
Young Teen Pregnancy (per 1,000)	*48*	*42*

…and Numbers that Should Go Up

Indicator	*1997*	*1999*
Receiving New Baby Visits	*59%*	*81%*
Child Support Paid	*72%*	*82%*

Walbridge, Missouri: School Failure Not Always the School's Fault

The Walbridge Community Education Center in St. Louis was the first Caring Communities site in the state. In this low-income, predominantly African-American community, more than 40% of the households were headed by single females. Faced with multiple responsibilities and overwhelming challenges, many parents found it difficult to be involved with their children's education.

With gubernatorial support, state agencies have attacked the mentality of "separate silos" in education, social services, health, labor, and mental health to improve services to families and children. What began in the urban St. Louis Walbridge community soon spread to rural Schuyler and Knox Counties and ultimately to some 60 sites statewide.

The guidance and technical expertise provided by Danforth helped Jefferson County Caring Communities focus on measurable results needed by the community. We expect to use the knowledge gained to make sure future projects reach desired outcomes. — State Senator Stephen M. Stoll, Jefferson County, Missouri; Caring Communities Board of Directors

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The Walbridge Community Education Center, in partnership with the local library and health clinic took a leadership role in planning and implementing strategies to help children and families prosper. Focusing on (1) all students reading by grade three and (2) all students at grade level in all subjects by the end of grade five, the project has succeeded in a number of ways. It has increased community involvement in the schools, reached out to parents, encouraged reading to children, and improved teacher professional development. Scores on statewide assessments have improved, a community garden has been launched, and a new music program to enhance reading has been launched. All of this activity represented a major change of direction for the CEC, which previously had had little or no involvement in issues related to student achievement, which was seen as a school issue.

Why is all of this important? As Khatib Waheed, former director of the Caring Communities program put it, children with learning disabilities cost the state about $30 million a year, with many of them winding up in the juvenile justice or health care systems. "If kids arrive from safe and secure backgrounds and don't learn, that's the teacher's fault," said Waheed. "But if they are coming from low-income backgrounds or dysfunctional homes, then their inability to learn is not the teacher's fault. We need to support these teachers any way we can."

Several simultaneous developments have put the Caring Communities program in Walbridge and elsewhere in the state in jeopardy. Turnover in the Governor's mansion, tight state budgets, lack of authorizing legislation, and the loss of long-time state and local champions of the effort (Waheed and Gary Stangler, former director of Social Services) make for a clouded outlook for Caring Communities.

The Caring Communities example shows why it is important for a governor to get legislative support to implement comprehensive change strategies. A highly praised structure was put in place with public/private support through an Executive Order. Unfortunately, when not institutionalized through legislation, it goes away when the champions go away.

According to the Search Institute, based on research involving 10,000 6th to 12th grade students in 213 communities across the United States, young people face many challenges outside the schools. Many have to cope with crumbling local social infrastructures, adults who are disengaged from children's lives, parents with less time for parenting, and an age-segregated society that denies them access to the wisdom and experience of the elderly.

The best predictor of a child's success in later life is whether the child comes from a healthy, strong, supportive family, according to this research. The second best predictor is bonding with school. Moreover, a combination of assets is much more important than any individual asset. Most people can draw on close to 20 assets as they are growing up, according to the Search Institute research. The more assets they have, the better their chances of avoiding destructive behaviors.

In addition, youth with the most assets are far less likely to engage in high-risk behavior involving alcohol, drugs, violence, and sexual activity than those with fewer assets. For example, according to Institute analyses, fully 53% of students with 10 or fewer assets experience problem alcohol abuse; by contrast, only 3% of those with 31 or more assets to draw on encounter the same problem. The patterns involving illicit drug usage, sexual activity, and violence are very similar.

Conversely, the more assets a young person can draw on, the more positive their attitudes and behaviors. Access to more assets not

only prevents undesirable behaviors, it also promotes the behavior most parents and community leaders desire. More than 50% of young people with 31 or more assets succeed in school, compared to just 7% of those with 10 or fewer. Similar positive patterns prevail on such attitudes and behaviors as valuing diversity, maintaining good health, and delaying gratification.

Armed with this evidence, a state team from Maine left the January meeting determined to promote an assets approach to collaboration. The Bangor team implemented such an approach with great success. Although starting from a data-driven approach, the Barre team immediately recognized the salience of an assets-based approach and drew on these ideas without hesitation.

Principle Ten: Resources and Their Alignment Require Attention.

While clear statements of vision and goals are important, the results of interest to policymakers are achieved with resources, not wishful thinking. Practically every annual meeting included state tutorials on how to align resources with policy priorities. Budget experts from Ohio, Iowa, Missouri, Maine and elsewhere demonstrated how different states approached putting budget muscle behind program goals.

Making Bangor the Best Place in America to Raise a Family and Be a Child

Bangor, a small city of 30,000 in central Maine, sent a team to the Danforth Institute in 1999. Building on work already completed with the state's Communities for Children effort, the team developed a plan organized around a vision of making Bangor the "very best place in America to raise a family and be a child." Community literacy became a major focus. The effort has emphasized:

Leadership: Key leadership from the state, local officials, United Way, and the Governor's Children's Cabinet.

Support: Support at the state and regional level, and financial support from the King Foundation and United Way (to hire coordinator) and from the Libra Foundation (to fund summer camp for every student in grades 3-6).

Partnerships: Powerful partnerships involving state and local government, school system, local non-profits and the philanthropic community.

Volunteers: Heavy use of volunteers, including recruitment of 23 employers to provide release time so that employees could serve as readers in more than 30 day care centers. Since 1999, over 1,450 volunteers have provided more than 3,300 hours of volunteer service and provided close to $200,000 for training and administrative costs for Read for Success.

Results: Working with the state's "Maine Mark" program to identify 79 indicators to measure movement toward goals about results for children, youth, and families.

Based on anecdotal information, the community and its leaders are satisfied with results so far. But hard data on effectiveness are hard to find. Data helped drive Bangor's commitment to the effort, however. "When we told adults that 75% of the kids in Bangor don't believe grown-ups value them, the community responded," says Joe Dahl, a school principal. "The arrest rate from teenagers grew 50% in the 1990s. People found that unacceptable."

"When we began this work, many people saw this as a social service problem and [social service agencies] could just get together and fix it. What Danforth helped us understand was that it was a community problem which means involving everyone...." —Jeff Wahlstrom, President, United Way of Eastern Maine

At the state level, Missouri was the most explicit in requiring a joint budget request for joint funding for Caring Communities from five separate agencies (education, health, mental health, social services, and employment). The need to justify this shared funding jointly before appropriating committees sent an important signal about priorities to state agency personnel and to local Caring Communities sites.

When these goals had been clarified and funds allocated to them, many of the local sites became magnets for generating additional funds from the phil-

anthropic sector. In Bangor, for example, the Libra Foundation was eager to encourage more reading. Alerted to the city's literacy initiative, it provided tens of thousands of books so that volunteers could read in parks, recreation centers, and day care and senior citizens' centers. An even more surprising financial commitment came from the Libra Foundation. Out of the blue, the city received a gift of $1.3 million annually for 20 years to provide $1,000 for a camp scholarship for every 3rd – 6th grade child in Bangor's public schools. Unrelated to income, the scholarships required "effort" in school and served a dual purpose of helping young people and supporting the state's summer camp economy.

A Better Future

During the life of this Policymakers' Program, Americans have been involved in a great national debate about the nature and shape of government, and even about the need for traditional public structures of many kinds. At the federal level, citizens watched as the national government was shut down for several days over a dispute between the White House and Congress about budget priorities. Many state legislatures had to work with a contentious electorate, intent on redirecting state spending and priorities through referenda and other direct action. And, at the local level, political and education leaders often found themselves fighting an uphill battle to enact local budgets and pass school bond issues. If not in disrepute, government was frequently forced to justify itself. As the United States enters fully into a new millennium, public confidence in the competence of government appears to be increasing. In this context, this report from the Policymakers' Program adds another small measure to the accumulating evidence of government integrity and efficacy.

Indeed, one of the more remarkable results of this program is that, in several states, it is evident that the work continues despite 2002 budget pressures on state and local government. Local officials in Barre, Vermont for example, continue with the efforts described here; in addition, the state has directed some of the savings from reductions in the number of families needing services to additional prevention efforts. In Nashville, the Madeline Initiative recommended that an Office of Children and Youth be established in the Mayor's office. It is now a reality. In summer 2002, it was funded by the city council and a director has been appointed. The coordination work will now be administered out of this office, allowing for a consolidation of money, data, and service. Not only will this address one of the top concerns of the committees, but also it will signify that children and youth are a priority in the eyes of Metro government.

What the Policymakers' Program demonstrates is that when committed leaders at the state and local level convene to improve the quality of life in local communities, positive results follow for children, youth, and their families.

Appendix A

The Child in the Family & the Family in the community:

Improving Results for Children

- *Highlights of the January 1999 Meeting of the Policymakers' Program*

Co-Sponsored by
Education Commission of the States
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governors' Association
Child and Family Policy Center, Vanderbilt Institute for
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Nashville, Tennessee
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Foreword

Where can you go to talk about early care and education programs for children and be guaranteed two great opportunities? The first is the chance to dissect these issues in detail for hours with two governors and the elected and appointed officials from 19 states. The second is to spend an evening visiting backstage at the Grand Ol' Opry and listening to country legends like Roy Clark, (star of the 1970s TV show, "Hee Haw"), "Skeeter" Davis (a queen of country gospel), and Jack Greene (who knocked the socks off "Statue of a Fool").

Nashville, Tennessee's the place, the site of the January 1999 Policymakers' Program, a four-day seminar oriented around raising student achievement by providing a healthy beginning for every child.

Can children succeed if their families do not? Can we strengthen families without strengthening communities? Do we really know as much and care as much as we think we do and say we do? If so, why haven't we made more progress? What's happened to those people who used to be on public assistance rolls? Most are at work. The question is what kind of work? And what will happen when the economy cools and demand for relatively unskilled labor drops through the floor?

These questions and others challenged nearly 120 legislators; governors and their aides; and analysts, researchers, and cabinet officials from 19 states and territories late in January, 1999. They met in Nashville to discuss the needs of preschool children. The meeting was held at the invitation of the Danforth Foundation, the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association, co-sponsors of the Policymakers' Program, headquartered at Vanderbilt University's Child and Family Policy Center.

I want to urge you to understand, said one Foundation official, that "there's no plausible alternative other than making it possible for as many kids as possible to grow up in their natural families. That's true not just for the small cherubs in our families, but for difficult and troublesome teenagers."

Two governors described the progress they've made in K-12 education and argued that now's the time to cement these reforms into place by making sure children arrive at school ready to learn.

Participants listened intently as a scientist described brain development in young children. They heard a national education spokesman outline a general plan of attack. And they took new ideas from a rural school superintendent, who explained what these services looked like up close and on the ground as well as from colleagues in state legislatures and agencies, who, along with preschool experts, described their experiences. And they worked hard in breakout sessions to devise programs that made sense back home.

Robert Koff
Senior Vice President
The Danforth Foundation

Debbie Miller, Vanderbilt University
Director
The Policymakers' Program

The Child in the Family and the Family in the Community: Improving Results for Children

Combining all the services needed by children and families in stress is a tough policy issue. It seems to be an almost bureaucratic fact of life: Agencies involved with problems such as health, jobs, training, education, child care, nutrition, mental health, community policing, and criminal justice seem to avoid collaboration in preference to carving out their own areas of expertise.

There are a lot of legislative barriers to collaboration, noted Ron Cowell, a member of the program's advisory committee and president of the Education Policy and Leadership Center, who had served for 25 years in the Pennsylvania legislature. He explained that these barriers come in two varieties—external and internal. Externally, legislators have to deal with pressures from constituents to preserve the status quo. "Take care of us," our constituents say. "Then there's the nature of the system itself. Education, health care, and early childhood programs are all separate systems – with separate funding, training, credentialing, and so on. And each of these things is disconnected. Finally, we get all the ideological issues—small versus big government, the rights of parents, and other rallying points—that can get people fired up."

The internal barriers are equally challenging, Cowell stressed. "The legislative committee structure is more and more complex, with more and more chairs and subcommittees. As legislators, we tend to focus on programs, not systems, and we find it hard to obtain information in a useable form."

As a result of these factors, he argued, policymakers often encounter three major failures. "First, we're not thoughtful about the policy levers we have. We have a lot of power, but we don't always use it well. Next, sometimes we lack the guts to lead on tough issues. We're afraid of our constituents, but our constituents will respect us for standing up for the right thing. Finally, one of the things that really stand in the way is, 'Who gets the credit?' We waste a huge amount of time worrying about that."

To make real change, suggested Ralph Smith, vice president of the Casey Foundation, policymakers would be well advised to pay attention to the lessons of the Policymakers' Program. "All of us in the foundation world owe a huge debt of gratitude to Danforth," he said. "With limited resources and great patience, the Policymakers' Program has had an amazing impact on improving policymaking for children by encouraging interagency collaboration."

Bill Purcell, director of the Policymakers' Program and director of Vanderbilt's Child and Family Policy Center, said that Danforth "has no policy agenda for your state. Danforth's agenda is simply that you get your policy team together and do what's right for your state. That's all there is to this; we're the last ones to tell you what to do. But we must be doing something right because thousands of officials from just about every state have come through this program at one point or another."

What you need to keep in mind is the ultimate purpose of all this activity, said Smith, recalling the answer a child gave when a television interviewer asked her what she wanted to be in 20 years. The 12-year-old responded: 'I'm not sure I'll be alive 20 years from now.' Some communities "are destroying children's ability to dream," said Smith. "Your great work is helping stimulate and renew children's dreams."

This meeting began this great work by dividing it into six major areas: (1) helping the child in the family and the family in the community; (2) stimulating brain development; (3) defining the agenda; (4) understanding what it will take; (5) putting it together at the state level; and (6) putting it all together locally. The task is not one for the faint of heart.

Helping the Child in the Family and the Family in the Community

"I want to share a couple of insights with you today," said Smith of the Casey Foundation in as he kicked off the meeting. He described an insight as simply a fancy word for admitting, "We've discovered the obvious!"

The first insight is that the "fate of children in intricately linked with the status of their families." It's not a foolproof formula. Some young people from high-status families get into terrible trouble and some young people from families in desperate conditions rise above them. But statistically the relationship holds.

Perhaps this sounds obvious, acknowledged Smith, "But we've come to understand that we won't see better outcomes for most disadvantaged kids unless we treat their families as important too. We need to abandon the idea that we can somehow rescue the children while abandoning their families. The only option is to make it possible for children to grow up in their natural families. There's no plausible alternative. That's true not just for the small cherubs in our families, but for difficult and troublesome teenagers."

"Insight number 2 is that the prospects for family success are affected by where that family lives." Smith argued that analysts can "predict your success as a parent by knowing your ZIP code. The greatest problems are in high-poverty areas. Even in these areas, great strengths and assets exist. People have strong values. Even here, families prevail, but they often have to be heroic. These communities are crushed by disinvestment, social disorganization, abandonment, and social isolation." Americans harbor a notion that families are free to leave bad neighborhoods, noted Smith, and wonder why they stay. "Some choose to stay, but most remain because they can't afford to leave or they're not allowed to leave."

Insight number 3 is that "families are nested in a web of social and financial supports." They belong to communities; they attend churches; they have jobs. When these supports disappear from communities, particularly when jobs leave communities, problems develop. "We need to help kids in the families where we find them, and we need to help families in the communities where they live," declared Smith.

When dealing with communities that are "toxic" to families, "we need to move the family up the policy agenda and unleash our people's imagination about how to help these families. Let's face it: strong families will do a better job of looking after their own kids than any agency of government ever can."

Good schools, good communities, safe streets, and quality affordable housing. These are the things everyone wants – and they're the things poor families want too. "There's a price on these things. They can be bought. In many ways, social policy needs to concentrate on those who can't purchase these things for themselves."

"Earned income tax credits? Longer school days? Child care centers? Better early education? Health screening? All these things are important. Do them. But also put on the agenda the issue of strengthening families by transforming tough neighborhoods into places where families can thrive and raise children."

Stimulating Brain Development

Dale C. Farran, associate director of Vanderbilt's John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, observed that daily rates for boarding a dog in New York City run from about $44 to more than $400. Yet, he noted that reimbursement rates for childcare rarely exceed about $20 a day. The nation needs to get its priorities in order, he suggested.

Since 1900, American families have been exposed to increasing pressure, noted Farran. Fathers have stopped working on the family farm; women are increasingly working outside the home; the number of single-parent families (most headed by women) has increased dramatically; and the phenomenon of poor children with responsibilities for their own children has developed. At the same time, the proportion of all two-parent families has declined; family size is smaller (and thus teenagers are less likely to watch younger siblings); neighbors are less accessible for extended care; and the quality of child care itself is often questionable. Plenty of reasons for family stress, suggested Farran. And the consequence of much of this is that many children are unsupervised, are confused by the number of adults in their lives, and frequently act out.

The brain is the "most complex object in the known universe," said Farran. Each one of us has 100 billion neurons (nerve cells) in our brain. Each neuron has 5,000 to 10,000 connections to other neurons. "When the brain is fully wired up and connected around the time of adolescence and early adulthood, 100 trillion interconnections among the neurons exist."

What is important about this, stressed Farran, is not simply the number of connections. "The way the connections are organized and how they are organized is far more important than the number." This is why early childhood education and nutrition through childhood is important.

"At birth, the brain is at full size, which is why doctors worry about early births, since it gives the brain and other important organs less time to develop," explained Farran. But the neurons continue to develop through the first 18 months of life, he said. Moreover, the brain's wiring continues to develop

through age 10 as the interconnections between the neurons (known as dendrites) are established.

Farran said that the brain grows in response to stimulation after birth. Infants and toddlers, as well as young children, make active sense out of the stimulation they receive from baby-talk, colors, touching, and games. Repeated stimulation (positive or negative) establishes strong connections; connections that receive little stimulation die.

Obviously, a number of things can threaten brain development and functioning. Farran ticked off several. Isolation and lack of stimulation will confound the wiring of important elements of the brain. On-going stress and abuse of children has been shown to affect brain development. Sudden man-made violence is terrifying to children — more so, according to the evidence, than natural violence. Disorganized environments stress out young children. And depression on the part of the caregiver or severe physical punishment also adversely affects children.

Farran suggested several human development and policy lessons from emerging research:

- Children need repeated, organized stimulation to develop properly, but large-scale group care can be problematic.
- Children need positive relationships with adults who know them and care about them.
- Children need active involvement in their own learning and freedom to explore in safety.
- Children need calm, smooth transitions in their days and lives and the reassurance that adults will protect them.

In place of these needs, he pointed out gently, many children don't receive what they need. Instead, they get chaotic and disorganized care, many changes in caregivers, interaction with adults who barely know them, overcrowded care situations, hours of incomprehensible television, and abrupt changes in activities from adults who basically insist on control as the important aspect in the relationship.

Farran thought it important to encourage high-quality childcare through policy. Create a seamless and coordinated system of child care, he urged. Base eligibility on income, not receipt of public assistance. Make co-payments affordable and easy to understand and exempt parents with children under the age of one year. Worry about salaries and benefits for early childhood caregivers, he stressed, otherwise these programs are subject to never-ending turnover. Provide training to facilities directors, since they're the most stable element in the system. Coordinate training for childcare and school staff and create a "golden handcuff" to programs by improving benefits to childcare workers. Provide incentives to centers to upgrade the quality of care and encourage coordination among social service agencies to reduce disruption in care.

Too often today, concluded Farran, we have a system that puts infants and young children at the mercy of the very real problems of the real world—

stressed families, multiple caregivers, impersonal environments, unsupervised television, and the challenges of living in distressed communities. We need to replace that with a system that provides a cocoon of protection from the challenges of the real world, within which the child is free to explore and grow in safety.

Defining the Agenda

"I don't know why it is that we have to come all the way to Tennessee to talk about education—the cornerstone of my administration—with agency heads and legislators," quipped Governor Paul Patton of Kentucky at the outset of his remarks. "But it was well worth the trip. We've had a terrific discussion and these issues of brain development are going to become more and more important as we learn more."

Governor Tom Carper of Delaware also emphasized how high education is on the gubernatorial agenda these days. Carper said that education and the needs of children had been the themes he concentrated on as chair of the National Governors' Association. "This year, we're focused on raising student achievement and worrying about technology, additional time for learning, and assessment."

Both governors emphasized that early care and education is the emerging education issue. "I backed into early care and education," acknowledged Patton. "It was my daughter's influence. As a businessman, it just had not been something on my radar screen. I just didn't see it. But when I did, I got into early childhood issues in a big way."

"Let's face it," said Patton. "We've already done K-12 reform issues. We're proud of what we've done in higher education. That's why we're going back to the beginning in Kentucky."

Carper had a similar message. He outlined an ambitious agenda already in place or in prospect in Delaware in K-12 education – mentors, assessment, discipline, standards, public school choice, additional time for learning, smaller class sizes in the early grades, and wiring every classroom for the Internet.

Now Delaware is pursing similarly lofty goals in early care and education. "We want to start before kids are born by lowering teenage pregnancy rates. We want to drive down infant mortality below the national average and extend health care to everyone at 200% of the poverty level. We want a wellness center in every school, and a school nurse too. When a child is born in Delaware, the hospitals now send home with that child a five-year calendar ('Growing Together') so that parents will know what to expect and be on the alert for developmental problems. We have home visits for every mother. And we've increased childcare funding four-fold. Every four-year-old in poverty is eligible for Head Start."

"All of this happens before the child even walks into kindergarten," emphasized Carper. "They're ready, and the parents are ready."

What everyone needs to understand is that many of the problems we have in this society can be traced to a poor foundation in early childhood, said

Patton. "I started thinking crime was a big issue. It is. I thought a big part of the problem with adult criminals could be traced to the terrible juvenile justice system. It can. In Kentucky, we had one of the worst juvenile justice systems imaginable. But I also realized that the home pays a big part in all this, and it started to dawn on me that trying to correct these problems even as early as the age of nine was too late."

"What I've realized looking at the brain research is that the brain's just like a computer. But we have to build the computer, and if it's badly wired, it won't work, or it will work badly."

Patton's goal is to develop in Kentucky the best program in early childhood education in the country. "We want to go back to the very beginning and be sure we're at the leading edge of making sure our kids have the best start in life."

In the final analysis, said Carper, "One hundred years from now, no one will remember our clothes, our cars, our houses, or the size of our bank accounts. What they'll remember is whether we made the world a better place. And we can do that by improving the life of just one child."

Understanding What It Will Take

Defining the agenda is one thing. Putting it in place is a horse of a completely different color. Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States, put what will be required to make progress into a pithy 11-point plan.

"It's a very exciting time," reported Newman. "Education and early childhood education are front-burner issues, more visible than they have ever been. The only negative in all of this is that schools, for the most part, sit on the sidelines. Their attitude is 'Don't bother us. We're in the K-12 business. Come and see us when you're 5. Till then, we're busy.' "

It's important to understand that we've learned a lot, observed Newman. "This brain research has enormous implications. We know we can build new brain connections at any point in life. It gets harder as you get older, but it's never too late. Very important."

"Prenatal care is essential. Doctors always knew that, but who paid attention to that in setting education policy? The importance of parenting skills, the need for high-quality child care, the need to avoid stress in early childhood, and the importance of preparation for reading—we've made quantum leaps in our understanding in every one of these areas."

"How do we take advantage of all this?" Newman asked. We need, he said, an 11-step process:

1. Start with a highly visible public discussion of purposes and goals. It's much easier to get agreement on purpose than on methods, but without the first, you're lost.
2. Take the time to do it right. Some states need time for public engagement. They need time to see what works. They need time to figure out how to finance it. It's all time well spent.

3. Draw everyone, including the opponents, into the process. Give people a voice, not a veto. "There are toes waiting to be stepped on, wall-to-wall." Give people a chance to air their concerns before you step on their toes.
4. Understand that not all progress needs new money. Some things need new money, e.g., full-day kindergarten. "But you're already spending a lot." Think about current expenditures; there may be better ways to use that money.
5. Build a base among parents as the first line of child development. Support families. Support communities. Let parents know that we're their allies. "We need to support them because they're essential, not act as though we think they're incompetent and need to be replaced."
6. Bring coherence into the system. Coherence is the key to all this. A lot of programs exist. There's a lot of duplication. Make the system more coherent, and part of that includes reforming the K-12 system.
7. Be tough and demand evidence of effectiveness. A lot of programs that sound good don't work very well. Insist on sound evaluation. Has learning improved? Has absenteeism gone down? Has infant mortality declined? Be tough about this.
8. Create the conditions requiring various public agencies to work together on site. "We have a lot of turf problems wasting resources, and we need to get past that."
9. Learn how to create policy to manage mixed systems. How do you encourage for-profit and non-profit groups to work together? Public and private schools? Mix market incentives and public entities? States have to become better at managing markets.
10. Insist on quality. "If there's one area where you can't have a backlash because we wasted money or somehow harmed clients, it's here in early childhood programs." Insisting on quality teachers and quality programs is the best line of defense against these potential problems.
11. Finally, go back to the beginning and re-engage the public. Keep the discussion going. "Parents cared when it was perceived that policy-makers were messing their kids around with standards. They didn't understand. Well. Messing with three-year-olds? The public will care even more about that."

