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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who supported me through years of field work, interview transcription, data analysis, and writing. My husband, Kevin and sons Caulen and Aedan have loved me through it all.

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Abstract

The challenges of engaging families in poverty have been documented and strategies for addressing the unique needs of communities of poverty have been put forward (Hands & Hubbard, 2011; Hiatt-Michael & Hands, 2010; Raffo et al., 2010; Rehman, 2011). The purpose of this study is to examine participation to reveal the nature of community engagement and identify who participates in these activities. This critical ethnographic inquiry engages an ethic of care and a place-based theoretical lens to explore authentic participation within a single urban school; the elementary school employs the equity strategy of community schooling to support conditions for learning (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011; Gruenewald, 2003; Noddings, 1989, 1992). An archive of school and community data consisting of experiences, enquiries, and document examination support three ends-in-view for community engagement: community service, student enrichment, and community development (Wolcott, 2008; Anderson, 1998). Exploration of these ends-in-view reveals who participates and to what end members of the community are involved in decision-making and action to address relevant social issues in this central city context. Findings indicate hegemonic practices which perpetuate poverty circumstance are inherent within the community engagement activities experienced and described (Fine, 1994; Raffo et al., 2010). Closer examination of participation in decision-making and action within the community reveal few opportunities for community members to be embedded in or lead decision-making processes to address relevant social issues of place. Finally, authentic

participation is reframed from a place-based perspective of care and warrants employment of socially just practices which grow leadership from within the community as advocates for the community and to address marginalization and exploitation within this urban place (Baptist & Theoharis, 2011).

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Refinery smokestacks, railroad tracks, and miles of highway interchanges are prominent features in the local environment of many children living and learning in urban communities in the United States. A hundred of years of "progress" have created a legacy of environmental degradation, alienation, and loud, hurried existences. Local, community-building practices of the past in many of today's urban communities included a focus on cooperation, appreciation of the interdependent nature of our lives, and awareness of the unique gifts of the local environment. With increased focus on innovation and competition in a global economy, many of these community practices have faded from view and their value dismissed.

Thus, as our country has changed and the needs of its citizenry have changed, compulsory public education has changed little. American education remains an artifact of industrialization that aims to produce effective, obedient factory workers (Gruenewald, 2003). Yet even blue collar employment opportunities seem to be at a premium for many living in urban communities. Educational authorities today stress our 21st Century context and charge that we acquire skills that promote imaginative thinking and problem-solving in order to become top-income earning innovators and entrepreneurs in a global economy (Escobar, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Yet this is not a reality for low-income urban communities. Children and families living in poverty and served by urban schools struggle to access an empowering education and compete with their more resourced peers (Gorski, 2013).

Without the advantages of white privilege neighboring wealthy school community members enjoy, urban school children are working against the odds to develop the competitive edge they will need to be successful (Delpit, 1988; Schutz, 2006; Yosso, 2005).

Today a free public education considered to be important for the success of the country and marketed as a pathway to a better life, conspires to promulgate disconnection from local community, as schooling forwards global economic perspectives. However, the promise of a place for all at the top is not our global reality (Gruenewald, 2003). Advantaged, financially comfortable families, schools, and communities understand that an academic experience offered far from the realities of urban decay might nurture a broader, economically empowering academic experience for their children (Delpit, 1988; Yosso, 2005).

By restricting levels of educational attainment possible for poor and minority students (Jones & Schneider, 2009) and privileging those with money and power by making it a bit easier for their children to move up (Mickelson, 2009), schools reliably reproduce the status quo (Gorski, 2013). Through structures and practices that reinforce social stratification, such as academic curricular tracking, students experience limits in their competitiveness and future opportunities for learning (Jones and Schneider, 2009).

Thus, we understand that unequal access to resources and opportunities hinders academic and life success for poor and minority students (Gorski, 2013; Raffo et al., 2010; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Yet reform initiatives employed to address inequities tend to view those in disadvantaged circumstance from deficit position, while the values

and perspective of school employees are privileged over the families they serve (Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011; Gorski, 2013).