"One last point," said Newman. "We need to recognize that we're in this for the long haul. The turnaround we need is not going to happen in four weeks. It won't happen in four months. It won't happen in four years, although by then we should see some progress. It's going to take time. Let's take it a piece at a time, evaluate what we do, and get better at what we're doing slowly."

Putting It Together at the State Level

Taking it a piece at a time and getting better by understanding what they're doing is a pretty good description of what these states have been doing. In a series of small group sessions and plenary panels spread over the four days, it became apparent that these states have made substantial progress on issues of early care and education and service coordination.

Nationally, the growth in early childhood programs has been remarkable, reported consultant Anne Mitchell, president of a center on early childhood policy research. Before 1960, only two states offered pre-kindergarten programming of any kind; today, only 11 states don't offer anything. The driving forces have been education reform, welfare reform, brain development research, the effort to give poor children a head start, and awareness of the importance of school readiness generally. Public investment has followed program growth. Before 1970, states spent only $25 million on early childhood programs; today the total exceeds $1 billion.

Mitchell recommended that states commit to universal access to high-quality programs. Echoing Newman, she emphasized the importance of involving the community. And she urged appropriating sufficient funds to achieve high-quality pre-kindergarten programs.

Connecticut

Representative Denise W. Merrill, Deputy Majority Leader, reported that two issues dominate the discussion in Connecticut. First, how do you get the money you need for this? "The issue isn't whether it's a good idea. It's how do you fund it?" Second, how do you put the program together? Of the two problems, she thought the second easier to solve.

In terms of getting support, she emphasized, it's all about how you frame the question. Connecticut's a wealthy state, with high concentrations of poverty in several cities. "So, we've had to convince legislators and a governor in a state with very wealthy and very poor people that this was a good idea." Part of the argument was that unless the state dealt early on with issues of literacy and learning, it would never solve the larger educational challenges facing the state's schools. "But, the governor's interested; the House is interested; and the business community is interested," she concluded. Things look promising in Connecticut.

Georgia

Fewer than 20 people have been responsible for significant change in early childhood programs in Georgia, said Celeste Osborn, director of the State's Office of School Readiness. Governor Miller and dedicated legislators and agency heads put it together. In a state with high rates of teenage pregnancy, 40% dropout rates, and 85% of prisoners reading at the 6th grade level or below, the need for attention to education and early education was easy to justify.

Within the state, a movement to rename "day care centers" as "child-care learning centers" has succeeded, said Osborn. The state has rewritten regula-

tions into plain English. The state has required training for working with infants and toddlers and encouraged the private sector to provide grants to support this training. "We need to raise the bar," said Osborn. "Think of systems, not programs. Maximize brain development from birth to age four. Enact comprehensive programs and do a few things well each year. Insist on standards of care. And evaluate what you do." She insisted that pre-kindergarten "should be a matter of choice. Choice of school. Choice of curriculum. And choice of services."

Ohio

In Ohio, Governor Voinovich is a staunch champion of the first of the National Education Goals, School Readiness, reported Robert Gardner, chair of the Senate Education Committee. The governor has set out to encourage health programs for children, increase access to high-quality pre-kindergarten programs, and improve services aimed at family stability. The 1997 budget allocated $167 million for Head Start over two years, enough to double the number of children served. Additional funds have been targeted at improving collaboration between Head Start and private providers. Nearly 90% of eligible Head Start children are being served.

The state also operates a number of other specialized efforts such as programs for pregnant mothers and special pre-kindergarten programs for children with special needs. So the state is beginning to think about establishing standards for all adults who come into contact with children. What's driving a lot of this interest is a new education reform bill. It requires all students to be able to read before promotion to 5th grade, so this has become a major impetus for early care and education programs.

Vermont

Similarly to Dale Farran, Vermont's Deputy Secretary for Human Services, Cheryl Mitchell, noticed a disconnect between the amount society is willing to pay for good child care and the amount it is willing to pay for market services. "A nose piercing in Vermont costs about $40 for a 20-minute procedure," she observed, "but Vermont pays adult child care workers only $20 a day." Vermont has well-defined legislative goals for the development of children and families. Among these goals are: Pregnant women and newborns should thrive; and families and individuals should live in safe and supportive communities. In fact, the Vermont goals reflect very well Ralph Smith's desire for attention to the child within the family and the community.

These are developmental goals, stressed Mitchell. One grows out of the other. After 10 years of concentrating on these goals, the state is able to document declines in childhood poverty, teen pregnancy, teen births, second pregnancies among teens, sexually transmitted disease, suicides, and child sex abuse. At the same time, indicators that one would hope would increase have, in fact, gone up: there's been a 50% increase in health coverage and a four-fold increase in child support collections. Setting the goals and then establishing programs to attain them lies at the heart of this success.

Missouri

Missouri's program is known as "Caring Communities." The state's director of social services, Gary Stangler, said, "The key to adopting collaboration as a way of life within a state lies in creating a small cadre of people who care and then building from there."

At the state level, Caring Communities is made up of seven state departments – corrections, social services, education, health, mental health, labor and industrial relations, and economic development – which share a $22.4 million appropriation for collaboration. Every other week, the deputy directors of these programs get together to work together. Their mantra is Ralph Smith's vision codified in statute and regulation: children succeeding in school, living in strong families, in communities where the parents are working, and growing up healthy and safe and prepared to enter productive adulthood. There are now several dozen Caring Communities around the state, in which school systems work collaboratively with social service agencies, and so far the results are encouraging, in terms of parents working, children being ready for school, and children succeeding in school.

Putting It Together Locally

What all of this theory means in practical terms over the long haul was brought into relief by Roland Chevalier, who briefed the meeting on his experience implementing an early childhood education program (birth to nine) in St. Martins Parish, Louisiana.

In describing how he negotiated all of the tricky political and financial crosscurrents involved with implementing early childhood programs, Roland Chevalier asked the participants to consider a simple question: Why are we here? "Are we here to help kids learn? Or is our function to provide adults with jobs? This is a huge issue. People know about it, but they don't want to talk about it."

Adopting the attitude that "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got," St. Martins schools put together a comprehensive community team to attack the early childhood issue. It included people from the school system, law enforcement, private day-care centers, the business community, Head Start, and health care.

Chevalier described how people in his district identified "retention" (requiring students to repeat a grade) as a major issue. Coding every child from kindergarten through grade 3 and plotting their homes on a map, St. Martins' educators were able to identify what they called "retention cancer clusters"—areas with extremely high rates of retention. In 1993, extraordinarily high rates of retention were found in kindergarten and grades 1, 7, and 8, reported Chevalier. Looking behind these figures, he came to a sobering realization: Retention is justified as an effort to help the students. But when he reviewed student-level data over the previous 25 years in St. Martins Parish, he discovered that "no student who was held back twice ever graduated." Clearly retention in the earliest years had to be tackled, because children held back in

kindergarten had already run out of second chances if they were held back again later.

Chevalier urged: "As educators, we have to do what's best for kids and everything else will fall into place....When you have to make a decision about a child, superimpose the face of your own child on the face of the one in front of you—and you can't go wrong."

Public engagement was a major strategy in St. Martins. With Danforth Foundation support, the district contracted with Philliber Associates to mount a "community engagement" process in which 50 people developed a community questionnaire and went door to door to encourage people to complete it. "We literally went into about 500 homes with a 5-6 page questionnaire," smiled Chevalier. "We not only learned a great deal," he reported, "but the process of developing the questionnaire and administering it also created 50 citizen-leaders who became advocates for local schools."

Then the district turned its attention to educators, he said. "We found that about 12% of our teachers (73 out of 600) really didn't believe all children can learn. Even worse, 20 of the 73 (including a principal) disagreed strongly with the idea."

"As Yogi Berra used to say, 'If you don't know where you're going, you probably aren't going to get there,'" said Chevalier. "So you need a vision of where you want to be. And everyone needs to get behind the vision. Because if only you see it, no one else will buy it." Echoing Governor Patton, the Louisiana educator asked, "How many kids don't make it? Kids in prison don't make it. Fixing it while it's cheap in school makes a lot more sense than paying for it later in those famous state universities known as penitentiaries. We need to understand that all children are gifted. Some just open their presents later than others."

St. Martins used the data it gathered during the public engagement process to get grants to implement Parents as Teachers, the Right Question, Drug-Free Schools, Dads for Children, and Parent Support Groups, according to Chevalier. Moreover, the team established a comprehensive school-based health care center serving the entire district and staffed one day a week by a volunteer district graduate who is now a physician.

St. Martins also set about providing training in early childhood issues for K-6 teachers and held the first meeting ever convened in the county that included teachers from the schools, Head Start, and private day-care providers. "Day-care providers opposed us at the outset. They thought we'd steal their business. They torpedoed a parental education program we were trying to set up. Now they're sneaking into our workshops and we're providing workshops for them."

Is it working? Many of the signs are good. Teachers' expectations are higher; student achievement has increased; best of all, fewer students are achieving below grade level (and the number decreases as they progress through school), and more are achieving above grade level.

Put your money into professional development, was Chevalier's message, you can't go wrong. "If you catch a teacher doing something right, help them spread their story." Above all, don't be afraid to jump in and mix it up. "Five years ago when we started this, St. Martins was $658,000 in debt. Everything we did, we did while we were broke!"

Appendix B

Building Children's Assets:

New Ways of Working with Young People

Highlights of the January 2000 Meeting of the Policymakers' Program

Co-Sponsored by
Education Commission of the States
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governors' Association

Hyatt Islandia Hotel
San Diego, California
January 27-30, 2000

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Foreword

How can we help young people succeed? Do they need programs or people? What strategies can we develop to encourage the 95% of young people who do wonderful things, instead of fixating on the 0.01% who do dreadful damage? Is it possible to teach young people to be courageous? How can powerful friends best help powerless children? While we worry about our children, do we understand that they are worrying just as much about us? And what do giraffes and ducks have to do with all of this?

These questions and others challenged nearly 120 legislators, governors' aides, analysts, researchers, and cabinet officials from 19 states and territories late in January. They met in San Diego to discuss improving the delivery and coordination of services to children and families at the invitation of the Danforth Foundation, the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association, co-sponsors of the Policymakers' Program.

From a representative of a research institute in Minnesota, the attendees learned about the importance of 40 family and community assets in children's development. Most children can draw on about 20 of these assets, said the researcher, which turns out to be a kind of critical mass for adult success. Kids with fewer then 10 of these assets in their lives are likely to wind up in trouble; those with 30 or more normally hit the ground running when they reach adulthood.

An expert on families and work described recent groundbreaking research on what children want from parents and schools. What's most important for young people, she said, is that their parents are there for them when they need them. Young people know more about their parents' work lives than most adults understand, she said, and kids believe parents are unhappy in their jobs.

Participants also listened as their colleagues from state government and local communities described promising programs — programs that set demanding goals, that use language the public understands, that reach out to learn from community members, and that ensure accountability by defining goals in measurable terms. They listened intently as a children's advocate from one state described how she had helped build a powerful corporate children's lobby and as policymakers from other states described how to find funding for children's programs.

Above all, they listened to each other. In "role-alike" sessions and other small-group discussions, around meals and during coffee breaks, the participants continually challenged each other to rethink current policies and priorities to help make life better for children and families. The result? As they left, each of the 19 state and territorial delegations carried with it some sense of what it planned to do immediately to begin building assets for children.

The Policymakers' Program intends to build on this meeting's base by establishing a model of how to rethink service delivery in one metropolitan area. Starting with a joint state-local steering committee and working with sev-

eral task forces, policymakers hope to be able to refine a redesigned service delivery system plan for Nashville, Tennessee at a Policymakers' Institute this summer. This plan will be brought to the Mayor and Governor for action.

Robert Koff
Senior Vice President
The Danforth Foundation

Debbie Miller, Vanderbilt University
Director
The Policymakers' Program

"Grown-ups never understand anything. It is tiresome for children to have to be forever explaining things to them." These lines from Antoine de St. Exupery's *The Little Prince* were quoted by Bill Purcell, Mayor of Nashville and Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Danforth Foundation's Policymakers' Program. One of the things that needs to be explained, said Purcell, is that legislation and policymaking can only take you so far in improving the lives of children. Most of the real work has to take place on the front lines, in communities, neighborhoods, schools, and families that are intent on helping children thrive.

As majority leader of the Tennessee House, Purcell helped write legislation providing for smaller class sizes and computers in every classroom, then was surprised to discover that the benefits never appeared in his daughter's school. "At the local level, little changed."

As mayor of Nashville, Purcell has made it his business to visit every nook and cranny of about 64 schools in the city, out of a total of 164 schools, despite the annoyance of the local school board. "They think I'm yanking their chain," reported Purcell. "But what I'm worried about is that bats are flying around inside Merrill School. As mayor, however, I can't do anything about that. People in the schools have to fix it."

"I've just come from a meeting in the White House with the President of the United States. He's saying all the right things about education. He's talking about schools, about lower class size, and about computers in the classrooms. But I know there's very little he can do directly about any of those things."

Long before anyone else understood the significance of these issues, said Purcell, Danforth had grasped the significance of the importance of cooperation and collaboration at the local level as a means of ensuring a decent start for every child. The Foundation also understood that schools could not do the job alone. "It's very important that presidents and presidential candidates are talking about education and about families. It's very important that state legislators are worried about schools and social services. But to make a difference in children's lives, these battles have to be fought out ultimately on the front lines and at the local level. That's what brings us together here this weekend."

The Policymakers' Program

The Policymakers' Program has existed since 1992 as a means of bringing together legislative and executive branch leaders intent on improving services for children and families. Over the years, more than 500 state leaders from some 40 states have participated in the effort. Funded by the Danforth Foundation with the cooperation of the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislators, and the Education Commission of the States, the program initially revolved largely around state-level concerns. In recent years, as it became apparent that cooperation in the state capitol meant

little without similar collaboration in local communities, the program has become more of a state and local partnership. It continues to provide for a January meeting that brings together many state policymakers from 15 or more states each year. But it also supports two or three state teams each year at a Summer Institute. These state teams, normally selected from among the states participating in the January meeting, involve not only state leaders but also leaders from a community within the state who are determined to improve service delivery.

The year's January meeting quickly took shape around six major themes: asset building; the relationship between families and work; promising state and local models; school finance; powerful friends for powerless children; and the importance of giraffes and ducks in the process.

Asset Building

There's something terribly wrong with the way we talk about young people in our society, argued Clay Roberts of Minnesota's Search Institute, at the dinner that opened the meeting. On one level, he observed, we devote pages of newsprint and hours of media time to catastrophes such as Columbine High School, as though the teenagers who wreaked havoc on their school were typical. But this ignores the fact that a tiny fraction of young people are capable of terrible things and that 95% of youth do wonderful things with their time. Later in the meeting, Ellen Galinsky of the Families and Work Institute, returned to this theme. "It's clear from magazine covers and negative images of young people on radio and television that we define kids as the problem," said Galinsky. "When you talk to kids, they say they want to be part of the solution."

On another level, according to Roberts, professionals talk about young people in ways that have nothing to do with the reality of teenage lives. "As a junior high school history teacher, I used to listen to the kids outside the school on Friday as they waited for a ride home. The conversation was always the same: What are you doing this weekend? Any good parties? Who got drunk last weekend? Who might get wasted this weekend? Who's getting some? And, who isn't?"

These are the things typical middle-class teenagers think about, argued Roberts. Yet we behave as though kids need programs. "They don't need programs, what they need are people." Citing a history of program development that relied first on "information" and then on "prevention" and then on "risk factors," Roberts called for a new emphasis on "asset building." Our problem, said Roberts, "is that we focus on the one-tenth of one percent of our kids who do terrible things and not on the 95% who do wonderful things." Citing research completed by the Search Institute, Roberts pointed to two kinds of essential assets—external and internal (see Tables B–1 and B–2).

These 40 assets are based on research involving almost 100,000 sixth to 12th graders in 213 towns and cities across the United States, according to Roberts. The external assets (see Table B–1) involve support from family and neighborhood, a sense of empowerment, clear boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of free time. The internal assets (see Table B–2) involve a comment

to learning, positive values, possessing social competencies, and a positive sense of self.

The problem with school-based solutions to youth problems is that assets come from the home and the community, not the school, Roberts pointed out. But young people face many challenges outside the school. They have to contend with a crumbling social infrastructure, adults disengaged from children's lives, parents who have less time, and an age-segregated society that has "robbed children of inter-generational wealth." They also have to put up with negative portrayals of youth in the media and the suspicious, arms-length relationship between schools and churches, said Roberts.

"The best predictor of a child's success is whether that child comes from a healthy, strong, supportive family," asserted Roberts. "The second best predictor is bonding with school." However, it is clear that combinations of assets are much more important than any individual asset, he said. Most people can draw on close to 20 assets as they're growing up, according to the Search Institute research. The more assets they have, the better their chances of avoiding destructive behaviors, said Roberts.

He reviewed data indicating that youth with the most assets are far less likely to engage in high-risk behavior involving alcohol, drugs, violence, and sexual activity than those with fewer assets (see Table 3). For example, fully 53% of students with 10 or fewer assets have experienced problems with alcohol abuse; by contrast, only 3% of those with 31 or more assets to draw on have encountered the same problem. The patterns involving illicit drug usage, sexual activity, and violence are very similar.

Conversely, the more assets a young person can draw on, the more positive their attitudes and behaviors. Access to

Support

1. Family support – family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication – young person and parent(s) communicate.
3. Other adult relationships – young person receives support from 3 or more non-parent adults.
4. Caring neighborhood – young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring school climate – school provides caring, encouraging environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling – parent(s) actively involved in helping young person succeed.

Empowerment

7. Community values youth – young people perceive adults value youth.
8. Youth as resources – young people given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to others – young person serves in the community one hour or more a week.
10. Safety – young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries – family has clear rules and consequences and monitors young person's whereabouts.
12. School boundaries – school provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood boundaries – neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. Adult role models – parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive peer influence – young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High expectations – both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities – young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth programs – young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school or in the community.
19. Religious community – young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at home – young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Source: The Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN

Table B–1
20 External Developmental Assets in Childhood

Commitment to Learning

1. Achievement motivation – young person is motivated to do well in school.
2. School engagement – young person is actively engaged in learning.
3. Homework – young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
4. Bonding to school – young person cares about his or her school.
5. Reading for pleasure – young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values

6. Caring – young person places high value on helping other people.
7. Equality and social justice – young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
8. Integrity– young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
9. Honesty – young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
10. Responsibility – young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
11. Restraint – young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies

12. Planning and decisionmaking – young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
13. Interpersonal competence – young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
14. Cultural competence – young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
15. Resistance skills – young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
16. Peaceful conflict resolution – young person seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.

Positive Identity

17. Person power – young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
18. Self-esteem – young person reports having high self-esteem.
19. Sense of purpose – young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
20. Positive view of personal future – young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Table B–2
20 Internal Developmental Assets in Childhood

more assets not only prevents undesirable behaviors, it also promotes the behavior most parents and community leaders desire. More than 50% of young people with 31 or more assets succeed in school, compared to just 7% of those with 10 or fewer. Similar positive patterns prevail on such attitudes and behaviors as valuing diversity, maintaining good health, and delaying gratification.

The good news, reported Roberts, is that individuals, schools, organizations and communities can all help build assets. It's time we went about this work, he counseled. It's time to move beyond problem-identification and prevention strategies to efforts to identify strengths and build on them. He suggested that six individual and community attitudes are the keys to success. They are: (1) everyone can build assets; (2) ALL young people need assets; (3) relationships are key; (4) asset building is an ongoing process; (5) consistent messages are important; and (6) intentional redundancy is equally important.

"For those of us who came from difficult circumstances, some of the most important people in our young lives had a vision for us that we didn't have for ourselves. They believed in us when we couldn't believe in our own future. The challenge is not to create programs, but to give young people today the kind of support we enjoyed as children," he concluded.

Relationship Between Families and Work

Ellen Galinsky also invoked the damage created by negative portrayals of young people in newspapers, magazines, and the media. Based on research completed at the Families and Work Institute of New York that involved more than 1,000 students from grades 3-12 and 605 parents, she found that parents and children focus on

different things when asked what is needed to improve parents' lives. More than half (56%) of mothers and fathers say they want more time at home and less work; but only one-third of children say the same thing. What the children want is that their "parents experience less stress, not be as tired." About one-quarter of children (mostly from struggling families) also want their parents to earn more money.

	Youth with			
	0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
Negative Behaviors				
Problem Alcohol Use	53%	30%	11%	3%
Illicit Drug Use	42%	19%	6%	1%
Sexual Activity	33%	21%	10%	3%
Violence	61%	35%	16%	6%
Positive Behaviors				
Success in School	7%	19%	35%	53%
Diversity Valued	34%	53%	69%	87%
Good Health	25%	46%	69%	88%
Delayed Gratification	27%	42%	56%	72%

Table B–3
Assets that Protect Youth from High-Risk Behavior and Promote Positive Attitudes

Galinsky wants to use this data and the writings based on it to do several things. First, she hopes to change the nature of the debate about parents and work. "It's not either/or – it's not work or stay at home. The discussion needs to focus on good parent/bad parent issues. The 'mommy wars' are destructive. Both mothers in the workforce and mothers working in the home feel put-down. The reality is that only 20% of parents feel that non-parent child care is good for children."

Next, she hopes to inform the debate about parents' use of time with children. Half of parents want more time, she reiterated, but only about one-third of children agree. Children have a complicated response here, she reported. "We need to stop talking about quality time and quantity of time and talk about 'hang-around' time and 'connected' time. Think of parenting as similar to the job of a navigator. You have a goal; you know where you want to get. It's usually quite a long journey. It has its good days and bad days, and occasionally you'll have to deal with a storm." The fact that parents and kids sometimes encounter turbulent times is no more a reflection on the parent's skill than the reality that mariners occasionally run afoul of gales and treacherous cross-currents. It's just the reality of being a parent.

Galinsky noted that children know far more about their parents' work lives than most mothers or fathers believe. Children think their parents are doing a better job juggling the responsibilities of job and family than parents give themselves credit for, she reported. But youth also perceive that their parents don't really like their jobs. They worry as much about their parents as the parents about their children.

Finally, Galinsky hopes that researchers and parents will continue to interact with children about their perceptions. Children are likely to say to working parents: "Work if you want or have to. We're proud of you." But they're also likely to say: "Spend time around us both focusing and hanging around. You people need more time off. Tell your boss to leave you alone!"

Keep in mind, she concluded, the advice of one 14-year-old boy: "If you're trying as a parent, if you're practicing what you preach, your children will turn out fine."

Promising State and Local Models

Much of this expert advice, particularly the observations of Roberts, was reflected in several presentations describing promising state and local efforts. Among the programs described, participants listened to representatives from: Maine, West Virginia, California, Vermont, Missouri, and Ohio.

Maine

Maine has done a lot to advance an asset-building approach, according to presentations from Susan Savell, Communities for Children, Harris Madson of Bangor, and Representative Michael Brennan, chair of the House Education committee. "I ran into a boy who'd planted two seeds in a junk-infested back yard," reported Brennan. "A few weeks later he mistook a couple of new weeds in the yard for plants. As a social worker, I'd have 'pathologized' this kid and focused on his mistake. As an asset-builder, I look for ways to build on his confidence."

In his home community of Portland, the Search Institute's survey has been administered to about 3,000 students from sixth to twelfth grade. It cost about $10,000, reported Brennan, money well spent in his view because it revealed the direct relationship between assets and behaviors.

Susan Savell reported that the statewide Communities for Children program tries to help communities create children's councils, to assess realities in local neighborhoods and develop plans, to implement these plans, and to assess results. Like Portland, many of the communities try to focus on the Search Institute's 40 assets. More than half (57%) of the state's population lives in the 57 partner communities that are a part of the effort.