Initiatives are declared success when test scores and attendance rates rise. Yet these measures only gage the degree to which the community has adopted white, middle-class values that are transmitted through formal schooling and drive views of success as one's ability to compete in a global economy (Delpit, 1988; Gruenewald, 2003; Yosso, 2005). They are numerical artifacts indicating the degree of objectification and reduction of individuals' educational experiences and ignore situated, personalized lives of learning (Delpit, 1988; Yosso, 2005). The experiences of children and families served by "reformed" schools might offer new insights if invited to dialogue, as they experience both the intended and hidden effects of these efforts. Engaging children, their families, and other community members to provide a more complete picture of reform efforts and their impacts necessitates a more intimate examination of a particular school and community setting than is possible by quantitative means.

Community Schools

One equity strategy that shows promise and warrants closer examination is the community or full-service school, a recent approach to addressing the inequities that have historically been reinforced in public education. Several models exist, yet aims are similar and include support for academic and life success for students who have traditionally fallen behind (Coalition of Community Schools, 2010). Community schools' programs strive to create networks of collaboration and develop a "web of support that nurtures the development of children and adults" (Community Service Council, 2010). Through these community networks, schools engage diverse

stakeholders to examine data within their own community and develop targeted interventions to support school children and their families (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010). Successful interventions identify key areas of need in the school and community and make a variety of coordinated resources available to its members (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010). By developing and mobilizing a network of community partners to provide an array of intervention possibilities to public school children in typically low-income schools, the community schools model has been documented to support students to improve academic achievement on standardized tests, attend school regularly, and graduate at higher rates than students in comparable schools not paired with community partners (Adams, 2010; Coalition of Community Schools, 2010).

However, because community schools have typically defined success by examining quantitative performance indicators and focusing on matriculation rates, attendance statistics, and test scores, we lack a deeper understanding of the culture that makes these achievements possible. Existing narratives regarding the lives of students in community schools provide snapshots of context surrounding individuals' experiences in contact with a particular program but tell little about ongoing school and community relationships and the unique characteristics of the community served by the school. Exploration of the larger context of community schooling, including critical examination of equity strategies employed and how these strategies are viewed by the community, would provide deeper insights valuable for understanding the effectiveness of this practice. Further narratives of students and their families engaging critical consciousness to make lasting changes for themselves and their community through the process of decolonization and reinhabitation of the place that is their community may

lead to sustainability of equity strategies and social justice practice that empowers the community to take the reins as invested participants in the community school.

Purpose and Research Question

By asking the following research question my purpose is to explore and elucidate community culture to discover and describe connections between narratives of place and participation in equity strategies to improve the lives of children and families living in poverty. This exploration is an opportunity to examine current levels of engagement in activities that empower members to claim the practices and processes influencing their community.

What is the nature and who are the participants of community engagement in an urban elementary community school?

Chapter 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Community Engagement in Public Schools

Current research regarding community engagement suggests it is a difficult task to involve parents and families in deep and meaningful ways to support students' personal and academic success. As school leaders continue to employ traditional modes of engagement in their school community, legislation demands more extensive contact with all families coupled with the creation of high-quality educational programs to meet the diverse needs of students and close achievement gaps with limited resources and dwindling budgets (Hands & Hubbard, 2011). Seeking deeper and more comprehensive involvement by parents has produced favorable results for student achievement (Walker, 2006). Strong home-school ties were one of five supports for a quality education in a study of 100 successful and 100 problematic elementary schools (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). Reaching out to parents to develop school-community partnerships to promote student success presupposes knowledge to be socially constructed necessitating families and schools working together to impact education (Hiatt-Michael & Hands, 2010). Nurturing relationships between home and school has been challenging, even with their common mission acknowledged (Hiatt-Michael & Hands, 2010).

Federal initiatives, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTT), implemented to increase accountability in pursuit of rigorous academic curricula and improved academic performance, have created new pressures to involve families as important stakeholders in public education. Section 1118 of NCLB recognizes that increasing parental involvement "requires multilevel leadership" to author and

implement policies that will "reach all families" and develop community resources in order to help every child achieve (Epstein, 2005, p. 180; No Child Left Behind, 2005). Yet current practices aligned with this imperative have failed to achieve the standard of reaching all families in more than a minimal way. Epstein (2005) suggests that current requirements for engaging parents places the onus on educators to employ equitable practices to bring parents into the school and imagine new ways of partnering with the community. In order to meet this challenge, NCLB charges districts with providing "professional development to build educators' and parents' capacities to understand partnerships and help schools develop goal-oriented partnership programs" (Epstein, 2005, p. 179; No Child Left Behind, 2005). Additionally, the legislation stipulates that schools receiving Title I funds must develop and implement a program that involves all parents to support student academic success (Epstein, 2005). In addition to keeping parents informed about individual student's performance, educators must also furnish comparison data for children based on their progress in school and let parents know about options if the school is categorized as "failing" (Epstein, 2005). Finally, all families must be included in high-quality parental involvement programs that make parents feel welcomed and valued by educators in order to sustain involvement throughout the child's school career (Epstein, 2005, p. 180).

Race to the Top (RTT) continues this charge for increased involvement of the community in schools as a means to support and continue innovative educational reform efforts in place (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Through the promotion of collaborative partnerships with business and other community stakeholders, RTT charges educators to leverage these associations to close achievement gaps (U.S.

Department of Education, 2010). However, it appears that the federal government is ready and anxious to pursue private treaties with charter school entities if partnership measures fail to produce innovation and results, adding additional pressure to public school districts (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Perspectives on Community Engagement

Community engagement may be a central concern for urban communities in this age of accountability, but enacting initiatives to improve and increase involvement has proven difficult. Schutz (2006) provides insights into the challenge of getting parents to come to school. A review of literature from 1993-2003 mapping the depth and effectiveness of community engagement strategies and practices brings to light competing agendas. Two perspectives on community engagement emerge, one from the view of the school and its mission to prepare America's youth and the other from the vantage of the community members served by the school. The fissure resulting from their separate agendas is well characterized by Zimet (1973).

> There is an underlying difference in philosophy between the efforts of the professional staff and those of the United Bronx Parents. The efforts of the professional staff are directed toward inducing the community to improve its understanding of the school system and to adjust to it. United Bronx parents, on the other hand, places its emphasis on the failure of the system, and demands that the system understand and adjust to the needs of the community. Until this basic conflict is resolved, progress in the direction of integrating school and community is likely to continue to be slow. (p. 141)

Similarly, Lawerence-Lightfoot (1978) suggests conflict in home-school relations exists due to competing priorities of parents and educators and the resulting power struggle produced. From the perspective of the school, certain types of community engagements are considered helpful to the school agenda. Parental involvement that supports the agendas, operations, and current functions of the school and seeks opportunities for

stakeholders to participate in ways that can be managed or controlled by school administrators are viewed favorably. This preference for minimally invasive forms of involvement suggests leader preparation is not supporting leaders to become "willed and skilled in pursuing a vision for parent engagement" that can meet the needs of the community (Auerbach, 2010, p. 701).

Each perspective subscribes to a definition of parental involvement aligned with a particular vantage point. From a school personnel perspective, parental involvement is directly tied to the academic performance of students, with parents playing an instrumental role in the child's academic life by ensuring he/she attends, completes homework, and follows procedures (Hiatt-Michael & Hands, 2010, p. 2). Researchers Epstein and Comer have contributed much to parental involvement literature and are good examples of a school-based view of community involvement that privileges the school's agenda over the needs of the community. Parents who are advocates of the school's agenda are viewed as helpful, while parents who are not actively supporting the school and teachers' efforts are considered disengaged.

Parental involvement can extend to other family members and even neighbors "who contribute in meaningful ways to a child's education"; in some cases, however, this broader definition is still tied to academic performance related to a curriculum under full control of the school and its staff (Hiatt-Michael & Hands, 2010, p. 3). Hiatt-Michael and Hand (2010) use parental involvement and community engagement interchangeably as they describe involvement occurring under the assumption that "knowledge is socially constructed and the school and home are co-constructors of a child's knowledge" with school-home partnerships having the "capacity to impact

student learning and reduce the achievement gap" (p. 4). From a community perspective, parent and family involvement can include an entire student body, school staff, and the larger community engaged in mutually beneficial relationships (Anderson, 1998; Morris, 2004; Schutz, 2006). Rather than using involvement and engagement interchangeably, theorists from the community vantage envision engagement as a more active and powerful form of participation (Auerbach, 2010; Theoharis, 2009).