In Bangor, reported Harris Madson who directs that city's Communities for Children program, the vision revolves around how to make Bangor the best place to raise a family and to be a child. It's an economic development strategy based on a belief Madson developed serving in the Pentagon: people are the only assets worth investing in. Bangor focuses on prevention, thinks long term, builds on community strengths, and insists on community involvement.

"Bad news travels with the speed of light," said Madson. "Good news barely sees the light of day." But part of the good news in Bangor is that out of the blue the city received a gift from the Libra Foundation of $1.3 million annually for 20 years to provide $1,000 for a camp scholarship for every 3rd through 6th grade child in Bangor's public schools. Unrelated to income, the scholarships require "effort" in school and serve the dual purpose of rewarding young people and supporting the state's summer camp economy.

West Virginia

Just as Madson, Brennan, and Savell emphasized the importance of community conversations, Barbara Gebhard from the West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families stressed the importance of convening forums of various kinds where citizens can get together to discuss these issues. The Governor's Cabinet, she reported, was created as part of an education reform package in the 1990s (as part of a school readiness plan) and really received very little attention when enacted, despite the broad powers it possessed. It was intended to help children meet their potential, to strengthen families, and to build on family and community strengths.

The Cabinet, which is located in the Governor's office, has survived partisan transitions. It focuses on creating local coalitions of family resource networks and serving as a statewide mechanism for convening meetings on topics such as early childhood education and information and referral. The Cabinet has helped establish 45 county-based resource networks, coalitions of service providers and consumers. The role of the networks does not involve service delivery but planning, assessment, and evaluation. More than half of the people serving on each network have to be consumers. Parenting, substance abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence—the issues of concern to the resource networks—span the spectrum of community problems.

The Cabinet has also helped establish 18 "Starting Points" sites around the state. These are centers for families with young children. Located in schools, community centers, and hospitals, they offer a variety of services related to parenting and health and social services.

Preliminary State and Territorial Plans

State/Territory	*Plan*
California	Foster care tied to children's educational attainment.
Guam	Asset model; "braiding" of funding streams; children's council.
Hawaii	Children's health insurance, children's report card, assets building.
Idaho	Creation of family council; community model; state roundtable.
Iowa	Formal recognition of empowerment zones.
Kentucky	20-year plan for early childhood; asset approach.
Maine	Building on what was described at this meeting.
Michigan	Asset-building; legislation defining outcome goals.
Minnesota	Incorporation of asset approach into statute; use of TANF funds for extended day.
Missouri	Initiation of an asset-building approach.
North Carolina	School-community partnerships; public forums on issues.
Ohio	Investigation of asset development
Oregon	Support for childcare and 100% participation in Head Start
Wisconsin	Concept of a "Better Badger Baby"
Wyoming	Investigation of asset-development; push toward statewide home visitation

California

In California, reported Ed Melia and Robert K. Ross, directors of the Health and Human Services agencies for the state and San Diego City, respectively, Governor Gray Davis's three priorities are "Education. Education. And Education." There is a sort of "Pogo-ism" at work, according the Melia: "We have met the enemy and it is us, in terms of the categorical nature of our programs. If state and local partnerships are to succeed, they will succeed to the extent the state gets out of the way." Measurement represents a huge problem in this whole area. "It is an article of faith that de-categorization will work. But will it? How will we know? And how will we measure it?" asked Melia rhetorically.

San Diego County is the size of Connecticut with a population of 3 million people, reported Ross. The city is the last one in the country without chlorinated water, he said. "A five-foot fence to the South is thought sufficient to separate us from Mexico," he quipped, "but to the North we have a battalion of Marines at Camp Pendleton to protect us from Los Angeles."

"Trying to take people from a place called dependency to a place called self-sufficiency is hard," said Ross. He noted that all of the application and eligibility forms for a family of four add up to a stack of paper the size of a 900-page telephone book. "Even that's artificial, since we went out and gathered them all together in one place; an actual family would have to run all over town to get these things."

Ross described a review that concluded that the old system, characterized by too many doors and no map, should be replaced with a new one with "no wrong doors." There is no health department or department of social services any longer, said Ross. Those functions and their personnel have all been put into regional offices where they work with regional teams. "What's wrong with this picture?" asked Ross. "I had 1,200 people touching paper and only 60 community nurses actually touching people."

Legislators need to start thinking about ways to design incentives that provide challenge grants for communities, suggested Ross. "Tell communities that whatever they save in administration they can keep if they put the savings into preventative services." Also, working with foundations would give risk takers in government some discretionary funds so that they could experiment.

"Stop paying money for services; start paying money for results," he urged. "It's a disgrace that the high school graduation rate for foster kids is 50% or below in most states," he argued. "These are government's kids. When politicians argue we need stronger families, point out that for these kids we need stronger government. Start telling these foster care case workers that 70% of funding will be based on caseloads in the future and 30% will be based on graduation rates. I guarantee you'll see some change."

Vermont

Con Hogan, a Vermont consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation and former Vermont Commissioner of Human Services, started his career as a prison

guard in New Jersey. "I learned very quickly how hard it is to fund effective work at the back end of the problem," he noted. Leaving government for more than a decade, Hogan was made CEO of a small enterprise about 25 days before it was forced to file for bankruptcy. "That's when I learned the importance of balance sheets and cash reserves."

We are at the Policymakers' meeting to improve the lives of children," insisted Hogan. "The issue isn't about government or boxes or where things are done; it's about improving the well-being of children and families." The government analog to corporate balance sheets is accountability, declared Hogan. In Vermont, there have been dramatic improvements in conditions for children and families – childhood poverty, down 39%; teenage pregnancy, down 42%; child support payments, up 86%; children on public assistance, down 32%; and early pre-natal care, up 10% — because the Vermont legislature adopted clear and comprehensible outcomes as legislative goals. The outcomes were simplicity itself: All pregnant women and newborns will thrive; children will be ready for school; children will succeed in school; people will live in safe and supportive communities; and elders and people with disabilities will be seen as resources in their communities, able to live with dignity and independence.

"These goals were not gobbledygook, but the law of the land," stressed Hogan. "They are developmental, spanning the lifespan from infancy to old age. They are interactive—work on one and you get them all. You can start anywhere. Best of all, they are measurable and they start working at the front end of the problem. Like the balance sheet, they tell you what they have accomplished."

Missouri

The show-me state has had a similar epiphany. The old command-and-control style identified a problem, measured accountability in units served, and worked on the assumption that efficiently run programs would lead to program success, according to Steve Renne, deputy director of Missouri's Department of Social Services. But in looking for better results, the state decided that better results for young people required it to start worrying about families and communities.

The Caring Communities effort is the state's attempt to work with communities around coordinated budgets at the state and local level. Instead of designing programs and implementing them in communities, this new thrust emphasizes community involvement and the development of comprehensive community plans built around coordinated service delivery. The program emphasizes assessing progress on several key core results: children succeeding in school, living in strong families, in communities where the parents are working, and growing up healthy and safe and prepared to enter productive adulthood.

Today, some 21 communities, representing 51% of the children in the state, are involved with these community partnerships. These programs involve innovation, investment of resources, development of infrastructure, input from

key stakeholders, and incentives for neighborhood improvements, according to Khatib Waheed of the Missouri Department of Social Services.

School Finance

The real question in looking to school finance isn't just who gets how much, but how to design the education finance systems to encourage high levels of achievement for all students, according to Duke University's Helen F. Ladd. She served on a National Research Council (NRC) group that recently produced a report on financing America's schools.

The NRC report (Making Money Matter: Financing America's Schools) proposed a four-part approach that would (1) reduce funding inequities; (2) invest more resources in capacity development; (3) create incentives to reward performance; and (4) empower schools and parents to make decisions about the use of public funds.

Jackie Romer-Sensky, director of the Ohio Department of Human Services, quipped that "I'm sure we can save the world, but first we have to get funded!" As a budgeteer, she reported, she runs into a lot of people who "want more money but they don't have a clue how they plan to spend it."

She advocated tracking existing funds and inviting budget-makers to the planning. "There's no point in getting everyone all worked up, only to find the Governor's office or the budget office is going to turn you down."

Change is hard, cautioned Romer-Sensky. "The only way to get through hard change is through leadership. Sometimes you have to 'fake it till you make it.' " And, she added, "Don't forget the customers and what they need. A lot of low-income, first-time case families really don't know how to access the services you can provide to them. That's why these programs are so important. You have to reach them at their level."

In the end, said Romer-Sensky, this is all about leadership as much as it is about programs. "Leaders make change, even if policy is untouched."

Powerful Friends for Powerless Children

Research among legislative speakers, majority and minority leaders, and committee chairs indicates that legislators consider children's issues to be important, noted Margaret Blood who directs a children's advocacy organization, Strategies for Children, in Massachusetts. Kids aren't at the top of the legislative agenda, she reported, but they aren't at the bottom, either. "The problem is that no one is sure who speaks for children," she said.

Blood asked one speaker what would make a difference for children. "Powerful advocates," was the response. "Powerless children need powerful friends."

Out of that realization came the development of Strategies for Children, a business coalition advocating for children. It maps out a detailed legislative

agenda, not simply broad policy goals. "Business people are like legislators. They don't have enough time to read the details of legislation or policy; they need to see, feel, and touch issues. So we take them out of the board room. Our first meeting was in the board room of the Bank of Boston. The next was in a pediatric center."

Hands-on experience made a huge difference, according to Blood. At the pediatric center, the coalition learned that 160,000 children lacked health care coverage. "This is unacceptable," said the Bank of Boston CEO. The group mapped out an agenda of directing cigarette tax increases toward health care for children in Massachusetts. The legislation passed and became a model for legislation pushed at the federal level.

"Massachusetts passed animal protection laws before it passed child protection legislation," noted Blood. Strategies for Children got behind the idea of a special license plate that would finance child care quality. The "Invest in Children" license plate was enacted, while 65 similar license place proposals languished. Finally, the group took up home visitation for children, pushing for a child care bond bill to provide funds for preschool facilities and home visits. Although the proposal died in conference, the group got valuable experience in the legislative process.

Health care for 160,000 children. License plates to improve the quality of child care programs. Pretty impressive accomplishments and evidence of what can happen when powerless children benefit from powerful advocates.

Importance of Giraffes and Ducks

With all of this advice ringing in their ears throughout the meeting, the participants received the benefit of several ideas that might serve as guides to action. These included:

- Focus on assets, not problems.
- Support proven and promising practices.
- Foster intergovernmental action.
- Involve youth in planning programs.
- Engage more in listening and learning than in speaking and preaching.
- Be inclusive not exclusive.
- Demonstrate some results in a short time frame.
- Reward results, not services, and worry about outcomes, not processes.
- Understand that if change is to happen, it will happen in homes, communities, and schools.
- Give powerless children powerful friends.

A lot of this can be summed up by the parallel stories of the giraffe and the duck. Clay Roberts asserted that what we need in this country are more giraffes – people willing to stick their necks out for children. Khatib Waheed thought the duck a more appropriate metaphor. It seems a duck walked into a bar three

days in a row asking for a drink from a bartender who became increasingly hostile. On the third day, the bartender told the duck that unless he left, the bartender would nail his webbed feet to the floor. On the fourth day, the duck returned. "Do you have any nails," he asks the puzzled bartender. "No," came the response. "In that case, I'd like a drink," retorted the tenacious duck.

Next Steps

Giraffes and ducks. Needed are people who are willing to stick their necks out for children and families and resilient and persistent enough to keep coming back no matter how difficult the assignment. That's what the sponsors of the Policymakers' Program will be looking for in the next stage of the program. Even before the state teams left San Diego, they had already begun to outline preliminary plans for their next steps.

The Danforth Foundation, the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association stand ready to move the agenda forward. Working with policymakers from the legislative and executive branches of state government in Tennessee and with city policymakers in Nashville, the sponsors hope to develop a model service-delivery design. Starting with a joint state-local steering committee to tie down policy and philosophy—and spinning off several task forces to examine program-specific issues—the effort hopes to present a plan for redesigning service delivery in Nashville to a Policymakers' Institute this summer. The plan will be brought to the Mayor and Governor for action.

Appendix C

Barre, Vermont

Learning for Life: Four Years of Work and Results

Commissioned by
The Danforth Foundation
St. Louis, Missouri

by Cornelius Hogan
Plainfield, Vermont
September, 2000

Cover: Stephen Stearns and Peter Gould of Brattleboro perform a skit for children at the Barre City Elementary School. The physical and verbal comedians were brought to the school to kick off "I Love to Read and Write Month" and to introduce the Barre Community Writing Contest sponsored by the Barre Danforth Learning for Life Committee. (Photo by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur and caption courtesy of the *Barre, Vermont Times Argus,* January 13, 2000.)

Foreword

This story about Barre, Vermont, is a tale of policy success. In an age of skepticism about government at all levels, this report documents how a group of dedicated state and local educators and officials set about tackling serious, and apparently intractable, social problems in Barre. They took on high rates of school dropouts and teenage pregnancy and similar bad news about child abuse and neglect. Four years of work has started to turn around indicators in each of these areas.

I am pleased that the Policymakers' Program supported by the Danforth Foundation has been part of this community-state partnership. The Policymakers' Program is designed to help state and local leaders create a vision for children and families—and define a process for achieving their vision that respects the unique traditions of each state and its communities. A 10-year initiative launched in 1992, the program will end in 2002. Now in its eighth year, the Policymakers' Program has helped more than 500 officials from some 40 states rethink service delivery in their communities.

The Policymakers' Program has an ambitious mission: engaging state and local policymakers in the task of ensuring that all children and youth succeed in developing into healthy and productive citizens, capable of learning not only in school but throughout their lives. Within that broad umbrella, the Policymakers' Program was designed to create five results for children and families:

- A safe environment for children
- Children coming to school ready to learn
- Improved student achievement
- Healthy families
- Healthy and productive communities

The Barre Story and Data

The use of data to aid decision-making and evaluate results has been a central component of the Policymakers' Program from the outset. The most effective initiatives have turned out to be those which built data usage into their plans to monitor the conditions of children and families and to tie data to specific benchmarks of achievement.

As this report makes clear, sound data in the Barre community helped launch the effort and document its success. Indeed, in three of the five areas listed above (a safe environment for children, healthy families, and healthy and productive communities), data helped convince the community of the need to move forward and provided convincing evidence that the Barre efforts produced credible and valuable results. In this context, the work in Barre is an outstanding example of an effort that, from the outset, insisted on results and assessed progress. It serves as a model of how to be accountable to the public.

While Vermont may well be the state with the best overall effort to collect useful and powerful social welfare indicators, much remains to be accomplished. It is clear, for example, that it is extremely difficult to collect good data and interpret it properly. In this regard, Barre and Vermont mirror the rest of the nation: almost no community or state can point to reliable and valid systems of data collection to undergird standards-based reform and to document the effects on student achievement. But the utility of Vermont's social welfare indicators in permitting officials to track trends over time points to the need for similar powerful indicators in the area of education.

This report shows that when data and results are presented in a user-friendly fashion, policymakers and citizens immediately see their value. Hence the lesson learned is that data need to be comprehensible; evaluations need to be related to policy questions; and citizens need to participate in selecting the indicators because that way they come to understand what is being measured and why it is important.

In addition to the lessons described in this report about the importance of collaboration and community engagement, another lesson should be drawn: policymakers at the state and local level may need to require the collection of sound and reliable data using validated metrics, and they may need to set aside funds to support such efforts, particularly with regard to children's achievement.

The Danforth Foundation was pleased to play a role in encouraging the Barre effort and is delighted that Con Hogan, former head of the state's human services agency, pulled all of the elements of this story together in such a compelling fashion. We are also deeply indebted to Marc Hall, the former Commissioner of Education; Paul Dupre, former Mayor of the City of Barre; Steve McKenzie, chairperson of the Barre School Board; and Lyman Amsden, Superintendent of the Barre School District, for their unwavering commitment to improving the life chances of children and families that live in Barre. The continuity and stability these leaders provided to the effort, quite simply, made it possible. They served as champions for the initiative and kept it on track. They also made sure that authority and decision-making for the effort were placed in local hands. Public and private service providers were brought on board and stayed the course, regardless of changes in leadership over time. This focus on citizens, program development, and stability was essential to the success of this effort.

Robert H. Koff
Senior Vice President
The Danforth Foundation

Preface

In the winter of 1996, the Vermont Agency of Human Services published a local data book entitled *Community Profiles*. The community report for Barre showed high levels of child abuse, teenage pregnancy, and drug and alcohol use and abuse. This profile for Barre City was alarming.

Cornelius (Con) Hogan, then Secretary of Human Services for Vermont, contacted key people in Barre to seek out their help and partnership to work on these issues. The commitment of the Danforth Foundation of St. Louis, in collaboration with the Education Commission of the States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors' Association, brought training and other opportunities for the community to address the issues. A coalition of policymakers, human service providers, school personnel and community members came together. The group took the name The Barre Danforth Group.

A four-day seminar sponsored by the Danforth Foundation took place in Burlington, Vermont, from July 26 to July 28, 1997. This experience brought experts in education, human services, and community development together and helped the Barre Danforth Group define a theme and basic strategies for the campaign to improve the quality of life for children and families. The enthusiastically adopted theme was "Barre… Learning for Life." The group then decided to mount initiatives in three areas: literacy, community values, and substance abuse prevention.

This report is a case study of the events, process, and results that followed.

About Barre

Barre, Vermont. is a small, ethnically diverse, proud city of about 9,600 people, including 2,400 children. Its roots lie in the rural agricultural history of Vermont. A high-quality granite industry has been a central aspect of the community life of Barre since the late 1700s.

Immigration has played a large part in the area's population. Over the years, Italian, French, Syrian, Lebanese, and Spanish immigrants arrived in Barre. Barre is a working man's city. The granite they produce has helped great artisans contribute to the life of the nation in their monumental carvings, public buildings in the nation's capital, and in memorials such as the compelling image of military figures depicted in the Korean War Memorial.

Barre was also the site of great riots and strikes in the 1930s, during a period of great economic and social upheaval. The city and surrounding environs also experienced some of the social difficulties of the 1960s through the 1990s that have confounded so many communities during this period of unprecedented cultural, economic, and technological change across the nation.

Barre is the modest economic center that is Hogan's neighbor, just south of his home community, Plainfield, Vermont. It's the place where his children

competed in hockey, where the family did its banking and shopped for groceries. Barre also is the home of the *Times Argus*, the long-standing primary newspaper in Central Vermont.

This is the backdrop for the work of the last four years as Barre found ways to confront its problems and begin a lengthy effort to overcome them.

Compliments

This case study, in many ways, reflects the work of three long-term community leaders in the city, town, and greater area of Barre, Vermont. They are Paul Dupre, former mayor of the City of Barre (and currently executive director of the Washington County Mental Health Services), Steve McKenzie, multi-year chair of the school board, and Lyman Amsden, the venerable and soon-to-retire superintendent of the Barre School District.

These three saw the opportunity early, were constant in their focus and attention, and served as role models for those interested in contributing to improving the well-being of our children and families in the greater Barre community.

This case study is a sincere compliment to these three good people.

Comments

There is no question that this is an optimistic report. This is because the writer is a neighbor of this community and, with many other people, has invested some time and energy into the process and, like most people, wants to see that investment pay off. We all want our communities to be healthy places to raise our families and to conduct our business.

There is also the factor of a more general yearning for the regeneration of the sense of community that has eroded over time. In the author's mind, the Danforth-Barre project represents the hope of a fuller understanding about our sense of community and the vital role that communities play in the overall health and welfare of our children and families. With that better understanding comes the sense of optimism that pervades this report. And that sense of optimism is an important ingredient for the future of our communities. If we collectively and strongly want our communities, families, and children to thrive, they will.

In Barre, the common purpose has been articulated across the many sectors of the community. The city is finding a way where everyone, over time, can contribute to an improved well-being of Barre's people.

About the Author

Cornelius "Con" Hogan began his career as a correction officer in New Jersey and spent his first 15 years in corrections, with his last assignment as commis-

sioner in Vermont in the mid-1970s. He then was CEO of a mid-sized company during the 1980s. Throughout the 1990s, he served as secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, where applying business tracking and organizing techniques, he oversaw a systematic improvement of many indicators of well-being of the people of Vermont. Foremost in this work was the development of many forms of collaborative efforts at the community level. Hogan continues this work through his affiliations with the Danforth, Annie E. Casey, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundations.

THE DANFORTH FOUNDATION— ITS CONNECTION TO VERMONT

In 1993 Vermont was one of three initial states, along with Minnesota and Pennsylvania, that participated in a Danforth Institute. The Danforth Foundation is dedicated to improving the education and well-being of our youth, particularly in the St. Louis area. Over the years it has provided support at a policy development level for state teams from across the nation. The program was geared to develop new collaborations among key people in a given state, aimed at putting in place policy and practice that, over time, would result in improved outcomes for children, families, and communities. The work at this time primarily focused on the potential of education and human service systems to come together on behalf of the same children that both of those systems served.

For Vermont, this was the beginning of an important new partnership including representatives from the legislature (Senator Jeb Spaulding and Representative Peg Martin); the Department of Education (Commissioner Richard Mills); the Agency of Human Services (Secretary Cornelius Hogan); local schools (Principal Otho Thompson of Morrisville); local nonprofit agencies (Ann Martin of the Lamoille Family Center); the state board of education (Ross Anderson, businessman); and others. This "team" became an important part of the policy development and implementation efforts in Vermont over the ensuing years and set the stage for an invitation from the Foundation to participate in a Vermont pilot of collaborative methods in 1996.

The first contact with Danforth regarding the possibility of having the states of Vermont and Missouri participate in a new effort, a pilot state-community collaboration came in a letter to Hogan from Danforth Vice President Robert Koff on Nov. 26, 1996[1]. This letter set the stage for a rapidly moving series of events, which unfolded over the next months.

In 1996, after considerable discussion and interest among the Vermont Agency of Human Services, the State Department of Education, and the Danforth Foundation Program, the Foundation issued a Design Change Memorandum,[2] which outlined the proposed goals and outcomes for a local Policymakers' initiative. This included, as a pilot phase, work with a locality from each of two states, Missouri and Vermont.

The Foundation was looking to build stronger links between state officials, which had been the focus of its program for several years, and key people in a local community. Danforth saw the localization of their work as a way to bring together the collaborative models that had been emerging at the state level in several states. The overall outcome of this localization was to be an improvement, over time, of the well-being of children.

This was also an opportunity to find places where schools, communities, and agencies at all levels could come together around a common purpose, and thus take the work to new levels of application and effectiveness.[3]

The action step at that moment was to work with the state education and human service agencies in Missouri and Vermont and to form local teams for each state. Those teams would then be invited to attend a "mini–summer institute" in July 1997 to begin planning the overall process for community engagement.

The overall program goal articulated by Danforth at that time was simply: *"to assist local policymakers and practitioners to improve educational, economic, and social outcomes for children and families that result in (1) increased academic achievement and well-being of children, especially children who are at risk; and (2) good state and local policy that guides the delivery of efficient and effective education and related services to children who are most at risk."*

The Role of Data in Getting the Attention of Key People in Barre

Early in January 1997, Hogan presented the first annual Barre City Community Profile to Representative Paul Poirier of Barre City. Poirier was also the chair of the House of Representatives Health and Welfare Committee of the Vermont Legislature. Hogan indicated that although there was some good news about the well-being of families and children in Barre, there was also news of great concern regarding rates of child abuse, teen pregnancy, and dropouts.

The City Council of Barre City met on Jan. 14, 1997. One of the items of business that evening was the review of the troublesome data that was brought to the council by City Alderman Paul Poirier. This discussion was reported by the *Times Argus* newspaper as part of its general coverage of the City Council meeting. That public discussion resulted in a formal inquiry by the city manager to the Agency of Human Services for more information about the nature of the problems reported in the recently released Barre City Community Profile.[4]

What Happened Next

On Jan. 21, 1997, there was a meeting of Hogan; Cheryl Mitchell, Hogan's deputy; Lyman Amsden, Superintendent of Schools; and Lee Lauber, Executive Director of the Family Center. They quietly began to identify an initial team of key people in Barre who would be invited to a larger meeting aimed at assessing interest in the proposition of beginning a long-term effort to improve these and other indicators.

On Jan. 26-27 key Danforth people met with Hogan and Marc Hull, the Commissioner of Education for Vermont, to discuss the community of Barre as a candidate for a Danforth initiative. Early hopes were laid out at this meeting.

The first community meeting of record occurred on Feb. 5, 1997 at the Spaulding High School, where Hogan and Superintendent Amsden (on behalf of Marc Hull) outlined to the group of invitees the purpose, envisioned process, and potential of the "Danforth" effort. At that meeting were 16 Barre opinion makers who were enthusiastic in support of the overall idea. There were 11 key

Barre people who could not attend, but who had offered their commitments of interest and support.[5]

Plans were laid in March 1997 for next steps, which would contribute to and lead to a summer retreat of both the Barre and Missouri teams (University City, Missouri, was also chosen by Danforth as a community where a pilot project would be supported). At this retreat, the work of improving outcomes for children and families would begin in earnest.[6]

In early April a process for involvement of students and parents was established for the Barre team, with a team building meeting also scheduled for early April. At that meeting any known indicators about the health and well-being of the people of Barre were presented. Sources of this information were the State of Vermont Social Well-Being Report, the Annual School Report Card, a special report on the health status of the citizens of Barre and a set of economic indicators for the city. These data were then organized into data sets, which were sent to Danforth, as a baseline for future comparison.

On May 6, 1997, a team-building exercise was conducted at the Barre City Elementary School. The work included beginning the visioning to establish overall project direction and to identify specific outcome areas that the data pointed to as clearly needing change over time. This team-building meeting was broadcast on Cable Access Television and was the first broad-based opportunity for general public awareness of the emerging effort.

In late May, a "Mid-Course Correction Meeting" was held for two days, where the details for the Intensive Summer Policymakers meeting were put together.

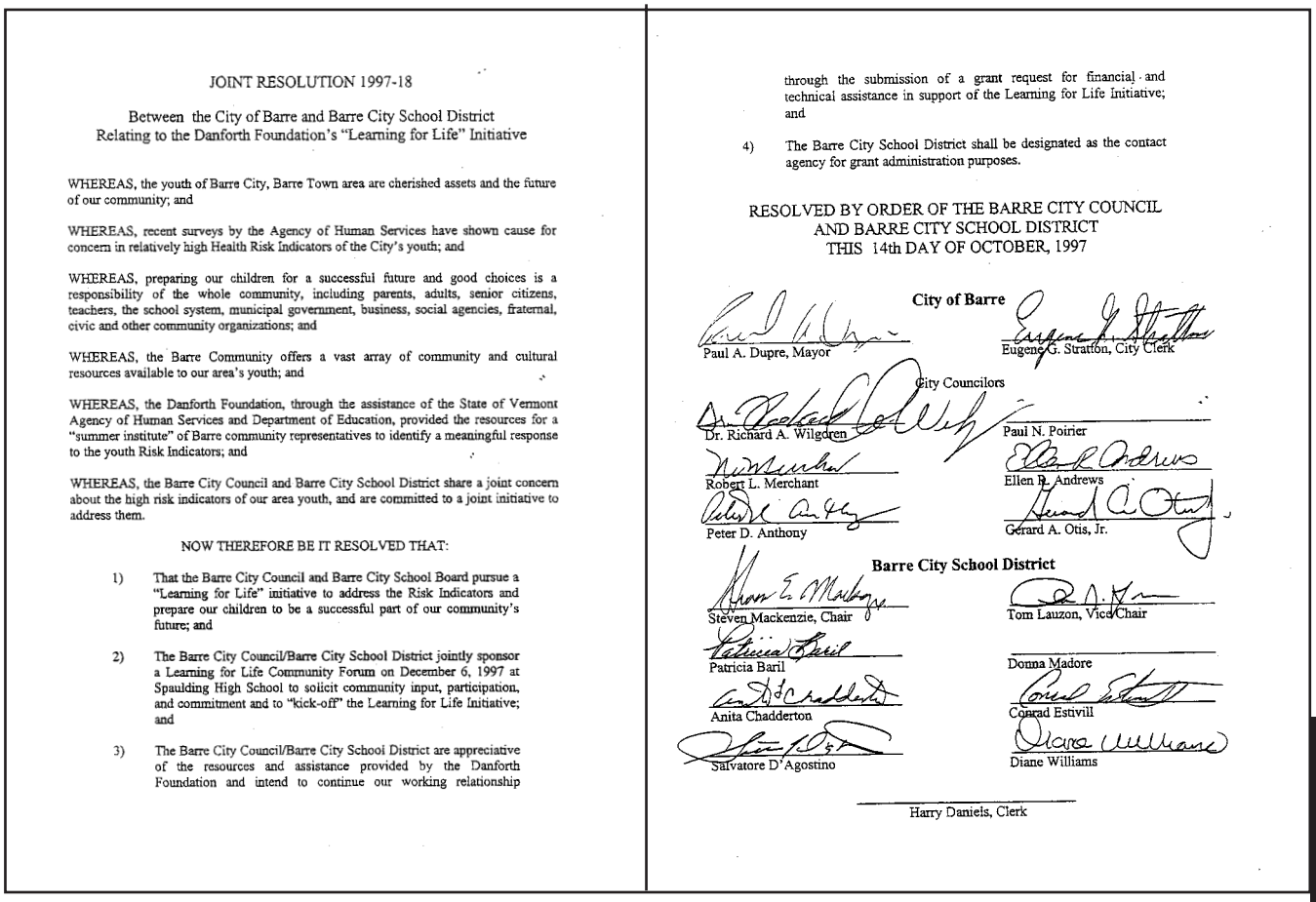
The "Intensive Summer Session and Retreat of 1997" was then held from July 26 – 29 in Burlington, Vermont, where both the Barre teams and the Missouri teams came together to consolidate the vision for each community to begin mapping out the plans for each community for the next two years. (As an aside, this meeting also corresponded with an annual ethnic festival held in Barre, where the city celebrated its people and traditions. As part of those festivities, both the Barre team and the Missouri team found themselves on a float in the afternoon parade, which identified them as the "Danforth Team." This was the beginning of an important branding of the effort in the public mind.)

The major and significant result of the Barre and Missouri teams' retreat was to adopt the concept and banner of "Learning for Life" for Barre, which became the general outcome to which all aspects of community life could contribute over time. This meeting was covered by the *Times Argus* newspaper[7].

This outcome, as expressed, proved to be propitious, as virtually all positive community activity could be interpreted and better understood through this broad lens. Suddenly, much of the existing good work of many organizations throughout the city took on a greater meaning, which laid the foundation for a more knowledgeable articulation of the mutual work. "Learning for Life" took on a life of its own.

The next important moment in the process occurred on Oct. 14, when there was a three-way meeting between the new Danforth Steering Committee, the

Barre City Council, and the Barre School District School Board. At that time, the aldermen and school board adopted a Joint Resolution expressing strong support for the overall Danforth effort.



JOINT RESOLUTION 1997-18

Between the City of Barre and Barre City School District
Relating to the Danforth Foundation's "Learning for Life" Initiative

WHEREAS, the youth of Barre City, Barre Town area are cherished assets and the future of our community; and

WHEREAS, recent surveys by the Agency of Human Services have shown cause for concern in relatively high Health Risk Indicators of the City's youth; and

WHEREAS, preparing our children for a successful future and good choices is a responsibility of the whole community, including parents, adults, senior citizens, teachers, the school system, municipal government, business, social agencies, fraternal, civic and other community organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Barre Community offers a vast array of community and cultural resources available to our area's youth; and

WHEREAS, the Danforth Foundation, through the assistance of the State of Vermont Agency of Human Services and Department of Education, provided the resources for a "summer institute" of Barre community representatives to identify a meaningful response to the youth Risk Indicators; and

WHEREAS, the Barre City Council and Barre City School District share a joint concern about the high risk indicators of our area youth, and are committed to a joint initiative to address them.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1) That the Barre City Council and Barre City School Board pursue a "Learning for Life" initiative to address the Risk Indicators and prepare our children to be a successful part of our community's future; and

2) The Barre City Council/Barre City School District jointly sponsor a Learning for Life Community Forum on December 6, 1997 at Spaulding High School to solicit community input, participation, and commitment and to "kick-off" the Learning for Life Initiative; and

3) The Barre City Council/Barre City School District are appreciative of the resources and assistance provided by the Danforth Foundation and intend to continue our working relationship through the submission of a grant request for financial and technical assistance in support of the Learning for Life Initiative; and

4) The Barre City School District shall be designated as the contact agency for grant administration purposes.

RESOLVED BY ORDER OF THE BARRE CITY COUNCIL
AND BARRE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
THIS 14th DAY OF OCTOBER, 1997

City of Barre

Paul A. Dupre, Mayor

Eugene G. Stratton, City Clerk

City Councilors

Dr. Richard A. Wilgdren

Paul N. Poirier

Robert L. Merchant

Ellen R. Andrews

Peter D. Anthony

Gerard A. Otis, Jr.

Barre City School District

Steven Mackenzie, Chair

Tom Lauzon, Vice Chair

Patricia Baril

Donna Madore

Anita Chadderton

Conrad Estivill

Salvatore D'Agostino

Diane Williams

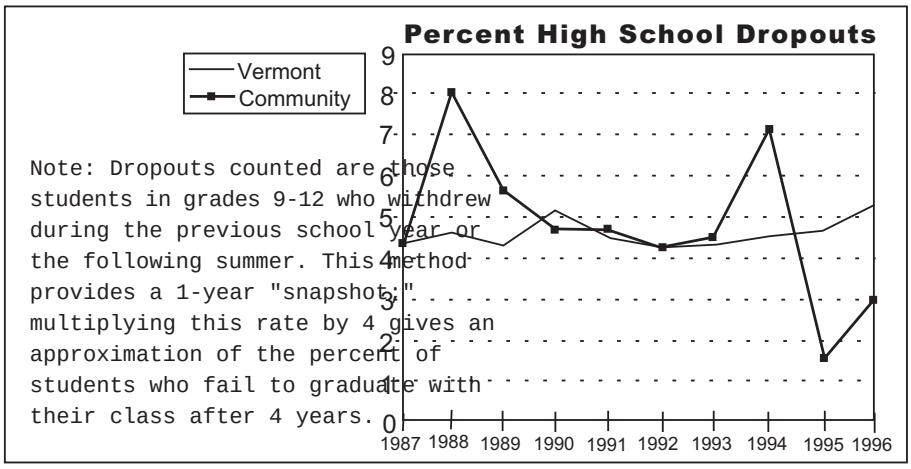
Harry Daniels, Clerk

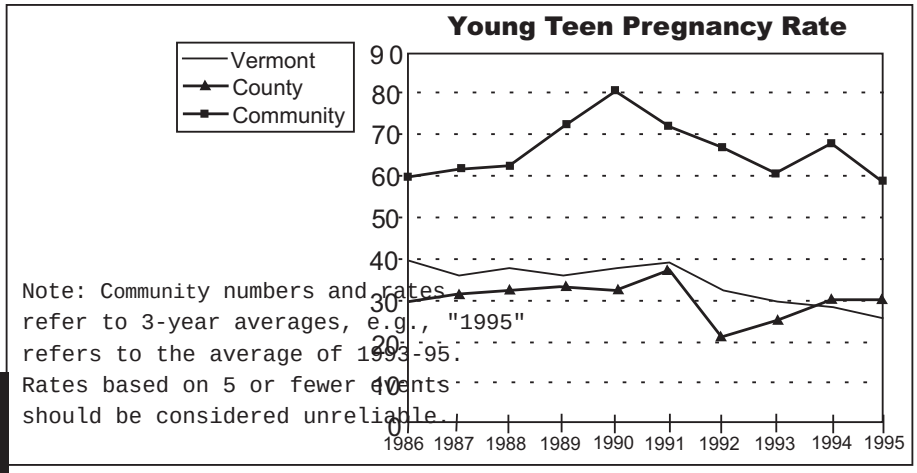
More About the Data

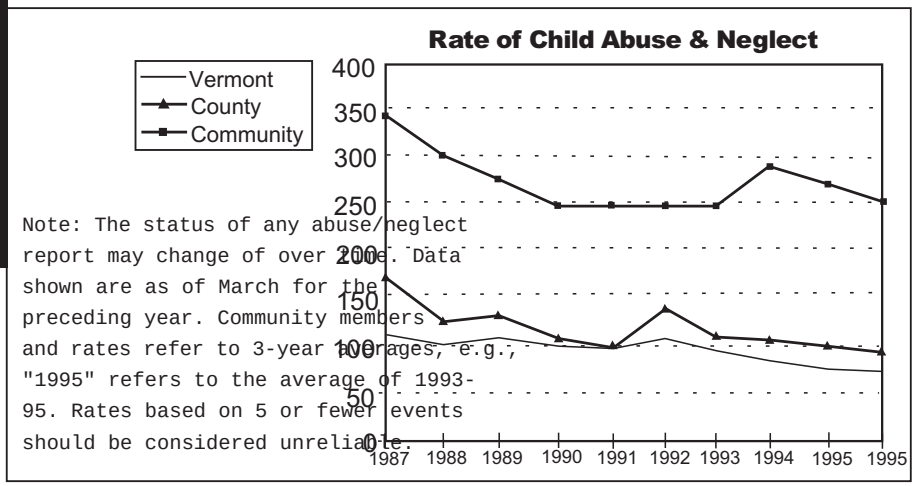
The First Community Profile for Barre City was issued in January 1997.[8] That report was used to galvanize key people who cared about the city. There were several key pieces of information in that report that drew particular attention. Specifically, the rates of child abuse and teen pregnancies were in the order of two to three times that of Washington County, Barre's county, and were also of that order of magnitude worse than the same indicators for Vermont as a whole.

One of the indicators reflected in the 1997 edition of Community Profiles for the Barre School Union catchment area was the rate of dropouts. From 1989 through 1994, the last date available at the time of the report, dropouts in Barre regularly exceeded the State of Vermont average.

There was a similar pattern in the profile data as it related to teen pregnancies in Barre—the teen pregnancy rate was more than two times the Washington County rate and the state of Vermont rate. This was a very troubling and well-known problem in the community and was also at the center of the political debate that was occurring in Vermont as a result of the emerging debate regarding the need to reform the welfare system.







Finally, the 1994 data showed disturbing news on the child abuse front—child abuse rates for Barre were over two and one half times that of the county and the state. And where it looked like the state and county rates had stabilized and were even beginning to bend down, the rates in Barre showed little signs of abating.

Regarding the rather upsetting trend lines and extent of child abuse in Barre, a further study was made of the abuse cases in Barre in 1998 in an attempt to find the "hot spots" in the city. The common belief was that, when looked at, a disproportionate number of the abuse cases would be found in the low-income housing areas of the city. In fact, the study showed an almost equal amount of abuse distributed across the three wards of the city.[9] At that point, there was an important insight. Child abuse and the other indicators that the people in the city were not proud of were, in fact, city-wide problems. Therefore, the entire city and the greater Barre area had a stake in fashioning the strategies to improve the results.

Articulation of Desired Outcomes

The articulation of the challenge proved to be an important contribution to the work. The theme "Learning for Life" was generally understood by all who came into contact with the project. At the same time it was big enough to encompass the interest and work of many organizations and people. Simply put, it was an end result that could be embraced by interests as wide-ranging as the poet who attended one of the steering committee meetings and offered to read poetry to the young, to the Central Vermont Hospital officials who contributed a steady flow of public service information and communications. The theme seamlessly integrated into the traditional Easter Egg hunt

that involved trading eggs for books. It also fit into the opening of the Brook Street School, which integrated the area-wide Head Start program, the county-wide Success by 6 program, and education programs for single mothers.

A tent big enough to pull all this, and more, together was nicely constructed through the broad theme of "Learning for Life."

The specific objectives of the overall effort were summarized in a mini-grant application to the Danforth Foundation. The purpose of the report was expressed as follows:

Project Purpose

Goal #1: To promote reading success accross all ages and sectors of the population.

Goal #2: To improve outcomes in the following areas:

a. Adolescent pregnancy rates

b. Child abuse rates

c. Delinquency rates

d. Substance abuse rates

Goal #3: To clarify the values that are held in common across all sectors of the population.

Description of the target audience or beneficiaries: This is a community-side project including all residents of Barre City (9,536 individuals) and as many residents of Barre town as choose to participate. Barre City is a working-class community that has made a major commitment to improving its infrastructure and is now stepping up to the plate to improve the well-being of its people.

Objectives to be accomplished:

1. Leverage Barre's rich and diverse cultural heritage into opportunities for sharing and learning for all citizens.
2. Establish a variety of reading opportunities and settings which promote reading and access to written materials.
3. Identify, recognize, and celebrate the shared values across different sectors of the population.
4. Identify and implement more effective state support systems for local efforts.
5. Track indicators of the physical, social, and economic well-being of the region over time.
6. Build a sustainable process for community change which can address other critical community issues.

One of the earliest pieces of important strategic work by the steering committee was the adoption of the three fundamental tracks of exploration and work, which flowed very naturally from the broader learning and literacy theme. Committees were formed to consider (1) community values, (2) literacy and learning, and (3) alcohol and substance abuse. Following is a tracking of the basic work of those groups.

David Batchelder, co-principal of Barre City Elementary and Middle School, facilitates a discussion with Barre community members about ways the community can better deal with drug and alcohol problems. The workshop was part of a larger forum on community issues, which was held at Spaulding High School on a Saturday.

COMMUNITY VALUES

At some point in 1997, a new face, Noreen Carpenter, a retired teacher, appeared at the regular Danforth Steering Committee meetings. She had heard of the Danforth effort and came to one of the meetings to take stock and determine if she would lend herself as a volunteer, to the "community values" part of the overall strategy.

Carpenter, in coordination with Sherry Wong, the community development consultant from the state of Washington, constructed a process with the objective of engaging citizens in Barre in an ongoing conversation about the community's values. These agreed-upon values could then serve as a basis for constructing action plans to pursue the community's values over time.

The Action Planning Guide adopted by the Community Values committee and the steering committee called for identifying and communicating core community values or behavior standards. This long-term process includes ten key steps:

1. *Identify stakeholders* to participate in the process. This should include key formal organizations and institutions (e.g., schools, churches, businesses, etc.) as well as a diverse representation of community residents.
2. *Determine a process* for soliciting stakeholder input on core community values, including guidelines for facilitating discussions.
3. *Establish a timeline* for soliciting stakeholder input on core community values.
4. *Identify individual(s)* who will be responsible for compiling the results of the community dialogues.
5. *Decide how* the final list of core values will be selected (by whom, using what process, how many core values) and select the final list.
6. *Develop a communications plan* to introduce the core values into all arenas of the community, using your key stakeholders.
7. *Encourage all stakeholders* (schools, families, churches, coaches, businesses, etc.) to use the core standards to develop and communicate clear

expectations for behavior as well as consistent and appropriate consequences for meeting, or not meeting, expectations. Expectations should be developmentally appropriate, easily understood by young people, and behavioral.

8. *Provide assistance*, including training and support, to parents, teachers, coaches, service providers, and other adults who influence young people to help them apply the behavior standards.
9. *Identify barriers* to meeting the standards (e.g., people moving in and out of the community, parental substance abuse, etc.) and develop and implement plans to overcome barriers.
10. *Actively seek out and celebrate* examples of young people (and adults) living the standards in all arenas of community life.

Carpenter and the steering committee created a community values committee which took on the ambitious communications task. As the months unfolded, meetings occurred with the many community stakeholders.

Committee Meetings

		No. of Attendees
1/19/99	Unitarian Church	30
3/17/99	Barre Rotary Club	32
5/16/99	First Presbyterian Church	13
5/23/99	Church of Latter Day Saints	17
6/20/99	The Episcopal Church	6
6/22/99	Highgate Low Income Housing	6
7/19/99	Barre Kiwanis Club	23
7/27/99	Church of New Life Worship	17
9/9/99	Barre City Employees	6
9/14/99	Barre Lions Club	20
10/3/99	East Barre Congregational Church	19
10/5/99	Spaulding High School Faculty	30
10/6/99	Spaulding High School Parent Group	20 Est.
11/1/99	Barre Congregational Church	16
11/2/99	Barre Vocational High School Faculty	17
11/15/99	The Masons	10 Est.
1/6/00	BCEMS Parent Group	12
1/7/00	Barre Office of the Dept. of Corrections	35

Thus, in 10 months, Carpenter and Craig Comstock, the long-standing director of the Department of Social Welfare's Barre District Office, had organized and executed 19 separate meetings of organizations, involving over 350 people. Barre is a relatively small city of about 10,000 citizens. Applying a common sense multiplier that assumes that for everyone who attended one of the meetings, perhaps three other people were touched by later workplace and family conversation, a case can be made that somewhere in the order of 1,400 people, or about 15 percent of Barre's people were touched by this process in less than a year.

In the spring of 2000, Carpenter moved to Nebraska and Craig Comstock took over her position. Comstock, a charter member of the Community Values Committee, readily and ably picked up the flow of the work.

Early in the process, the Community Values Commitee engaged the services of the Vermont Prevention Institute to help facilitate the meetings, using as a framework the process that had been suggested by Wong. The Prevention Institute used that process to document the results of the meetings, and then moved to summarize and distill the material.

In April of 2000, Barbara Gassner, who was a member of the Vermont Prevention Institute, forwarded her summary to the committee. That material

Barbara Gassner's e-mail Message

Date: Mon. 10 Apr 2000 09.04.50 - 0400
To: Craig Comstock
From: Barbara Gassner
Subject: Barre Values

Hi Craig,

In search for language that most accurately reflects the majority thought of the Barre Community groups which participated in the values dialogues, I went back in and counted mention of specific, single words, rather than identifying concepts into which specific words might be categorized. The following is the rank order of the values and words most frequently included as descriptors or qualifiers of the core value. The single word values are at the end. I'll also write a short descriptive paragraph of each value and the connotation implied by the language which was used to describe or qualify it…expect that mid-morning.

Barb

Honesty came out on top; in some lists honesty and integrity were both mentioned as separate qualities. Honesty was the word which appeared most often and typically as one word without any qualifiers or further descriptors.

Respect was the second most frequently used word and was used in conjunction with environment, community, self and others.

Family and *community* were often linked together, with community receiving more specific mentions than family. However, sometimes the word "parenting" was identified without specific use of the word family. given that family (albeit with a variety of definitions of what constitutes family) is still the basic component of human society, it seems reasonable to link family and community together …particularly since the phrases used in the lists often linked them together.

Responsible tied for third place in mentions with family/community. It was sometimes mentioned as a single word, and it was also included in phrasings with the words self, other, community, environment, behavior, family, and socially.

Compassion was fourth and was used along with the words love, self, knowledgeable, generosity, kindness, caring, spiritually, and socially.

S*pirituality/faith* was tied with work ethic for fifth place in number of mentions.

Educated takes sixth place. The word educated was used only five times. there were however several mentions of specific skills which relate to education and learning. These were the ability to demonstrate and pass on parenting skills, to think critically, to be equipped to face life's challenges, capable of knowing various perspectives, being fully literate with practical skills, communication skills, and (from high school and vocational facilities) good people and parenting skills and knowledgeable of self and to have self-love. Given the above the following short list of qualities, toward which the Barre community strives, emerges:

* Honest
- Respect for self, family and community
- Responsible
- Compassionate
- Hard-working
- Spiritual
- Educated

was reviewed by the original and full community values committee at a meeting in early May. The basic content of her report is conveyed in Gassner's e-mail. (See Gassner's e-mail at left and "Community Values[10] as Identified by Focus Groups" on next page.)

The list of seven fundamental values that resulted from the focus groups is straightforward. What makes this list important is that it was developed by the people of Barre themselves, people who cared enough about their city to come out in the evenings and to give up important family time to do so.

It is now the hope that those who carry out the process can use these deeply held beliefs to galvanize new sectors of the city in a broad-reaching communications plan, which will be aimed at involving even more people in the ongoing effort at community improvement and development.

The next step of the ongoing process that emerged at the May meeting is identified as "step 6" in the Sherry Wong "Action Planning Guide."[11] That step is "to develop a communications plan to introduce core values into all arenas of the community, using key stakeholders." To begin that step, Wong will be invited back as soon as scheduling allows, which is likely to be sometime in October of 2000.

The results of all this work to date are being shared in a progress report to the people in the Barre area. It will appear on public access television in October 2000 and will involve most of the well-known members of the Danforth steering committee.

Literacy and Learning

Groundwork for what became the literacy subcommittee started in June of 1995 with the mandate of developing an approach that would engage the community of Barre. The natural leader of this group became Paul Costello, the executive director of the Central Vermont Adult Basic Education program.

In a playful mood, the literacy committee told the steering committee that their theme was "Reading…You Can't Take it for Granite." (This humor may well be lost on others than Vermonters—Barre considers itself the "Granite Capital of the World.")

Throughout the summer of 1999, over 300 children were involved in active early literacy programs. The literacy committee also put together a reading series in the park that brought some of the best authors of Vermont and beyond to the park each week to read from their considerable body of work.

Since the small park is located absolutely in the middle of the city, this kind of activity is noticed by many. Also, in the summer of 1999, the second round of the ongoing writing contest was held, with the winner being published in a statewide magazine. In addition, three Spaulding High School students who placed in the top 10 for their poetry in a statewide contest sponsored by the Vermont Department of Education were acknowledged.

Overall, the work of this committee received steady and positive coverage and approbation by the press.

Community Values as Identified by Focus Groups

Honesty
Thought, speech, and behavior which is worthy of trust. The possession of a code of ethics which guide decisions and behaviors so that we act in honesty and with integrity.

Respect
Thought, speech, and behavior in accord with the health and well-being of self and others. We strive to bring this consideration to our treatment of self, family, and community.

Responsibility
Thought, speech, and behavior which is accountable to the needs and best interests of self, family, and community. We strive to be responsible to self, family, and community and to display our responsibility with acts which are honest, respectful, compassionate, and considerate of self and others. We bring good humor to our endeavors.

Compassion
Thought, speech, and behavior which reflects our knowledge that self, family and community are enriched by a variety of talents, abilities, beliefs, and perspectives. We strive to be considerate and respectful of our diverse experiences, beliefs, and customs, and to act in kindness toward self and others. We recognize the common bond we all have as members of families and of various smaller communities within our larger community.

Work
Thought, speech, and behavior which puts food our tables, roofs over our heads, and brings us knowledge. We strive to achieve satisfaction from our daily endeavors to use our talents and learned abilities to create health and well-being for self, family, and community through the expressions of our work.

Spirit
Thought, speech, and behavior which brings us connection to one another, to our earth, to whatever our idea of greater power than self might be. We recognize that joy and health in life are enhanced by a connection of self with a larger entity. We respect the many ways in which that "greater power" is named by different individuals and groups. We recognize that for some it is expressed through organized religion and that for others it is found in other types of communion.

Education
Thought, speech, and behavior which brings us knowledge, practical skills, and wisdom. We work to achieve knowledge which enhances our ability to think, to communicate, and to be literate, to question in pursuit of further knowledge and to practice the skills we need in order to work, to be honest, to be respectful, responsible, and compassionate, to be connected to the spirit of something larger than ourselves.

Public Service Announcement

Date: June 15, 1999

Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc.
18 N. Main Street
Barre, VT 05641

For more information contact:
Jan Steinbauer

For immediate release:

Barre City "Readers in the Community"

What a summer this will be for reading in Barre! The Barre Danforth Learning for Life Literacy Committee is sponsoring weekly reading times with children plus books to borrow at three sites around the city during the summer of 1999. Volunteers from the community, from America Reads, Altrusa International, The Aldrich Library, RSVP, and Central Vermont Adult Basic Education will read to children for pleasure. Books will be loaned to encourage families to read together at home for fun and to keep up the habit of daily reading while school is not in session.

"Readers in the Community" will take place from June 28 through August 20:

- **Tuesdays at Highgate** from 11:30-1:30 at the location of the lunch program in the Community Center
- **Wednesdays at the Barre City pool** from 12:30-1:30, with a children's lending library provided by the Aldrich Library
- **Thursdays at Green Acres** in the community center library in the early afternoon.

The Danforth Learning for Life Committee also offers the "Authors on the Green" series on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:00 before the evening concerts.

Summer Hours for Libraries

In Addition, the **Barre City Elementary and Middle School Library** will be open to everyone in the community Mondays through Thursdays from 8:00-12:00 and Fridays from 8:30-11:30. The **Barre Town School Library** will be open Mondays through Thursdays 9-1. The **Aldrich Library** will be open as always, with free lunches for children 18 and under from 12-12:30.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Fortunately, the alcohol and substance abuse track formed at the same time that a statewide competition for major local grants from the Vermont Department of Health was getting off the ground. The Danforth Steering Committee quickly put its lot in with the emerging "New Directions" coalition that formed on behalf of Barre. Twenty-three communities in Vermont were awarded New Directions grants to prevent youth substance abuse, and the Barre coalition received $100,000 to pursue a community-wide prevention effort over a three-year period.

Bob Costantino chaired the Barre area New Directions effort and also sat as a member of the Danforth Steering Committee. This cross-representation assured close coordination.

The fundamental strategies of New Directions complemented the Danforth effort well:

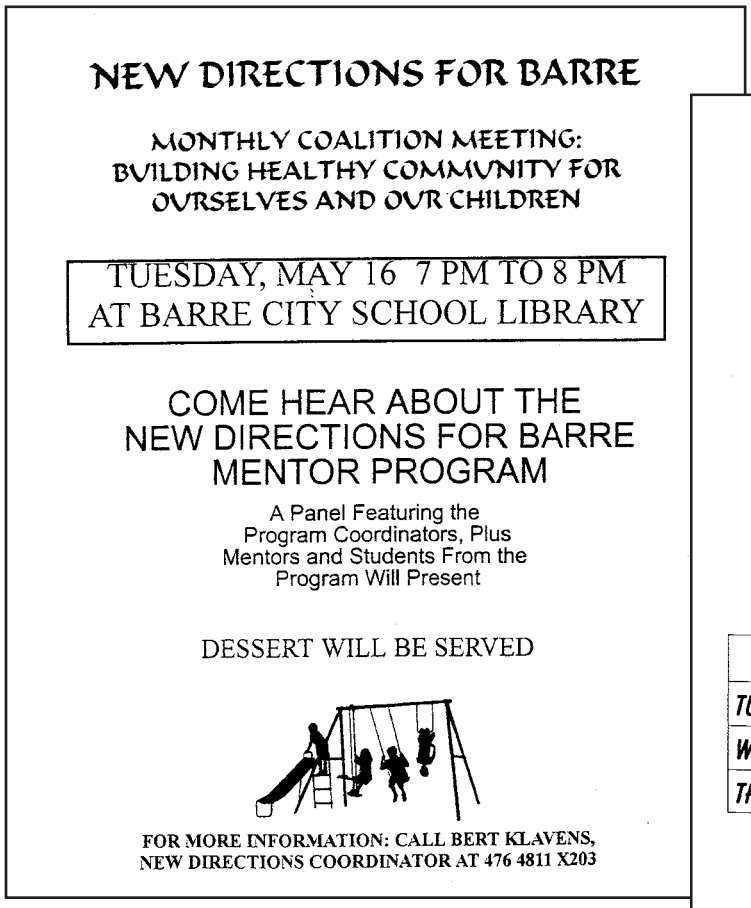
- Act together as a community.
- Combine multiple strategies, not just lean on a "silver bullet."
- Increase the factors that protect youth from substance abuse.
- Decrease the influence that encourage youth to use.
- Sustain efforts over time.

The coalition identified two risk factors—"youth begin using at an early age" and "unfavorable attitudes toward youths"—that were particularly prevalent in Barre. The strategies described above would be used to counter these risk factors. The biennial Youth Risk Prevention Survey would measure the overall impact of the integrated effort.

A strong communications approach to the work was evident from the beginning. In this regard, the steering committee was fortunate to have an energetic citizen on board. Tony Campos, who is the owner and operator of Video Visions, a full service videography service, was a well-known figure in Barre

whose ongoing work incorporated considerable community service. Campos also found a willing partner in Russell Smith, a long-term public information officer in the Agency of Human Services, who also had a strong background of community service.

For further community service in a more focused way, the Danforth project offered a great opportunity. An important strategy that emerged very early on was to use the Danforth name to serve as an attraction and leverage to obtain new and additional resources to apply to solving community-connected prob-



NEW DIRECTIONS FOR BARRE

MONTHLY COALITION MEETING:
BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY FOR
OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN

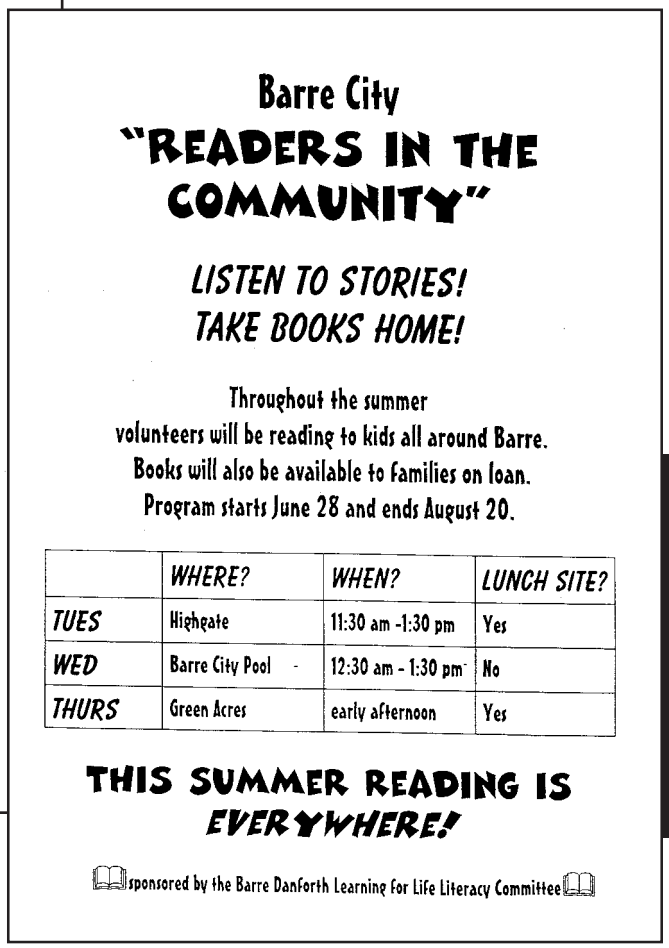
TUESDAY, MAY 16 7 PM TO 8 PM
AT BARRE CITY SCHOOL LIBRARY

COME HEAR ABOUT THE
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR BARRE
MENTOR PROGRAM

A Panel Featuring the
Program Coordinators, Plus
Mentors and Students From the
Program Will Present

DESSERT WILL BE SERVED

FOR MORE INFORMATION: CALL BERT KLAVENS,
NEW DIRECTIONS COORDINATOR AT 476 4811 X203



Barre City
"READERS IN THE COMMUNITY"

LISTEN TO STORIES!
TAKE BOOKS HOME!

Throughout the summer
volunteers will be reading to kids all around Barre.
Books will also be available to families on loan.
Program starts June 28 and ends August 20.

	WHERE?	WHEN?	LUNCH SITE?
TUES	Highgate	11:30 am -1:30 pm	Yes
WED	Barre City Pool	12:30 am - 1:30 pm	No
THURS	Green Acres	early afternoon	Yes

THIS SUMMER READING IS
EVERYWHERE!

sponsored by the Barre Danforth Learning for Life Literacy Committee

lems in the greater Barre community. This branding proved to be an unanticipated, but important, part of effective communication.

There were five fundamental modes of communication that were constant and key to keeping the interest in the effort moving forward:

- Local newspaper coverage
- Community Access television
- Special community events
- Expressions of political leadership
- Integrated approach

Local Newspaper Coverage

The ongoing and steady reporting of the work by the *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus* proved to be essential in keeping the effort in front of the public. There were occasional articles, photographs and encouraging editorials about the effort. The following is a sample of those pieces:

"At Risk: Barre, Missouri City Officials Seek Solutions To Similar Problems," *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus* (TA) 7/28/97

"Life Campaign Provides Hope for Barre's Kids," TA-7/31/97

"Barre Community Members Meet About Ways to Better Deal with Drug and Alcohol Problems," TA-Undated

"Barre Takes Hard Look At Itself Residents Seek Ways to Combat Teen Pregnancy, Drug Use, Other Problems," TA-Undated

"Taming the Thicket," A review of the problem data for Barre and a challenge for all to work together. TA-Undated Editorial

"Learning for Life," Strong support for the "Learning for Life" initiative. TA-Undated Editorial

"Grant Aimed At Woes of Barre's Youth," An account of the Danforth grant award and its purpose. TA-Undated

"Barre's Big Problem," Need to turn good intentions into concerted follow through. TA-Undated Editorial

"Learning for Life Campaign Launched in Barre," An account of the joint school board/city council meeting launching the initiative. TA-10/15/97

"Barre Project Gets Another Boost From State Grant," Report the receipt of a $325,000 grant for the reconstruction of the Brook Street school for early childhood development purposes. TA-Undated

"Spaulding On Saturday," An account of a disappointing 50-person turnout to discuss youth risk behavior on a Saturday morning at the Spaulding High School. TA-Undated

"Barre Group Wins Federal Grant To Fight Teenage Drug Abuse," Report of receipt of $100,000 grant obtained by Senator Patrick Leahy. TA-Undated

"Community Connections Looks At Myths of Welfare," Announcement of one of the half-hour public access TV programs. *World Newspaper* -Undated

"Literacy Campaign Winners Celebrated," Credit to the 25 winners of the Barre community wide essay contest as part of the literacy campaign. TA-Undated

"Three Citizens Discuss a Point at the 'Important Community Values' Meeting at the Universalist Church." TA-Undated Photo

"Pledge for Progress," Other communities should learn from the work that Barre is doing. TA-Undated Editorial

Life Campaign Provides Hope For Barre's Kids

DELCORE
s Staff
Is child abuse
ouseholds where
read to each

more apt to
d well than

or rending
drugs and
d juvenile
can both

sored by the Danforth Foundation, will be upbeat and play up the initiative.

The dateline would be Barre, according to Dupre, who said if the team responsible for hatching the program were to write the story it would read something like this: "Mayor Paul Dupre and School Superintendent Lyman Amsden today announced the launching of a five-year effort to help prepare the city's children for a lifetime of success…"

Dupre said he hoped the 'today' would not that far off and predicted such an announcement might be made as soon as September.

For the purposes of Tuesday's presentation, today was yesterday and the program described by Dupre, School Board Chairman Steven Mackenzie and Lee Lauber, executive director of the Family Center of Washington County, was not an idea but a re…

Dupre credited Barre residents … tackling issues ranging from r…

Barre's Big Problem

Big problems require thorough solutions.

That's why it's a good sign that state officials have agreed to help Barre reduce the number of its young people who are in trouble. About 40 percent of Barre's children live in poverty that's compounded by high rates of drug abuse, teen pregnancy and child abuse.

That's a big problem.

But a comprehensive solution is in the works. Two big gun… give ballast to the Barre effort. Education C… and Human Services Secretary Cornelius… tance to the city in developing its Learnin…

The Danforth foundation and city official… eracy a central focus of the fight. Many of… imposes upon Barre's youth have illiteracy…

At Tuesday's announcement of the init… warned, "I think we need to put our finger, no… ilies." But it's possible to do both — by focus…

One effective strategy attacks the problem of… its tendency to jump generations. Illiterate a… erate offspring. Only when the cycle is broken…

One way to break this cycle is to encourage ill… to learn to read to their young children. That des… erful motivation for adults to learn to read for…

Hull and Hogan may be the marquee names in… effort, but there are others:

▲ Lee Lauber of the Family Center of Washingto… izes that child care and other family support serv… preventing the kinds of problems that Barre mus…

▲ Jan Steinbauer of Central Vermont Adult B… works with parents of children… Middle School to hel…

Spaulding On Saturday

The early returns have been disappointing. But Barre still has time to turn things around.

On Saturday the community will meet at Spaulding High School to discuss some nagging problems. Poverty, child abuse, child neglect, teen pregnancy and children's drug use will make for a full agenda.

But despite more than 1,000 invitations sent out by Barre officials, only 50 people have confirmed thus far. If the Barre community wants to get serious about addressing the problems that face its children, it will have to get more involved.

City leaders have done their part. In working with the Danforth Foundation, those leaders want to focus on literacy to build a bulwark against the problems that plague Barre's young people.

But for such a program to have any reasonable chance of success, many more citizens must contribute their ideas. Everyone's …

Barre Group Wins Federal Grant To Fight Teenage Drug Abuse

Staff Report

BARRE – Barre's battle against teenage substance abuse will get a big boost from the federal government.

The U.S. Department of Justice has awarded a $100,000 grant that will finance ongoing substance abuse efforts in Barre, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., announced late last week.

The grant has been awarded to the Washington County Youth Services Bureau, which will work in conjunction with a coalition of Barre residents organized under the auspices of the Danforth Foundation, according to Leahy. The grant will help the coalition achieve its goal of reducing substance abuse by 10 percent in the next five years.

The funds, which originate from the Federal Drug-Free Community …

toward efforts to increase substance abuse education, foster skills in substance refusal, and promote extracurricular middle school activities and organizations.

Leahy, who serves as ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over such anti-drug efforts, said he hoped local officials would come up with creative and effective ways to achieve their goal.

"This is not some sort of top-down bureaucratic remedy," he said. "This gives grassroots organizations who know the problem best the resources to mount an … paign.

"These funds w… towards the critical … environment for chi… temptation of drug…

Group Looks To Improve Barre's Community Values

By DAVID DELCORE
Times Argus Staff

BARRE — Caring. Responsible. Honest. Educated. Those are among the attributes a cross section of residents agreed the next generation of Barre residents should possess.

The challenge facing the group, which met Tuesday night at the Barre Universalist Church, will be to initiate a community-wide discussion aimed at developing a short list of core values and attempting to persuade local youths that those values are important.

Tuesday's forum, which was attended by a number of local and state officials, concerned residents and representatives of several area …

strides in the area of literacy and has begun to tackle the issue of substance abuse, the community values piece had been largely neglected, Steven Mackenzie, chairman of the Barre School Board, told those at the forum.

Mayor Paul Dupre agreed, suggesting it was time to begin trying to build a community consensus on what is an appropriate shared set of values.

"We have to address these problems… as a community," he said. "Not just the schools and not just the churches, but as a community."

Dupre said developing a set of community standards would "help parents draw lines" while sending a clear message to children about what …

to factors that could result in them making unhealthy decisions.

The solution, according to moderator Sherry Wong, is to buffer children from those risks by promoting a clear set of standards, and giving youngsters a reason to consider those standards important.

Wong, a consultant from the University of Washington, told the group it was imperative a set of shared values is generated and then promoted within the community in order to protect children from the risks they face.

"The children being born in your community today will be the adults you share your community with tomorrow," she said, asking participants meet in small groups to determine what attributes all agreed are important.

The results, Wong said, wer… dictable, because people around the world… dards espoused by those at the…

"You'd be hard-pressed to f… would say they can't live with th… suggesting words like "carin…

"trustworthy" and "civic-minded" had a universal appeal to parents and communities alike.

"All parents want the best for their children," she said, noting that due to circumstances beyond their control, some are incapable of delivering on that promise.

Setting a shared list of community standards can be helpful, according to Wong, who said adults should agree on a set of core values and then ask children to help interpret those standards and translate them into specific behaviors.

"What does 'responsible' look like in a third-grade classroom?" she asked. "What do 'caring' and 'compassion' look like in your greater community?"

For the answer to those and other questions, Wong said, participants must engage the community's youth.

Residents interested in participating in the … couraged to call 476-5011. Barre's … Channel 7, plans to …

LOCAL NEWS

Community Connections Looks At "Myths Of Welfare"

Does welfare pay better than a job? Do people who receive welfare keep having babies to get more money? Would they rather stay on welfare than work? These "myths of welfare" are examined in this week's edition of "Community Connections," on Helicon Cable Channel 7, Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m. and Thursday, Nov. 12, 9 a.m. and noon.

Host Melissa Blouin speaks with Social Welfare District Director Craig Comstock about developments in welfare reform, then turns to Social Welfare staffers Coleen Bean, Nancy Laperle and Ann Hastings to talk about commonly-held misconceptions about Vermonters who receive assistance through their programs. Reach Up supervisor George Spontak wraps up with information on Reach Up, a program designed to move people from welfare into the workforce.

Community Connections is a weekly half-hour series produced by VideoVision of Barre and supported with funding from the Danforth Foundation and production assistance from the Vermont Agency of Human Services.

Grant Aimed At Woes Of Barre's Youth

By DAVID DELCORE
Times Argus Staff

BARRE — The state Agency of Human Services has secured a grant from a St. Louis-based foundation aimed at examining a series of youth-related problems identified in Barre.

Responding to the findings of a recently completed community profile, Human Services Secretary Cornelius Hogan has turned to the Danforth Foundation to help Barre address a series of problem areas ranging from teen pregnancy to child abuse.

Superintendent Lyman Amsden said Monday he has discussed the grant with Hogan and was in the process of assembling a team of community representatives who would try to tackle the problems identified in the profile.

According to Amsden, the team will include city and school officials, local law enforcement, social workers and clergy. Amsden said that group will be examine the contents of the community profile in detail and attempt to develop a three- to five-year plan aimed at addressing the problem areas.

Barre is the only Vermont community that has been targeted for such assistance.

Among other things, the profile suggests Barre's delinquency rate is more than three-and-a-half times the state average and nearly thr… state average … Washington County …

Taming The Thicket

Why?

Why is Barre's teen pregnancy rate more than double the state average?

Why does Barre have more than double the state rate of child abuse and neglect?

Why does Barre have more than … "unmanageable children"?

Why have Barre's school delinqu… the state and county average?

These harsh statistics should ala… the future of the city. And Barre off… thing about them.

These disturbing findings were … sponsored by the Danforth Foundat… leaders, many from the fields of educ… how best to tackle the array of ch… partial answer: the need for great…

Although those at the institute … literacy, especially among the young… for all the above-mentioned woes, t… a more unified treatment than it … aging that Barre's mayor and schoo… selves to foster a new commitment … oping lifelong learning in their co…

But let there be no doubt about … exists in many cases not in spite … that fail to give the gift of readin… tion establishment has not always … nizations that have sprouted up … schools have wrought.

It is a good sign that Barre has c… ber of children and young adults … cracks. And enlisting adults of a… will provide an invaluable huma…

However, the thicket of governm… to assisting with illiteracy and it… gled one. The effort to diagram the… dictions of these agencies would …

Non-profit groups battle with… And non-profits battle with each … ing.

Is this the united front we nee…

Pledge for progress

Is it possible to measure community health scientifically? Not precisely, no.

But the Vermont Human Service Agency's fourth annual community profile booklets perform a public service by charting trends good and bad — from student success to poverty rates and youth substance abuse.

> Many things go into making a healthy community, including engaged residents.

The columns of statistics in the bright green booklets are dizzying, but they should inspire equal parts pride and resolve to make every Vermont town a place where people young and old can thrive.

For starters, every elementary school in Vermont should make an early investment in child well being by working intensely to ensure that all second graders can read before they move onto third grade.

The same effort should be made to reduce the state's rising high school drop-out rate. Both goals are essentially prevention programs. Just as children who fall behind in reading are at greater risk of school failure, high school drop-outs are at higher risk of teen pregnancy, unemployment and substance abuse.

Leaders of individual communities should study the reports and set their own challenges, even if it means choosing just one goal. For example, Winooski might strive to reduce its high rates of teen smoking and Montpelier might work to reverse its steady increase in delinquent teens' going into state custody.

Burlington leaders should analyze findings that suggest the percentage of children living in poverty in the city could be up significantly this decade, even while the state and county figures have remained rel…

…it is not impossible. Just … Reports of child abuse … ually transmitted diseases … ining.

…ity show some of the worst … in municipalities with con…

…these communities, and for … inadvertently increase the …

…s to build new subsidized … Winooski and Burlington, …

Literacy Campaign Winners Celebrated

By DAVID DELCORE
Times Argus Staff

BARRE – Carl Nicholson and Nelia Spinelli have more in common than you might guess by simply looking at them. Nicholson is 6 and Spinelli is pushing 86, but both enjoy reading and proved recently they have a knack for writing as well.

On Thursday, Nicholson and Spinelli were among 25 writers honored for their efforts in a recent essay contest that was part of Barre's community literacy campaign.

The topic of both essays, and more than 500 others that were submitted, was "Why reading is important to me."

For Nicholson, the answer involved learning more about things that are of interest to 6-year-old boys – things like spiders, snakes and scorpions.

Spinelli, on the other hand, reads to become a good mystery, and credits it for an active mind that has served her well for more than 85 years.

"There's nothing like a good book," she declared shortly after polishing off a meal she earned for finishing first in the adult category of the contest.

She earned $25, as did those honored for writing seven other essays that received third-place honors. Nicholson, whose essay was judged best in his category, will receive a $50 bond. First place essayists will receive $100.

… Ackerman's first-place … destined to be deposited … account, the 7-year-old … girl might spend a fair … the local book store.

… the prize-winning essay … Thursday night's event at … School, Ackerman has … she didn't like.

… family is looking for … room reading a very … Ackerman, who con… … spot for "Winnie… … Jones" …

makes me feel good about myself," she said.

Ackerman was one of a handful of students invited to read her essay during a dinner that featured an address by Barre Mayor Paul Dupre and a speech by award-winning children's author Katherine Paterson of Barre Town.

Dupre applauded all participants in the essay contest that is part of a comprehensive effort to address youth-related problems that have been detected in Barre.

Dupre said a group that has been working on a solution to problems, problems that range from teen pregnancy to child abuse and neglect, has mounted a three-pronged attack aimed at promoting literacy, reducing substance abuse and creating a set of community values.

Although subcommittees are attacking Barre's social problems from three separate directions Dupre said promoting the role of the community in general and families in particular is key to all of them.

"We are mentors and teachers of our children, whether we like it or not," Dupre said as he urged the parents in attendance and the community as a whole to set a good example.

"We have to become more aware and more conscious, as adults, that there are a lot of eyes looking upon us, so we have to be careful about what we do and what we say," he said.

While Dupre stressed the importance of the community, Paterson hammered home the value of reading.

"Reading makes me want to write, writing makes me want to read, and both reading and writing make me want to rejoice to be part of the great human adventure we call life," Paterson told the more than 100 people who filled the Spaulding cafeteria.

Paterson, who recall… when …

Barre Project Gets Another Boost From State Grant

By DAVID DELCORE
Times Argus Staff

BARRE — Another of Barre's abandoned neighborhood schools will be restored with the help of a substantial state grant.

On Tuesday G… announced Barre w… of a $325,000 Comm… Block Grant. The gr… a project planned at … Street School by the … Community Action … Family Center of Wash…

CVCAC Executive Di… said news the city's grant … been approved will mea…

tion will move swiftly to buy the Brook Street building as previously agreed.

Renovations, aimed at transf… the turn-of-the-cent…

coup in a little m…

…loped and operated collabora… CVCAC and the Family Center. Barre's first licensed center for … g children.

…d care center will occupy the …

Test Scores In Barre Rebound, Says Principal

By DAVID DELCORE
Times Argus Staff

BARRE – It's too early to call it a trend, but test scores among Barre's elementary school students are heading in the right direction.

Principal James Taffel shared that news with members of the school board Monday night, explaining Barre's focus on early literacy seems to be paying off and the math scores among the school's fourth-graders are on also on the rise.

Although Taffel warned that comparing two years of test data provided only a snapshot of student performance, he said the results of the latest tests compared favorably to last year.

"We should celebrate the successes," said Taffel, who welcomed …

(See Scores, Page 8)

Board Critical Of Teachers Who Sign On, Leave

By DAVID DELCORE
Times Argus Staff

BARRE – School officials ar… cerned by the number of te… who accepted contracts to … Barre earlier this year …

(See Teachers…

Vermont's Best To Read On The Green

The Barre Danforth Committee will hold an author's reading series on the green in Barre. At "Vermont Authors on the Green," leading writers from Vermont will talk about their work and read from their recent writings. The series will take place on Wednesday evenings starting June 9 at 6:30 p.m. "Concert in the Park" will follow every week at 7 p.m.

June 9 – Eric Zency, "Nature and History." Zency is a best-selling novelist, essayist, historian and ecologist from Calais. "Panama," his first book of historical fiction, received rave reviews from critics and the public at large.

June 16 – Ken Squier, "The Old Squier." Squier, the CBS lead commentator for auto racing, owns Thunder Road raceway in Barre and several popular radio stations. Squier will read from works by his father and other regional selections.

June 23 – Sydney Lea, "Hunting Sketches." Lea, author of "Hunting All the Way Home" and "A Place in Mind," is a poet and novelist from Newbury. He has produced seven books of poetry including his forthcoming, "Pursuit of a Wound."

June 30 – Tom Slayton, "Why I Love Barre." Slayton is an accomplished writer, the editor of Vermont Life Magazine and a commentator on Vermont Public Radio.

July 7 – Joe Citro, "Green Mountain Dark Tales." Citro has been gathering stories of spooks, occult happenings and unsolved mysteries from every corner of Vermont for years. His most recent book, "Green Mountain Dark Tales" delves deeply into Vermont's twilight zone. Citro is also a Vermont Public Radio commentator.

July 14 – Howard Coffin, "Young Vermonters Confront the Civil War." Coffin is Vermont's leading writer on the Civil War. His work in "Full Duty" and other popular books on the participation of Vermonters in the Civil War combines accomplished historical research with a powerful ability to tell a story.

July 21 – Jules Older, "Historian of Madness." Older is a writer, broadcaster, teacher and clinical psychologist …

These Are." Parini will read from his own poetry and from Robert Frost. Parini has just published an acclaimed biography of Frost and is an accomplished author of poetry and novels, including the best selling "To the Last Station" about the last days of Leo Tolstoy.

Aug. 4 – Howard Norman, "A Spr… – Key." Norman is the author of the suc… cessful novels, "The Bird Artist" an… "The Museum Guard." He will rea… from his work in progress, "Th… Haunting of L."

Aug. 11 – David Budbill, "Capturin… the Talk of the Hills." Budbill is a mas… ter of dialect. His "Judevine" poem… captured the voices and drama … Vermont. Also playwright and novelis… Budbill's most recent work is a ne… book of poems called, "moment … Moment."

Aug. 18 – Archer Mayer, "Th… Mystery Deepens." Mayer is one of th… leading crafters of the who – done – in the country today. His popular my… teries feature Vermont sleuths in se… tings recognizable to all who live … the region.

C

"Group Looks To Improve Barre's Community Values," An account of a 40-person meeting at the Universalist Church under the tutelage of Sherry Wong from the University of Washington. TA-Undated

"Talk of the Town," A lighthearted feature about the Aldrich Public Library inviting those 18 and under for a free lunch at the library during the summer. TA-Undated Feature Column

"Test Scores in Barre Rebound, Says Principal," Focus on early literacy appears to be paying off as test score among Barre's elementary school students are heading in the right direction. TA-Undated

"Barre 2000 and Beyond: Who We Are And What We're About," Account of an emerging community and economic development process for the city. TA-12/9/99

"Stearns & Gould Perform Skits for Children at the Barre City Elementary School, Kicking Off 'I Love To Read and Write Month,'" TA Photo-1/13/00 (See front cover)

"Barre Shows Some Progress in Indicators of Well-Being," Op Ed piece summarizing Danforth process and results for the community at large. TA-June 2000

Community Access Television

Public access television proved to be a key avenue for mobilizing people who normally would not be involved in this kind of community improvement process. The shows were produced by VideoVision on site at the Barre Area Vocational Center using students as directors and camera operators. A weekly rhythm was established, producing on average a new show every week.

Local volunteer Melissa Blouin hosted a weekly half-hour interview piece entitled "Community Connections." Guests on this show brought life and clarity to the sometimes confusing world of social services. The practical information was often provided by actual clients of these services. In one memorable episode, three local students talked about their reactions to the Columbine incident and their perceptions of how adults handled the situation.

Another program, "Storytime," was aired more intermittently but always featured persons from the area or the state reading to children in the studio and to those watching at home. One guest reader was the mayor of Barre, who co-chaired the steering committee. Governor Howard Dean, whose political career has been intertwined with efforts on behalf of children, read to an ever-squirming group of 3- and 4-year-olds. The image was compelling. Senator Jim Jeffords, who regularly visits schools in Washington, D.C. to read to children, also took on a reading assignment. These regular guest appearances by people who are known for their caring for kids, helped set the stage for the continuing levels of energy and commitment.

Between these two programs and a third entitled "Healthy Community" on health issues produced for the Central Vermont Medical Center, more than 60 shows were aired over a two-year period, developing a model for other communities to replicate.

Special Community Events

Special community events played an important part in keeping the effort in the minds of citizens. Three specific efforts were particularly successful and worthy of note: Barre Community Writing Contest, Easter Egg Hunt, and Poets in the Park.

The Barre Community Writing Contest

The Barre Community Writing Contest was a product of the Danforth literacy committee process.

The Easter Egg Hunt

For several years, the city and the Aldrich Library had sponsored a very successful Easter Egg hunt for the young. Over the years, it attracted upwards of 1,000 toddlers. In 1998, the literacy committee, using an energetic VISTA volunteer, took the hunt to a new level. That year, as the children gathered the eggs, they were brought over to a long table filled with young children books. At the table, they would "trade" the egg for a book or booklet of their choice. (They also kept the eggs.) This was an extremely popular twist to an already successful program, and was an interesting way to bring literacy and learning to an existing successful community event.

Poets in the Park

For several years, over the summer months, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday evenings, various local music artists and groups would perform in the gazebo on the small park known as the town square. The literacy committee built upon this theme and established a series entitled "Poets in the Park." Well-known

The 25 "Community Connections Half-Hour Public Access TV Programs

1. Brook St. School, several service agencies co-housed in a renovated school building
2. Literacy: Learning for Life
3. Child Sexual Abuse Part 1
4. Child Sexual Abuse Part 2
5. Child Sexual Abuse Part 3
6. Child Sexual Abuse Part 4: Victims Speak Out
7. Good Samaritan Haven, local shelter for the homeless
8. Empowering Seniors
9. Wheels (Public Transportation)
10. Community Values
11. The Area Agency on Aging
12. Habitat for Humanity
13. Teen Suicide
14. Welfare Reform
15. Workforce Investment Board
16. Health Access
17. Fresh Air Fund, bringing inner-city kids to Vermont for the summer
18. Autism
19. Teenagers on the Littleton Tragedy
20. Teens: A Positive Influence in the Community
21. Fun Alternative Activities for Teens
22. Barre Town Literacy
23. An Overview of the Danforth Project
24. Welfare Success Stories
25. Human Services Secretary Con Hogan on Outcomes and Indicators

Vermont writers and poets were invited to read their work and the work of other Vermonters. This very visible and popular effort continues into its second summer.

Expressions of Political Leadership

Each year the mayor of Barre offers his annual State of the City remarks at the beginning of the calendar year, similar to the process of the governor offering the State of the State. In his 1998 address, Mayor Dupre dedicated a significant part of his address to the Danforth effort. He used the analogy of the successful efforts of the city over the years to improve its physical infrastructure. Over the last 10 years, the city had replaced its antiquated water system, consolidated its aging elementary schools, and upgraded its bridges and roads. Dupre's theme was that the human infrastructure was also showing some wear and tear, and that the Danforth effort would be focused on helping that sector of the city's life develop and thrive.

The early visible political support by Vermont Representative and Barre Alderman Poirier set early expectations. The Joint Resolution by the City Council and the School Board was an important expression of the city's political leadership. And the ongoing participation of key elected officials such as the mayor set an important and ongoing tone for the effort.

Integrated Approach

Using the Danforth process to present an integrated face to funders brought an energizing aspect to the work. Obtaining grants and contracts was something that virtually all members of the steering committee knew how to do. The coming together of the players in the Danforth process at the steering committee increased the leverage of the community to continue to gain new resources and to plan for obtaining future resources. The common purpose inherent in the "literacy and learning" framework made the applications for funding stronger and more integrated.

Second Annual

Barre Community Writing Contest

Sponsored by the Barre Danforth Learning for Life Committee

This Barre Community Writing Contest celebrates the new millennium of writing and reading by encouraging students and everyone in the Barre community to write

an essay - - - a poem - - - or a short story

Contest Topic: **Reading and the Future**

Prizes in each entry category: 1st Place – $100 2nd Place – $50 3rd Place $25

There will be 21 cash winners – 3 winners in each entry category.

Barre Community Writing Contest Rules

1. Entrant must live in Barre or attend public, parochial, or vocational school in Barre City or Barre Town.
2. Entries must be typed (double spaced) or printed clearly.
3. Entries must fit on a single sheet of 8½ by 11" paper. Use both sides if necessary.
4. Entries may be made by a team if all members are in the same entry category.
5. Do not put your name on your entry. Use the Contest Entry Form, at the bottom of this sheet, for your name and other information.
6. Staple the Contest Entry Form to the essay, poem, or short story your are entering.
7. All entries must be received at the Barre Supervisory Union, 120 Ayers Street, by 4 PM on Friday, February 11, 2000.
8. Entries will be judged on style, content, grammar, and originality.
9. All decisions of the judges are final.
10. Winning entries may be printed in the newspaper or read on the radio or TV.
11. Entries will not be returned.

✂ ✂ ✂ ✂

%%%

Barre Community Writing Contest Entry Form

Staple to the front of your entry

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

Phone ______________________________

School ______________________________

Send entries to Barre Supervisory Union Office
120 Ayers Street
Barre VT 05641

Check Entry Category

___ Student in grades 1 - 2
___ Student in grades 3 - 4
___ Student in grades 5 - 6
___ Student in grades 7 - 8
___ Student in grades 9 - 10
___ Student in grades 11-12, Voc. Ed., &17-18 yr olds
___ Adult

Onion River Arts Council & the Barre Danforth Learning for Life Committee present

Performances in the Park

Featuring Vermont's best writers and musicians in free performances
Wednesday nights at 6:30 PM at City Hall Park in Barre

Generously underwritten by ULTRAMAR

June 21	Children's author KATHERINE PATERSON Bluegrass music by THE RADIO RANGERS
June 28	Novelist JOE CITRO Celtic guitar music by ART EDELSTEIN
July 5	Writer TOM PAINE COountry music show with SHERRI'S JUBILEE
July 12	Writer JAN ALBERS Celtic music by SARAH BLAIR & MICHAEL KERRY
July 19	Poet JANE SHORE and writer HOWARD NORMAN Swing & big band music by STRETCH 'N' THE LIMITS
July 26	Vermont STate Poet ELLEN VOIGT Christian & gospel music by THE FOUNDATION, HEAVENLY TREASURES & CROSSROADS MUSIC
August 2	Writer JEFFREY LENT Country music show with SHERRI'S JUBILEE
August 9	Novelist DANIEL HECHT Bluegrass music by PUTNAMVILLE REVENOOERS
August 16	Novelist CHRIS BOHJALIAN Country music by MARK LEGRAND & THE LOVESICK BAND
August 23	Poet GALWAY KINNELL Rockabilly music by STARLINE RHYTHM BOYS

Performances in the Park is made possible with support from
The City of Barre, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Barre Supervisory Union,
The Barre Partnership, and the Vermont Council on the Humanities

The Danforth steering committee was becoming the public venue for a variety of groups and organizations to share their hopes and plans. For example, on the frontline of innovation, the steering committee supported a grant to establish a Cyber Café on Main Street in Barre, which would give young people who don't have access to computers at home access to the Internet and the worlds of computing. The steering committee in June 1999 also heard plans to establish a rollerblade and skateboard park for greater Barre. The committee also supported a sizable grant to the Department of Justice for a broad-based and comprehensive initiative to work with the difficult issue of youth violence, which in the context of generally improving indicators on many fronts, was not improving.

At right is a short list of those funding successes.

The Grants and Resources Received Enhanced by the "Danforth" Packaging

- Mini-grant from the Agency of Human Services – to identify and track key indicators: $17,500.
- Mini-grant from the Vermont Department of Education: $10,000.
- "New Directions Grant" by the Substance Abuse Prevention Committee: $100,000, per Barnes memo of 4/18/98.
- Vermont Humanities Council: $5,000.
- Community Development Block Grant: $350,000 as match for redeveloping and rehabilitating the Brook Street School, a former neighborhood elementary school, for early childhood development purposes.
- A grant for the expansion of the city library, which is important to the overall literacy strategy: $150,000.
- The unexpected renewal of the City Scape grant: $100,000 per year for five years, a total of $500,000.
- The receipt of funds for the Phoenix Program, an alternative school program: $100,000.

City of Barre, Vermont

"GRANITE CENTER OF THE WORLD"

PAUL A. DUPRE
Mayor

12 N. MAIN ST., BARRE, VT 05641
802-476-0240 City
802-476-0264 City FAX
802-479-9809 Home

March 6, 2000

Lyman Amsden, Superintendent
Marc Hull, K-8 Director of Curriculum and Instruc
Barre Supervisory Union
120 Ayers Street
Barre, VT 05641

COPY

RE: Letter of Support for REA Grant Application

Dear Lyman and Marc,

We are writing as co-chairs of the Barre Danforth Learning for Life Program to express our enthusiastic support for the Barre City and Barre Town REA Reading Improvement Program and Tutorial Assistance Grants. As you know, the Danforth Program's Literacy Committee has sponsored many community-wide activities to engage citizens of all ages in the enjoyment of reading and writing.

These include:

- An annual writing contest open to all citizens
- "Vermont Authors on the Green," a series of 12 weekly readings by well-known Vermont authors, held Wednesday evenings in City Park, before band concerts.
- "Readers in the Community," a 10-week series of readings for children, scheduled for the sites that offer free lunch program s in the Highgate and Green Acres housing developments, at Aldrich Public Library, Barre City Elementary and Middle School, and at the Barre City pool.
- Reading programs for children aired on the local TV access channel every Monday evening. These programs have been accessible throughout parts of Central Vermont.

The goals and objectives of the Reading Excellence Act match those of the Danforth Literacy Committee very closely, and we look forward to serving as a forum for cooperatively planning additional literacy outreach projects that benefit the REA and Danforth initiatives.

Because of your active support and that of other community organizations and agencies, we recently were selected as one of the Vermont Council on Humanities' community-wide literacy programs: Creating Communities of Readers: 2000. This grant, together with the Reading Excellence Act, will enable us to make important strides in reaching our communities and the Barre City and Barre Town schools.

We look forward to a strong partnership. Both of you have contributed to the success of the Danforth Learning for Life program. It's always a pleasure to work with you on projects that enrich the lives of others.

Sincerely,

Paul Duprey
Mayor, Barre City
Co-Chair, Danforth Learning for Life Program

Steve Mackenzie
Barre City School Board
Co-Chair, Danforth Learning for Life Program

The total resources brought to bear over the period was in excess of $1.2 million, an extraordinary amount of money for a community of about 10,000 citizens. Funders have expressed their appreciation at receiving proposals that have been so integrated in their approach, and which went to great lengths to support other community organizations that in the past would have gone separate ways.

The strategy of using the Danforth Steering Committee as an information clearinghouse and the Danforth name in the grant applications has been important to this overall resource generation success.

At left is an example of this mutually reinforcing approach to fund raising.

Changes In Important Outcome Indicators

Significant measures over two years indicate the project is making a difference. Most of the problems one would want to see declining (e.g., substance abuse) are going down and positive indicators (e.g., child support paid) are going up.

Barre City Indicators Change Over Last Two Reporting Years

Indicator

Child Mortality .....0 deaths in 1997-98

Infant Mortality .....0 deaths in 1997-98

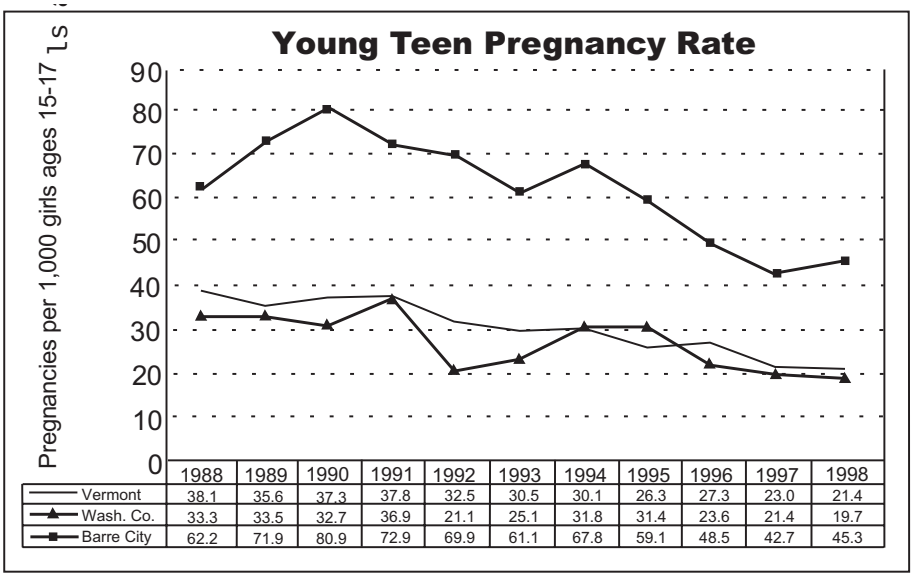
Immunizations .....100% in 1996-98

	Date	Rate	Date	Rate	% Better
8th Graders Using Marijuana	1997	17%	1999	8%	70%
8th Graders Using Tobacco	1997	28%	1999	15%	50%
Teen Sexually Transmitted Diseases	1996	5%	1999	3%	43%
Adult Abuse and Neglect	1996	35%	1999	20%	42%
8th Graders Using Alcohol	1997	30%	1999	22%	40%
Receiving New Baby Visits	1996	59%	1998	81%	28%
Child Abuse (victims/10,000)	1996	73	1998	63	27%
Young Teen Pregnancies (per 1000)	1996	48	1998	42	27%
High School Dropouts	1996	3%	1998	2.5%	13%
Child Support Paid	1996	72%	1998	82%	12%

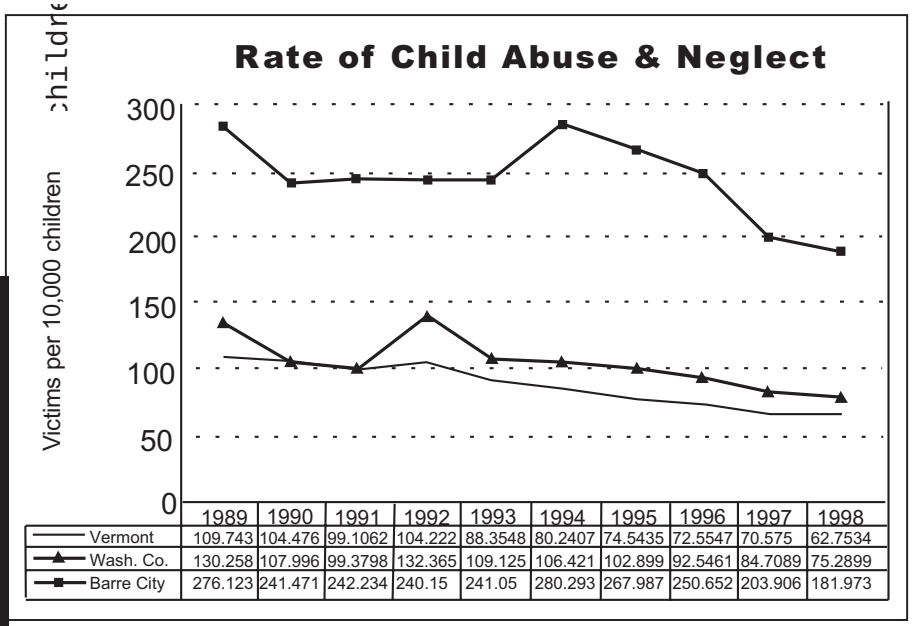
The above results are a reflection of change over a two-year period. In this work of community development, two years is not a long time. And, the shorter the period, the more volatile and less reliable the numbers. A much stronger assessment point will be at about the five-year mark after the onset of the work. However, these numbers are encouraging, and, in some regards, even surprising in their strength.

For example, no infant or child mortalities in the last reporting year, in a catchment population of 9,500 may not be unusual, but by any standard is good news. The same is true when one can say that the immunization rate for the children is 100%. There are very few places in the nation that can make that claim. Even in Vermont, where the overall immunization rate is 88%, a 100% rate is a wonderful achievement.

Inherent weaknesses in the self-survey methods used to determine the risks that youth take are reflected in the substantial margins of error. However, when 8th graders report a decline of alcohol, smoking, and marijuana behavior in the order of magnitude of 40 – 70% respectively, it is clear that there is directional change occurring, regardless of the potential impact of sampling error or



	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Vermont	38.1	35.6	37.3	37.8	32.5	30.5	30.1	26.3	27.3	23.0	21.4
Wash. Co.	33.3	33.5	32.7	36.9	21.1	25.1	31.8	31.4	23.6	21.4	19.7
Barre City	62.2	71.9	80.9	72.9	69.9	61.1	67.8	59.1	48.5	42.7	45.3



	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Vermont	109.743	104.476	99.1062	104.222	88.3548	80.2407	74.5435	72.5547	70.575	62.7534
Wash. Co.	130.258	107.996	99.3798	132.365	109.125	106.421	102.899	92.5461	84.7089	75.2899
Barre City	276.123	241.471	242.234	240.15	241.05	280.293	267.987	250.652	203.906	181.973

methodological weakness. Again, after two more years pass, and the readings are taken again, we will have more confidence that the change is significant and sustained.

It's also important to compare the three indicators that helped pull the community together in 1996 to see what the graphs reveal when looked at again through 1998. (See the graphs for those three indicators on the left and on the next page.)

The 27% drop in teen pregnancies over the last two years is true cause for celebration. This is an issue that has dogged Barre for many years. The change has been noticed and remarked upon by many. And for this indicator, this vital statistics-based data is viable.

The child abuse rate dropped by a strong 27% in two years, and accelerated a four-year drop, resulting in a four-year drop of 36%.

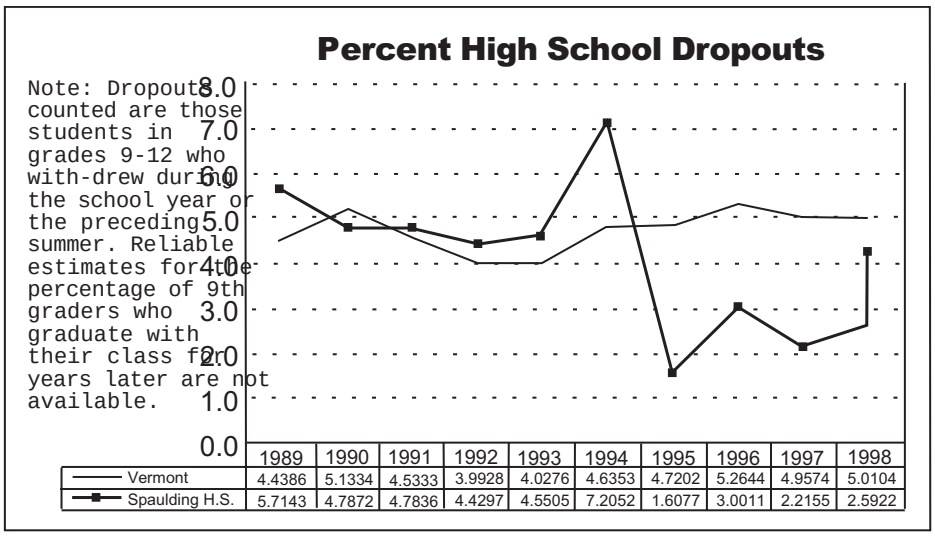
The dropout rate in Barre had already decreased dramatically in the year before the onset of the Danforth effort. But it has continued to decline over the last two reporting years by an additional 13%. Even more importantly, it has sustained the very low relative rate of about 3%, which is just about one-half of the State of Vermont's rate.

And the connection between school dropouts and teen pregnancies is known, thus contributing toward the idea that so many of the things being measured are connected, some in ways that we don't fully understand.

In the summer of 1999, the schools produced and distributed the first school and social indicator report that consolidated the range of data that had been developed over the last couple of years. This improved the reliability of the earlier baseline data.

Indicators regarding school performance are also encouraging, although not as strong this early in the work as the larger indicators that track non-educational indicators. There has been some visible improvement in 2nd grade

reading scores. The very strong increase in students receiving special education services is also important to note. This increase of 65% over the period may also be connected to the improved dropout rate and to the establishment of special and alternative course work in the system, which has generated considerable interest and optimism. The next round of data on this front will be important.



In the fall of 1999, the Barre Supervisory Union #61 produced a "School & Community Report." That report outlined a series of educational indicators. It was the first report that graphically showed important educational indicators over time, in the context of larger community indicators. The premise for the report was eloquently stated early in the report as follows: "The ability of a school to educate children is powerfully influenced by the community within which it carries out its assigned task."

	96-97	97-98
Free & Reduced Lunch	50%	53%
Number of Students per Computer	5.3	4.6
Spaulding High School Dropouts	20	18
Spaulding High School Suspensions	419	243
Grade 4 New Standards English, City	72%	88%

These are the best results from a set of mixed results. These data need longer trend lines to be meaningful.

A recent summary prepared by the Vermont Agency of Human Services entitled "Supervisory Union Stand-Outs By Regional Partnership, 1999" paints an encouraging picture regarding substance abuse for students in the Barre school system. This report took the results of the periodic youth risk surveys and arrayed them in a way where it was easy to see which school districts were standing out, for good or bad, in smoking, alcohol, and marijuana use by 8th graders and 12th graders. The report also undertook the same analysis for dropouts across the state.[12]

- Based on the change from 1997 to 1999, Barre has the second best reduction of 8th graders smoking cigarettes of the 15 school districts in Vermont that have improved. And this is in a total universe of 58 school districts.
- The indicator of the number of 8th graders using alcohol showed strong improvement. Of the 58 school districts, it was ranked 20th in its improvements, well above the average.
- Regarding high school dropouts, covering the period 1996 through 1998, Barre, with a reduction of 41.6% over that period, was the second best in the state of Vermont.

Again, the question has to be asked, "What role did the subcommittee on alcohol and substance abuse and the Danforth Steering Committee play in these reductions?" Cause and effect may never be known, but given the fact some of these exact indicators have been the subject of continuous and constant public discussion for over four years now, one would like to believe that this process of public education and public health messaging mode has contributed to these results, albeit they may be short-term.

One of the smaller processes that the steering committee used in the area of addictions was to occasionally invite knowledgeable representatives from the state to bring them up-to-date on the latest research. They received reports regarding addictions and young people in general and reports about their own community. There has been a strong flow of solid information from organizations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Vermont Department of Public Health that is now circulating around the Barre community. There is no question that these occasional visits and reports to the steering committee have improved the knowledge of the committee regarding the devastating effects of early substance abuse by our youth. Again, the Danforth table was a place where these discussions could occur.

Important improvements in inputs and services have influenced some of the results. For example, the percentage of families receiving new baby visits in Washington County increased dramatically from 31% in 1994 to almost 95% in 1999. This capacity, on a state-wide basis, has been credited as a contributor to the overall reduction of child abuse, particularly for the youngest children. It is too soon to see that connection in Barre, but we have every expectation that an age cohort analysis, done several years from now, will show similar results.

- The percentage of parentage establishment for out-of-wedlock child support cases improved between the years 1997 and 1998.
- Teen sexually transmitted disease rates for the entire county which includes the Barre area have declined 55% since 1991.
- The percent of new families at risk, which is defined as first births to unmarried women younger than 20 with less than 12 years of education, has remained consistently below the state average.

In sum, progress on many fronts is getting clearer. Important indicators are moving in the right direction, even when looked at over the very short two-year assessment period.

There also remain some important challenges, including: improving civic voting percentages; improving low birth-weight rates, which have remained stubbornly high; improving high school seniors' aspirations for the future; and improving indicators associated with rising rates of juvenile delinquency and serious crime in and around the city.

And the regular reporting, assessment, and analysis of the information are central to these improvements.

"Continuum of Systemic Change" Model

Another method to judge general progress in a community is to adapt a tool created by Beverly A. Parsons, titled "A Continuum of Systemic Change."[13]

The tool, to paraphrase Parsons, is designed to help assess where a jurisdiction stands on a continuum of change. The tool allows an assessment of the extent of the presence of "vision, public and political support, networks, networking and partnerships, changes in services, the extent of services and help for children, youth and families, administrative roles and responsibilities, and new alignments of policy." Each of these desired aspects are then triangulated against the "continuum of change," which is defined as a progression beginning with "maintenance, to awareness, to exploration, to transition, to emerging new infrastructure, to the predominance of a new system."

The tool allows a general assessment toward progress. Important aspects of a healthy community are measured against the progression of change, which ranges from doing what has always been done to arriving at the point where improved results are evident.

- In short form, the vision for healthier children and communities moved strongly in Barre during these four years. The community is in clear transition on this aspect.
- Public and political support has been strong as evidenced by continuing media support and citizen participation.
- Networking and partnerships have emerged as new and effective ways of doing business, as evidenced by integrated applications for resources, and the role of the "table" for comparing and constructing complementary strategies. The Brooks Street School service integration work is a strong example.
- Changes in services have been numerous, including the opening of Brook Street, higher early baby home visiting rates, and strengthened elementary school literacy programs, as well as the onset of alternative education opportunities.
- The Danforth Steering Committee served as an integrating structure for a variety of administrative roles and responsibilities. This process crossed all of the major sectors of programs for people in Barre.
- Policy alignment has been visible and effective. Seeing the Adult Basic Education program take the lead in fashioning an integrated approach to literacy and learning in the area is the best example of this new behavior.

Using the "continuum of change" model to assess change in Barre shows significant change in almost all aspects that the model uses to determine if change has occurred.

This assessment, when combined with changing indicators of well-being, is truly encouraging. A summary challenge now is to have people in and about Barre understand that they are making progress and that it is significant, and to continue building on that progress.

Leadership Is Key

The issue of leadership took several paths in Barre and all are instructive.

Getting local political and community leadership aboard early was important. The early buy-in of Superintendent Amsden, Mayor Dupre, Board Chair McKenzie, and Alderman and Representative Poirier set the right tone.

The leadership from the state level by Commissioner Hull and the Secretary of Human Services early on and their staying with the process in a personal way was equally important.

The added dimension of the ability of the leaders from both the state and local levels to work together and to develop the personal relationships that would stand the test of time proved to be extremely beneficial. The ability of leaders at all levels to come to solid agreement around the Learning for Life theme and the three associated strategies served as an important foundation for the entire project.

Some of the people emerged during the process. Others were key contributors in the early stages. Most have been with the project during its entire cycle. The most important leadership though has come from the original founders and charter members of the steering committee.

See Key Leaders section below of those who have stayed deeply involved over the entire course of the work.

Data Can Help Drive the Process

The early and strong reaction to the very targeted Barre trend information clearly put the larger process in motion. Changing the trend lines was also one of the key motivators for the Danforth Foundation. And constant tracking and sharing of the changing information infused continuing energy into the ongoing process.

The role of the state was essential on the data front. Only the state has the capacity to provide comparable data and trend lines on a regular basis. This was particularly true in the Barre situation where there was no full-time staff. David Murphey of the Agency of Human Services played an invaluable role in this regard, as he regularly visited the monthly steering committee meetings to bring people up to date. The Community Profiles and school report cards were readily accepted as one of the key sources of data to be tracked.

And the presentation of data in trend line form, in a variety of venues, made it easy for the media and general public to quickly grasp the fundamental question, namely, "Are things getting better or worse, and how quickly?"

''Outsiders'' Play an Important Role

The idea that a given community can come together, analyze the problem, grapple with it, and develop a sustained action sequence may at best be a very optimistic notion. People from other communities played occasional and important parts in the process. The state's early recognition of the data and the sharing of the data, the Danforth Foundation's willingness to provide modest financial support and a continuing prodding about the data and evaluation, Sherry Wong's occasional rallying presence with community members, and the occasional participation of the Agencies of Human Services and Education all served to reinforce the idea of partnership of people from the community and those outside the community, all toward the common purpose of "Literacy and Lifelong Learning."

Also, the regular reinforcement by Danforth, particularly at its annual January meeting for state policymakers, was also a factor early in the life of the project.

Facilitation Holds Things Together

Professional facilitation proved to be extremely important at several key times during the project. This was particularly true at the committee level. One example was when Diana Webster and Brian Ward of the Vermont Prevention Institute provided ongoing service to the "Better Barre Coalition – New Directions Planning Effort."

The important lesson drawn so far as a result of the community-wide "community values" identification process is that it is essential to find an interested and driven citizen to lead and facilitate ongoing community-wide discussion. A connected lesson was learning the importance of professional facilitation in both the conception of the community conversation and in its execution and summary.

Constancy Is Essential

One of the key lessons is the idea that constancy of effort is essential. It is relatively easy to generate considerable energy in organizations and people around short-term efforts and projects. Often though, that energy becomes quickly dissipated, and people's interests and concern gravitate elsewhere. The Barre Steering Committee, a completely voluntary group of very busy people, was able to sustain regular meetings and events over a four-year period to date. Part of the capacity to sustain lies in the belief that as data and trend lines improve, new energy is infused into the effort. The regular showcasing of results may be one of the variables that resulted in this long-term constancy of effort.

A Historical Sense of Community Is a Cardinal Asset

The people of Barre are solid, born of strong sense of history and community. This asset was one of the intangibles that made Barre a good bet from the begin-

ning. This sense of community and area pride was felt during the first visit by those from "away" in October of 1996, when all participated in the Barre Ethnic Celebration. It is not known whether this historical sense of community is essential to success, but we do know that in this case, it certainly assisted the process in great measure.

''Having a Table...''

At several times during the multi-year process there was discussion about how the process had simply brought people together to the same table, where the knowledge and work of each could be imparted to the others. The constant communication brought both an organizing set of themes to the work and also offered opportunities to connect the work in ways not previously envisioned. New and productive human relationships were also formed that would not have formed if there had been no project.

A Branded Name is Important

Even though very few people in Barre know who, where, or what the Danforth Foundation is, many know that the name has something to do with some kind of area-wide improvement effort. The Danforth name appeared regularly in grants, news releases, press photographs, and program documents. The "Danforth Project" became a shorthand way to explain the effort. The lesson is that some brand name that represents what an effort like this is all about can be an important intangible asset to the effort. In the case of Barre, the Danforth image served that purpose well.

Short-Term, Visible, Community Projects Keep Energy Levels Up

Even though a previous lesson spoke to the value of constancy over significant periods of time, there is no question that a series of short-term, visible, and exciting community projects is a way to bring occasional infusions of human energy and short-term accomplishment to the effort. The 1000 children at the Easter Egg hunt in the city park, who traded in the eggs that they collected for early reader books, is an example of a community event that was fun, that built on an existing event, and that added a literacy dimension. Paul Costello, Executive Director of Adult Basic Education, proved to be adept and creative in these efforts

Hiring a Half-Time Community Coordinator...(False Starts)

One of the areas where the original program design fell somewhat short was the hope that a local community could provide solid research as part of the findings regarding the impact of specific intervention or educational models. One of the things that became clear early on was that the almost totally volunteer nature of the effort worked against a classic research model. Attempts at

hiring a coordinator never did take root. After a time, the steering committee felt comfortable with a less directed model of management. As a result, organized discussion and process regarding methodology of research and other research and its accompanying requirements was never a major factor in the deliberations. Looking back, one solution would have been to enter into a partnership with the University of Vermont to undertake that part of the agenda.

Money is Not the Most Important Variable

Resources are important, there is no question about that. However, the Barre story is a story both of resources and of human energy and focus. And the two ideas reinforce each other. Greater human focus, in bringing a more integrated view of applications for resources, was a clear by-product of the project. Increased resources, applied to more integrated work, reinforced a more integrated view of results. More integrated results then set the stage for more human focus, through more effective communications and reaching out to citizenry strategies. This work is very connected, and no single variable can carry the load. When all of our work is within a framework of common purpose, money is put in a more realistic place in the continuum of resources needed.

All in all, for very small amounts of money, many people were reached, a strong group of people stayed with the process, coalitions to attract funds were effective, and results have been changing.

It Takes Time

Only four years have passed since this effort was conceived. All involved feel that the investment of regular meetings and the energy bursts associated with special events have been worth it. However, four years of work has yielded just two or three years of data. So any conclusions, while encouraging, are very early. The next natural point for analysis will be in almost two years when the next round of Youth Risk Survey data is available. Also, the year 2000 census data will also result in a tightening up of all of the rate data used by the Agency of Human Services. In addition, two years from now, some of the educational information that only has one or two reporting points in time, will have four or five points in time to report. By 2002 Barre should have a reliable and valid picture of its progress.

Ideally, this work will be tracked for a decade in order to see trends lines with enough direction and change to be considered mature.

Time Marches On

Perhaps the most important lesson learned is realizing how quickly time brings changes in the leadership arena. For example, there is a new mayor in Barre. Most of the City Council is new. Key Danforth leaders, such as Paul Costello and Noreen Carpenter, have moved on to new places in their lives. There are new Secretaries of Human Services and Education. And, the Danforth Foundation itself has consolidated its work to the St. Louis, Missouri, area.

Bridging these inevitable changes in leadership and support is now the largest challenge to the effort's sustainability.

Timeline

1989 through 1996	Actions that set stage for the Barre "Learning for Life" initiative
1989 – 1994	Data collected by the State of Vermont on high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, and child abuse in Vermont communities
1993	Vermont participation in Danforth Institute (one of three states)
November 1996	Inquiry from Danforth re: Vermont participation in new initiative
Nov.-Dec., 1996	Local Policymakers Initiative, a pilot state-community collaboration project, set up between Vermont and Danforth Foundation
1997 through 2000	• "Learning for Life" initiative begun and sustained • Extensive coverage of "Barre Danforth Group" in newspaper, community access TV
January, 1997	• High levels of child abuse, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse in Barre reported in *Community Profiles*, a data book published by Vermont Agency of Human Services • Formal inquiry from city re: *Barre Community Profile* • Meeting between Vermont and Danforth re: Barre as candidate for Danforth initiative
February, 1997	Community meeting where Barre opinion makers support participation in Policymakers' initiative
March, 1997	Planning meetings
April, 1997	Baseline data sets organized and sent to Danforth
May, 1997	Team-building meeting broadcast on cable access TV
July, 1997	• Intensive Summer Policymakers' Institute • Identification of Danforth Team at Community parade • Adoption of "Learning for Life" as theme of initiative
October, 1997	Resolution in favor of "Learning for Life" initiative at meeting of Danforth Steering Committee, Barre City Council, and Barre School District Board
1997	Three tracks: Community Values committee, Literacy committee, and Substance Abuse committee formed by steering committee

1998 through 2000	Grants and resources received in excess of $1.2 million, including $100,000 New Directions 3-year grant for prevention of substance abuse in April, 1998.
Spring - Summer, 1998	Special community events in support of literacy organized by literacy committee
Jan,. 1999 – Jan., 2000	• Meetings of "Community Values" focus groups composed of community stakeholders • Latest research findings on youth and substance abuse from state and private researchers heard by steering committee
June, 1999	Steering committee becoming public venue for groups seeking funds
Spring-Summer, 1999	• Literacy track: book exchange at Easter Egg Hunt; participation in literacty program by 300 children; continuation of reading series in park; 2nd annual writing contest • School report that shows encouraging school performance indicators
Fall, 1999	"School and Community Report" that shows educational indicators over time in context of larger community indicators
2000	Encouraging results on substance abuse shown in Vermont report, "Supervisory Union Stand-Outs by Regional Partnership, 1999"
April, 2000	"Summary of Barre Values" developed from meetings of focus groups
May, 2000	Seven fundamental community values identified
October, 2000	Progress report broadcast on public access TV

The following were key leaders in the Barre Danforth Learning for Life project:

- **Lyman Amsden** – long-time superintendent of the Barre Union School District, co-chaired the steering committee, convened meetings, ensured the support of school leadership, and showed important constancy of the work.
- **Dorothy Anderson** – director of Special Services, Barre Supervisory Union, was a regular attendee at steering meetings and brought school performance enhancement programs to the committees for review.
- **Jack Barnes** – coordinator of the Barre Danforth Group in the early years of the project.
- **David Batchelder** – co-principal of the Barre Elementary School. Was a faithful attendee at the steering committee meetings, and helped keep the committee current on related elementary school activities. He also facilitated a community meeting, which planned ways that the community can better deal with drug and alcohol problems.
- **Melissa Blouin** – ongoing host of the "Community Connections" Public Access TV series. She was the public face and moderator of the TV Access series.
- **Noreen Carpenter** – a member of the Universalist Church who came forward to lead the "Community Values" work.
- **Hal Cohen** – executive director of the Central Vermont Community Action Agency. Researched and reported to an early steering committee meeting an economic overview for the City of Barre and surrounding area. Also located a full service Head Start program in an abandoned neighborhood elementary school.
- **Tony Campos** – owner and operator of Video Visions of Barre, provided constant and effective creative energy to the myriad of public education programs on public access TV.
- **Craig Comstock** – area director of the Vermont Department of Social Welfare. Was a leader in the "Community Values" discussions across the Barre area over a two-year period.
- **Bob Costantino** – chair of the Barre New Directions grant development process. Area representative of the Vermont Department of Health as well as the regional representative of the Vermont Department of Health for alcohol and addictions. Bob was a key force in organizing the coalition, which successfully competed for a sizable regional "New Directions" grant, which was geared to engage the community in planning and implementing strategies to improve the levels of teen risk behavior.
- **Paul Costello** – executive director of the Central Vermont Adult Basic Education agency, provided continuous leadership on the steering committee and in planning and executing community events.
- **Mayor Paul Dupre** – co-chair of the Danforth steering committee who provided ongoing political support of the city.

- **Al Gasior** – director of the Barre Technical Center located at Spaulding High School. Provided access to the student vocational process resulting in the Community Access TV productions by students at the school. Also attended almost all of the steering committee meetings.
- **Tom Howard** – as executive director of the Washington County Youth Services Bureau, provided staff to coordinate New Directions Grant writing, and offered his organization as fiscal agent.
- **Mark Hull** – was Vermont Commissioner of Education when the effort began. Was an original member of the Steering Committee, and after "retirement" from state service, became the Director of Curriculum for the Barre School Union.
- **Doreen Huskes** – an active citizen of Barre, who constantly and constructively challenged the people in the process to keep moving.
- **Lee Lauber** – executive director of the Family Center of Washington County. Provided early administrative support to the project, and occasionally attended steering committee meeting to exchange key information. Also, co-located many important early childhood services in the rehabilitated Brook Street School along with the Head Start Program.
- **Steve Mackenzie** – co-chair of the steering committee since its inception. Chair of the School Board.
- **Donald Mandlekorn** – area director of the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. As a member of the steering committee, provided important support from the child welfare agency. He also did some of the early drafting of statements of goals, objectives and strategies for the project.
- **William McMeekin** – president of the Granite Bank, who attended early meetings of the steering committee to bring business perspective to the effort.
- **David Murphey** – a policy analyst with the Vermont Agency of Human Services, regularly provided data about Barre to the Danforth Committee.
- **Beverly Anderson Parsons & Sharon Brumbaugh** of InSites in Colorado. They documented much of the baseline information regarding process and objectives, which were then used as a basis for further evaluation activity. Their systematic record keeping was invaluable to the construction of this case study.
- **Representative Paul Poirier** – chair of the Health and Welfare Committee in the Vermont House of Representatives, and Alderman for the City of Barre. His concern about the initial public data served to engage the City Council in the early stages of the awareness of the problem.
- **Jo Romano** – provided early information about teen substance abuse problems, and the existing research base, in Barre to the New Directions Planning Coalition in June 1998.
- **Russell Smith** – Vermont Agency of Human Services. Provided production expertise and management of the 25 "Community Connections" public access TV programs.

- **Senator Jeb Spaulding** – senator from Washington County, which includes Barre City. Spaulding was a long-standing member of the national Danforth Advisory Committee, which recommended to the Danforth Foundation that Barre City would be an excellent choice for a local collaborative self-improvement effort.
- **William Sullivan** - principal of Spaulding High School who attended steering committee meetings and offered continuous support to the process.
- **Victor Swenson** – executive director of the Vermont Council on the Humanities who provided grant support
- **James Taffel** – principal of the Barre Elementary School who attended all steering committee meetings and offered constant encouragement and input to the process.
- **Rep. Oreste Valsangiacomo** – member of Vermont House of Representatives who gave early support to the Danforth Literacy effort.
- **Dr. Richard Wilgoren** – Barre City Council member who provided early encouragement and support for the literacy committee in its early planning stages.
- **Sherry Wong** – consultant from the University of Washington, the person from "away" in whom the people from Barre had great confidence, in helping define desired community values.

CITATIONS AND NOTES

1 Letter from Robert Koff to Cornelius Hogan, 11/26/96.

2 Memo from Bob Koff, Program Director, to Policymakers' Program Advisory Board, "Design Changes for 1997 PolicyMakers' Program," 11/20/96.

3 The development of local collaboratives in Vermont began in about 1992 and was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. One of the collaboratives was the Washington County Success by Six collaboratives. The Barre steering committee was, in effect, a collaborative within a collaborative, in that Barre is a community within Washington County.

4 Letter from Michael Welch, Barre City Manager to Cornelius Hogan, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Human Services re: Social Services Report – Barre City, 1/20/97.

5 Minutes of Danforth Planning Committee held at Spaulding High School, 2/5/97.

6 Memo from Cheryl Mitchell to Bob Koff, "Implementation Plans: Barre City Project," 3/26/1997.

7 "At Risk: Barre, Missouri Officials Seek Solutions to Similar Problems," 7/28/97 *Barre Times Argus*.

8 Community Profile, Barre City School District, January 1997.

9 Memo from Tom Moore, Deputy Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, 10/29/98.

10 E-mail from Barbara Gassner to Craig Comstock, April 10, 2000.

11 Sherry Wong a community developer from Seattle, Washington helped the Danforth Steering Committee engage Barre citizens by applying an action planning process that she had used successfully in other places.

12 Memo of 3/23/98 interpreting YRBS survey data, which showed alcohol use was starting at an ever-earlier age in Barre.

13 A Continuum of Systemic Change, based on "The State Education System – A Continuum of Systemic Change," Education Commission of the States.

The Madeline Initiative

A Focus on Service Delivery to Children and Families in Nashville/ Davidson County

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Foreword

The Madeline Initiative is the ninth community-level site funded by the Danforth Foundation's Policymakers' Program. It focuses on service delivery to children and families in the City of Nashville and Davidson County.

Participants agree that the Mayor of Nashville, Bill Purcell, has been enormously influential in bringing the Madeline Initiative to Nashville. Bill Purcell's first involvement with Danforth came through his position as a member of the Tennessee legislature. When he attended one of Danforth's Policymakers' Institutes, he learned about crafting policy that is driven by desired outcomes for children and families. Out of his commitment to children came legislation that reformed the educational system statewide. Among other provisions it offered funding for reduced class sizes and technology upgrades.

Despite Purcell's expectation that statewide policy would create beneficial changes in local school systems, he found a different story in his home district. When Purcell's daughter entered the school system in Nashville, Purcell discovered that Nashville's school system had not embraced the statewide reforms. Specifically, computers were still in the warehouse and large classes were the norm. After ten years as a legislator, Purcell concluded that public policy at the state level would not change lives until policymakers at the local level were part of the process. So Bill Purcell, who by now was the Chairperson of the Danforth Policymakers' Program Advisory Board, retired from the Tennessee legislature. He became the founder and director of the Danforth-funded Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University.

Two years later Purcell campaigned for Mayor of Nashville on a platform that urged the Metro area to get behind programs to improve the lives of children and families. After winning the election in 1999, he initiated a process of change for children and families. He first galvanized action through personal, comprehensive visits to every school in the district. Afterwards, he contracted with an outside firm for a performance audit of the school system.

When Nashville was chosen as the last of the Policymakers' sites and received a grant from the Danforth Foundation to improve service delivery to children and families in Davidson County, it needed a host agency. The Child and Family Policy Center, with Debbie Miller as Director and Sharon Carter as Project Coordinator, agreed to serve as catalyst and host agency for the program. The stage was set for a new entrant into the field of social reform in Nashville. It was named the "Madeline Initiative" in honor of the adventurous, resourceful heroine of Ludwig Bemelmans' beloved Madeline picture books.

This report describes a work in progress. The Madeline Initiative began in February 2000. At crucial junctions, Danforth planning and evaluation representatives, Beverly Parsons and Sharon Brumbaugh, worked with members of Madeline Initiative task force to clarify the evaluation issues and outcomes. After two years of thinking and discussing and planning, the participants in the Madeline Initiative can see strategies taking shape, initial plans in place, and key decisions made. Although they are only beginning, the good news is that they have begun. It is hoped that this report will serve as a reminder to those

who took part in the process of what they have accomplished, as a brief history to those joining the venture, and as an example for those planning a similar initiative of their own.

Robert H. Koff
Senior Vice President
The Danforth Foundation

Challenges Facing Nashville and Davidson County

"Local policymakers across the country understand that the long-term progress of their cities depend, in great part, upon the success of their city's children and families."

—Bill Purcell, Mayor of Nashville

Nashville and Davidson County present challenges of size and diversity in the context of government agencies accustomed to little collaboration on service delivery. A mid-size metropolitan city of approximately 500,000 and the largest city in the Policymakers' Program, the Nashville area is very diverse. Besides an African-American community comprising 30% of the population, the city has the largest Kurdish population in the country and sizeable Laotian and Vietnamese immigrant communities. In the last ten years, the number of Hispanics in the Metro area has increased 100%. Yet collaboration is a new concept, a "stranger in a strange land," in a city/county where a multiplicity of agencies handle the same issues and where turf protection is common. To calls for change the response has come, "But we have always done it this way." Thus, one challenge here has been to determine how policymakers can come together to begin new change initiatives in a complex political and social climate that has not asked for change.

With a new city administration came a window of opportunity. It gave the Madeline Initiative permission not only to examine Nashville's service delivery to children and families but also to compare Tennessee's service delivery to that of the rest of the nation. Research indicated that children's issues and concerns were out of line with many of the state's priorities. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Book 2000 listed Tennessee 43rd in the nation in the status and well-being of children. An alarming number of children were in the state's custody in Davidson County. Although the number of children coming into care had decreased by 21%, there had been a 44% increase in the total number of children in custody and a 27.5% decrease in the number of children leaving custody since 1995. Also, data indicated that children coming into care were staying in care longer. Statistics showed that the system was focusing more money and attention on children after they came into state custody than on efforts to keep them out of custody.

Much of these first years has been spent getting informed about the situation in Nashville and dealing with immediate problem situations. Taking action on these issues served as a way to both address real issues and build general understanding of the changes needed. These issues needed to be handled before the Nashville groups could get to the place where Barre started. In Barre, existing data allowed them to integrate data-driven decision making into the everyday thinking of community members and policymakers in state and local government. Nashville, a much larger community, illustrates the process of exploration and collaborative thinking that a big city and county may need to undertake before it can agree on desirable outcomes for children and families.

"Purcell started the ball rolling and we helped roll the ball."
—Debbie Miller, Director, Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University

Organization of Madeline Initiative

Participants

Over 150 community program directors and service provision staff participated in the Madeline Initiative. Key players in the change effort in Nashville have been the Mayor, the Metropolitan government, the Department of Children's Services, Metro Social Services, Caring for Children program, and the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University.

Structure

The Child and Family Policy Center

In its work, Nashville has benefited from the leadership and resources of the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University. The center focused on coordinating the initiative and keeping it moving forward. Of the center's role, Director Debbie Miller said, "Purcell started the ball rolling and we helped roll the ball." It served as a catalyst, an organizer, and a researcher for the participants in the Madeline Initiative.

Besides these functions, The Child and Family Policy Center took care of more mundane, but essential, administrative activities such as issuing invitations and arranging meetings. Its staff facilitated the discussion at those meetings. The center's participation was invaluable in another way: a dedicated focus on the well-being of children. According to Miller, "We get up every day thinking about ways to improve the well-being of children."

The Steering Committee

The Madeline Initiative under the direction of the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt began by forming a series of seven major committees staffed by over 150 key community leaders and workers. It was headed by a Steering Committee comprised of the Commissioner of the Department of Children's Services, the Finance Director for Nashville/Davidson County, the Juvenile Court Judge, the Vice Mayor for Nashville/Davidson County, the Director of the Metropolitan Health Department, the Director of the School System, and two representatives from the Metro Social Services Board. Members of this committee were selected for their leadership and for their capabilities to make changes and improvements. Each of the working committees reported to the Steering Committee and made recommendations for improvements and changes. The Steering Committee reviewed recommendations from working committees and presented recommendations to the Mayor and Metro Council.

These recommendations were not arrived at easily. The Nashville process emphasized consensus building. Often the Steering Committee sent recommendations from the working committees back to them for greater clarification and more data. By discussing differing viewpoints at committee meetings and gathering data to support recommendations, they tried to ensure that the recommendations submitted to council would have widespread support.

The Working Committees

For approximately the first fifteen months, the seven Working Committees were: Curriculum; Prevention; State Custody Children; Enhanced Options Schools (EOS); Early Childhood Capacity Building; Services to Families and Children in Davidson County; and Metro Issues and Service Delivery (later subdivided into Policy and Richland Village). The committee structure has been fluid. One committee disbanded when it saw its mission fulfilled; another couple joined existing agencies that were dealing with the same concerns.

Built into the initial plan was the concept of separate committees working on the same issues. Miller explained, "No way could you slice the pie so that each committee had a distinct set of issues." So by design they set up committees with overlapping issues and explained to members the need to do so. As it turned out, the overlap benefited members because they ended up sharing information and insights. Early on, this kind of coordination was identified as a major challenge. In a first-year report, at least five of the committees mentioned that they were working to overcome the lack of collaboration endemic in the existing system.

Beyond this lack of collaboration, there were other issues that attracted the attention of multiple committees. The Metro, State Custody, and Prevention Committees addressed custodial and non-custodial care for children. Among the concerns brought to the attention of these committees were: the adequacy of resources devoted to keeping children out of custody; the status of subsidies from Davidson County to Tennessee for children in custody as well as contracts between Metro Nashville and the state; and available options for using the local residential program (Richland Village) for non-custodial care. The Metro, State Custody, Prevention, and Curriculum Committees looked into service delivery to children and families, specifically the poor management by the Caring for Children program; gaps and overlaps in service delivery; and the inadequacy of resources and coordination. Both the Prevention and Early Childhood Capacity Building Committees decided to focus on children aged 0 – 5 years as the best long-term approach for addressing the well-being of all children in Davidson County.

Three of the committees also had areas of concentration not shared by the others. The Services Committee studied the localization of services under one department. The performance of the Department of Children's Service (DCS) was the bailiwick of the Curriculum Committee. Of particular concern were the high rates of staff turnover at the Department of Children's Services and the inadequate education and training of the department staff. The Enhanced Options Committee (EOS), in looking at education for the whole family, focused on the timeline and responsibilities imposed by a desegregation order; the need for infrastructure; barriers to success; and the need for support from communities and the school system.

Steering Committee Members:

- Commissioner of the Department of Children's Services
- Finance Director for Nashville/Davidson County
- Juvenile Court Judge
- Vice Mayor for Nashville/Davidson County
- Director of the Metropolitan Health Department
- Director of the School System
- Two representatives from the Metro Social Services Board

Investigations, Recommendations, and Results

Overview

In the first year of committee meetings, the Madeline Initiative started work on a number of fronts: (1) policy statement for Metro government to guide it in service delivery to children and families; (2) development of a grant proposal to Kellogg Foundation for coordination of the Enhanced Options Schools; (3) presentation of options for the use of the Richland Village facility where 32 children from Davidson County were receiving state custodial care. The options developed for Richland Village included leaving it as a residential program or changing its focus to serve non-custodial children and their families. As a result of the work of the Madeline Initiative, the Metro government retained a $3 million contract with the state by transferring the Caring for Children program to a different department. The Initiative also identified a lead university to head efforts to draw down federal Title IV-E funding and close gaps in service to children aged 0 – 5 years and to their families.

By the end of 2001, the dialogue between the Department of Children's Services and several statewide universities had resulted in a pilot project to reduce the high rate of turnover at the department through better training at the universities and better work incentives at the department. The Initiative then announced its recommendations that an Office of Children and Youth be established in the Mayor's office. This office would be positioned to carry on the work begun by the Madeline Initiative through Vanderbilt University. It would do so guided by the work of representatives of the various Madeline Initiative committees.

In late 2001, the representatives developed a tentative set of desired outcomes for children, indicators of progress towards those outcomes, and a list of stakeholders to involve in the process of achieving those outcomes. The tentative outcomes are:

- Children attend schools that are safe and conducive to learning.
- Children enter school ready to learn.
- Schools are ready for young children.
- Children are successful learners.
- Children live in stable, supported families.
- All children and families have access to high-quality health, mental health, social, and educational services in their communities.

According to Miller, the Madeline Initiative has achieved the result of "the real coming together around children and children's needs." Now they are ready to shift from a focus on building these relationships to leveraging the relationships to achieve specific outcomes for children and families in each of these areas.

Focus of Each Working Committee

The investigations, recommendations, and results of the working committees are discussed in more depth in the sections below.

Metro Issues and Service Delivery to Children Committee

The Metro Issues and Service Delivery to Children Committee centered its work around a review of the residential treatment program at Richland Village. The Metro government paid $1.4 million of the program's $2.2 budget; the state approximately $900,000. The committee was charged with the question, "Is this the best use of the money or could it be better spent in other ways?" It studied the current program and the needs of the community to determine the appropriateness, utilization, and flexibility of Richland.

The need for renovations at Richland was discussed. Richland Village began in l924 as a Municipal Children's Home. It remained in this capacity until it became the Metropolitan Children's Home in l963. In l970, it became a residential facility. If Richland Village were to continue to function as a residential treatment facility, a significant amount of money, in addition to the $1.4 million in Metro's budget, would have to be spent on renovations. But changing its status from a residential facility would move the Davidson County children to a placement out of the county and also remove state funding from Richland. Yet, it was thought that Metro's money could be used more wisely in efforts to prevent children from coming into custody in the first place. By the end of the first year (December 2000), the committee had presented several options for the use of the Richland facility, including a redesign of the residential program to serve non-custodial children and their families.

As the committee pursued its investigation of Richland, it dealt with concerns around the number of children coming into care, the resources needed in the community to keep children out of care, and overall service delivery and lack of collaboration among the service delivery agencies. Out of the committee's work came a recognition that the Metro area lacked a vision statement concerning children and services to children. So they formed a committee to draft one that would guide departments as they developed programming and let them know that children are truly valued by Metro government.

Metro Issues and Service Delivery to Children Committee

Issues of Concern:

- Number of children coming into custody
- Subsidies to the state for the care of children in custody
- Resources needed in the community to keep children out of care
- Service delivery to children and families
- Lack of collaboration

State Custody Children's Committee

In considering how the state and Metro governments provide services to local children and families, the State Custody Children's Committee explored the partnerships and collaborations between Metro and state government. They looked at the impact of these contracts on the budget to determine if the results were advantageous to families in Nashville. Much of the committee's work revolved around the number of children coming into custody and on ways to improve non-custodial efforts.

A major issue of concern was the contract between Metro government and the state; this contract provided services to children and families in the county

State Custody Children's Committee

Issues of Concern:

- Number of children coming into custody
- Contracts between Metro Nashville and the state
- Non-custodial efforts
- Service delivery to children and families
- Lack of collaboration

through the Davidson County Community Service Agency. This agency, one of four metro Community Service Agencies statewide funded through the State Department of Children's Services, employed a team of case managers and associated support staff to work with dependent, neglected, and delinquent children and their families in Davidson County. Some specific functions included child and family case management, family crisis intervention teams, residential case management, court liaison, and child protective services investigation.

The committee studied how the Community Service Agency was meeting both the State and Metro's expectations and how it was providing needed services to children and families in Davidson County. It found that the Community Services Agency was at risk of having its contract pulled by the State because of concerns about poor management and poor work product, in particular, the lack of accountability and the mismanagement of flexible funding dollars.

The flexible funding program was designed to use flexible dollars to enable children and families to remain together. Under this program, the case managers oversaw the development of individualized service plans for children at imminent risk of entering State's custody as well as for children in State's custody who can be successfully reunited with their families. The program also provided funding for direct assistance to individuals on behalf of children and families served by the Department of Children's Services. The concern was that flexible funding dollars appropriated in July of 1999 were exhausted by November 30th of that year. Also, 233 fewer children and families were served in the 1999/2000 budget year than in the 1998/1999 year. The Board had to add $65,000 to the flexible fund budget in March of 2000 to finish the year.

Other concerns as expressed by the Department of Children's Services were: lack of a quality work product; lack of quality supervision for the entire program; lack of accountability and coordination around child protective services cases; lack of training and information for Board members; and lack of coordination and communication with the Davidson County Juvenile Court.

The loss of the state contract would have resulted in Davidson County losing $3 million and the approximately 60 employees targeting Davidson County children and their families. As a result of the work of the Madeline Initiative, the Metro government identified another department to handle the Caring for Children program. With the program transferred to a different department, Metro government was able to retain the contract with the state.

Prevention Committee

The Prevention Committee's work revolved around the well-being of children in Davidson County ages 0 to 5, specifically, the importance of high-quality, affordable, and appropriate services for children in this age group and their families. Since no resource mapping within the communities in Davidson County had ever been done, no one knew for sure what resources existed within each community or the extent of the gaps or duplications in services. However, it was known that there were not enough quality, affordable day care

programs, Head Start programs, and early childhood education programs. With all the research underlining the importance of early learning and brain development of children, it was reasoned that this was a major gap in services.

Another concern was the lack of adequate Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) for all children in the custody of Department of Children's Services. Given the current research on early childhood brain development, the committee determined that gaps in service and missed opportunities for intervention with this population were costly mistakes that could contribute to the on-going cycle of poverty and lack of education. One key focus for the committee has been on measures that will ensure that children entering school will be successful in learning and that the schools will be ready for these children.

Prevention and Early Childhood Capacity Committees

Issues of Concern:

- Well-being of all children, 0-5 years of age, in Davidson County
- Lack of resources
- Gaps in existing service delivery
- Lack of collaboration

Early Childhood Capacity Committee

The Early Childhood Capacity Committee was formed to further the work done by the Prevention Committee and come up with clear recommendations that would positively impact these populations. Among its recommendations in December 2000 was the development of needs assessments for child care, Head Start, and Early Head Start in Davidson County.

Enhanced Options Schools Committee

To ensure early and sustained success in school, the Enhanced Options Schools Committee's primary goal was to assist in creating the most effective elementary program for high-risk students. In response to the court-ordered desegregation of schools in Nashville/Davidson County, a school improvement plan had been developed. Enhanced Options Schools, one of the components of that plan, offered at-risk children the option of attending a community school equipped with enhanced options, including opportunities for education for the total family. These Enhanced Options Schools were placed in areas where there were high populations of at-risk children. By setting up one place where services were provided within the community, the program intended to help families learn how to better help their children. Some of the services to be included would be school-based health care, mental health counseling, physical education, community-based programs, and tutoring.

One of the pitfalls with these programs was the burden it placed on the school system and its already overworked principals and staff to take on the tasks of establishing, coordinating, operating, and collaborating an extensive program without the help of additional personnel. The Enhanced Options School Committee was formed to alleviate some of this burden, to establish an infrastructure for Enhanced Options Schools replication, and to make recommendations for the success of these Enhanced Options Schools. By October 2000, the committee's aim was to implement full-service community schools so that "vulnerable children and their families [could] grow and thrive together."

This committee work was the first time community service providers had come together with the Enhanced Options Schools, the school administration,

Enhanced Options School Committee

Issues of Concern:

- Desegregation order timeline and responsibilities
- Understanding goals and structure
- Need for an infrastructure
- Buy-in and support from community and school system
- Barriers to success
- Lack of collaboration

Curriculum Committee

Issues of Concern:

- Turnover in staff at Department of Children's Service
- Interruption of service delivery to children and families
- Uniform preparedness for college graduates
- Commitment to service delivery
- Lack of collaboration

Vanderbilt University, and the Vanderbilt nursing program to impact this issue. The committee later merged with other agencies engaged with these issues. A grant proposal to the Kellogg Foundation for coordination of the Enhanced Options Schools is under preparation.

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee was established in conjunction with the Department of Children's Services around issues expressed by the Department of Children's Services. Specifically, the department was experiencing high turnover because new case managers came to the department from a variety of academic disciplines and with little or no experience working with children and families. Although the new hires thought they knew what the job entailed, they found the work too demanding and the pay too low. Because turnover directly impacted children and families, the question posed was, "How can the department involve universities across the State of Tennessee in providing course work/internships that would enable students who thought they were interested in working with the department to come to the department with advanced skills that would qualify them for increased salaries and improve the department's retention rate?"

To increase staff competence and retention at the Department of Children's Services, the Madeline Initiative mediated a dialogue between the department and statewide universities. It brought together representatives from the Department of Children's Services with the chairs and faculty members from various universities around the middle Tennessee area. Among the topics discussed were the exact academic requirements and skill levels needed by caseworkers at the department. The Department of Children's Services and several statewide universities signed a contract for the universities to provide training for existing casework staff. Approximately 1720 employees statewide have received training. New employees who have completed appropriate academic course work and field placements with the Department of Children's Services will be hired as Case Managers II with an increase in salary of about $4,000.

Services to Families and Children in Davidson County Committee

The Services to Families and Children in Davidson County Committee was formed around expressed concerns that services to children and their families were fragmented. With services placed under various departments in Metro government, most people were unaware of specifics about the available services, allocations of money, or the departments where service took place. There were gaps in service delivery as well as duplication of services. Some thought that money and services could be more effectively used if they were localized under one department. This committee was charged with exploring the question, "Would a specific department under Metro government dealing with children and families be advantageous and warranted?"

At the end of 2001, the Madeline Initiative held a press conference to recommend that an Office of Children and Youth be established in the Mayor's office. Under the proposal, the coordination work would be administered out of this office, allowing for a consolidation of money, data, and service. Not only would this address one of the top concerns of the committees, but also it would signify that children and youth are a priority in the eyes of Metro government. As Debbie Miller, Director of Child and Family Policy Center, remarked, "Timing is everything in politics." So they targeted the announcement of the proposal for December, which would allow it to go through the budgetary process in the spring and be presented for approval to Council the following summer. Their approach worked. The office is now a reality. In summer 2002, city council funded it. A director has been appointed.

Services to Families and Children in Davidson County Committee

Issues of Concern:

- Fragmented services to children and their families
- Localization of money and services under one department
- Lack of coordination and collaboration in service delivery

"It takes eighteen months to two years just to plow the ground and plant the seeds."
—Debbie Miller, Director, Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University

Miller describes the process to date as one that has consumed their lives. She says that too often people underestimate the time it takes to implement projects of this magnitude. "It takes eighteen months to two years just to plow the ground and plant the seeds." In the first six months, according to Miller, participants are getting to know each other, readying themselves for serious discussions. Another six months will pass before any recommendations are on the table. With this time frame in mind, the committees in the Madeline Initiative are on schedule.

To continue the work and get grassroots participation, they are looking at ways to increase the diversity of representation on the working committees. In conjunction with that, they want to get neighborhoods to participate in developing action plans. Although they have tried to encourage both, Miller acknowledges that there is still much room for improvement.

Besides these, Nashville, like many other communities, must deal with the issues of data sharing and confidentiality. There has been an "overwhelming call for a useable database," according to Miller. As envisioned, such a database would handle data sharing among many agencies dealing with the same client population. A number of issues need to be addressed in setting up this database. First they must determine what data are to be shared (e.g., assessment, intake, progress notes). They also must resolve the issues around data sharing, including confidentiality, leadership, training, and common hardware and software platforms.

Work-in-Progress Benefits

When the Madeline Initiative began, a systematic intensive collaborative effort in keeping children out of care did not exist in Davidson County. In the past, the decentralized structure of Metro government in Nashville had fostered independent spheres of influence and a culture of uncoordinated programs. The election of Mayor Purcell opened a window of opportunity to examine the way services were delivered to children and families in Nashville and Davidson County. Prior to Mayor Purcell's tenure, the mentality in Metro Government displayed a significant resistance to change of any type. The Purcell administration encouraged all of metropolitan government to look at the way business was being done and determine if there might be a better and more effective way.

"While federal, state and private collaboration is essential, it ultimately takes the commitment of local governments to families and children in their neighborhoods to create and sustain real improvement."

—Bill Purcell, Mayor of Nashville

As Mayor Purcell recently stated, "After decades of attention from the national and state level, children are increasingly an essential concern of local governments. This is because local policymakers across the country understand that the long-term progress of their cities depend, in great part, upon the success of their city's children and families. Cities are also on the leading edge because of a recognition that, while federal, state and private collaboration is essential, it ultimately takes the commitment of local governments to families and children in their neighborhoods to create and sustain real improvement."

The Madeline Initiative embarked on the first effort in Nashville to use collaboration for strategic planning in the delivery of services to children and families. Prior to Madeline, little thought had been given to high-quality, seamless, community-accessible service delivery. Now word has been getting around that collaboration is expected.

By locating the administrative arm of the Madeline Initiative at Vanderbilt University, the initiative gained credibility because the Initiative was seen as a neutral party with the potential of being "a very effective catalyst," according to Diane Neighbors, Vanderbilt Child Care. Neighbors said, "Having an outside entity provide strong leadership gave the initiative credibility, objectivity, and energy." Its independence from entrenched political and bureaucratic interests encouraged department heads to participate in committee meetings.

By bringing together representatives from different agencies for discussion of common issues, the Madeline Initiative laid the foundation for a spirit of cooperation. Diane Neighbors observed that the "cross-pollination" that occurred in the committee was "one of the most exciting" elements in the committee' s dialogue. It fostered a big-picture perspective that helped participants think about ways to integrate community services to support families and vulnerable children. The mutually beneficial dialogs between colleges, universities, and the Department of Children's Services began a process that participants hope will end the cycle of inadequate training and high turnover at the department. Also, committee work brought to light common issues of concern, e.g., the lack of inter-agency collaboration. The new Office of Children and Youth which the Madeline Initiative helped to set up is a coordinating office in

the Metro government with primary responsibility and commitment to the welfare of young people driven by agreed-on outcomes for children and families.

Miller and others have compared the Madeline Initiative to the citywide effort to build a stadium and to bring professional hockey and football teams to Nashville. While the professional teams have been "wonderful for revenue," Miller called the work of the Madeline Initiative, "a revolution. In eighteen years here I have never seen so much focus on children."