Schultz (2006) calls for more research on "truly community-based full-service schools." By challenging schools to provide more extensive outreach to families to navigate socioeconomic obstacles that impact their students' learning, this type of community-based school supports the family to do more than just survive (p. 728). The schools could provide community members with access to resources that could assist them to secure home loans, "negotiate city bureaucracy," "acquire health care," job and career training, and the like (p. 728). Pairing school resources and connections with community development efforts such as "community gardens and low-income housing renovation," the school becomes a centerpiece of the larger community and extends opportunities for the benefit of the neighborhood rather than limiting access to the school and its resources (Schutz, 2006, p. 728).

Far from a school-centered perspective on engagement, which views parents as allies to manage existing efforts and implement reform initiatives often authored far from the community served by them, a community perspective aims to address "issues of community in education" that have historically been absent from curricular conversations (Schutz, 2006, p. 729). Community perspectives demand the implementing of initiatives resulting in "concrete changes" that "integrate community

issues into the larger education curriculum" in order for the larger school community to see them as real (Schutz, 2006, p. 729). Leadership preparation must also begin engaging "more radical perspectives on school-community connections" and come to realize that it is the empowerment of the community that is the foundation of the educational enterprise of public schooling (Schutz, 2006, p. 729).

Participation

Education research on shared leadership is rife with language of participation, empowerment, and voice, but the "discourse of participation has become hegemonic" (Anderson, 1998, p. 572). As the gatekeepers of the school, educators hold the keys to participation, and although the voices of those directly impacted by decisions in the school community should provide substantial input in decision-making, case study data suggest otherwise. Instead shared leadership structures do not necessarily induce significant participation in decision-making (Malen & Ogawa, 1988) but rather create alliances of convenience (Hargreaves, 1994), buttress privileged positions (Lipman, 1997), and tighten the reins of control (Anderson & Grinberg, 1998; Barker, 1993). Other critiques characterize shared governance structures as time-wasting and inefficient (Beare, 1993) and suggest participation increases teacher workload (Anderson, 1998).

When administrators use shared governance as one-way communication to establish buy-in and develop shared vision, stakeholders characterize participation as contrived and serving the needs of the institution rather than the needs of the individual (Anderson, 1998). This public relations approach to parental involvement is anchored in history and continues to inform the school-based perspectives on engagement. Rather

than continuing to function as advisory councils who bring legitimacy to the school leaders' agenda without questioning this role, current modes for engaging stakeholders must be challenged in order for community-motivated reform efforts to gain momentum (Schutz, 2006). Thus, community organizing is central to the educational venture with all members participating and realizing the benefits of being actors in a truly relevant, holistic education with the potential to change current and future circumstances.

Authentic Participation

Authentic participation is aligned with one's personal and collective motivations; it is internal rather than external and provides opportunity to engage in decision-making and action that addresses social issues and conditions that are relevant and personally important. Authentic participation is inherently connected to a transparent "end-in-view," democratic discourse, and coherence between espoused theories and theories in use (Anderson, 1998, p. 588; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Dewey, 1927). Therefore, exclusion or select invitation of participants communicates a particular "end-in-view" is sought (Anderson, 1998; Dewey, 1927). Providing opportunities for authentic participation offers promise, as research in this area is limited but indicates low-income and minority parents are more likely to be involved in their child's education when school invites their participation, provides multiple entry points for involvement, values their perspective, and reaches out in culturally appropriate ways (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Epstein, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Mapp, 2003; Tillman, 2002).

In addition to providing a welcoming climate, support for authentic participation must allow "broad jurisdiction, policymaking authority, equal representation of relevant

stakeholders, and training provisions" (Anderson, 1998, p. 590). Even with these provisions, authentic participation is difficult to realize, as relationships of power may discourage participants from challenging a member who is perceived to have more cultural capital or control. Authentic participation demands that members challenge broader social and cultural issues that threaten to undermine peer-collaboration efforts to address difficult and uncomfortable circumstances (Anderson, 1998). Additionally, distributive leadership structures that appear to create opportunities for shared decision-making more often reproduce the status quo and act to hide the source of power hierarchies in a decentralized education system. In reality, site-management teams have little latitude to decide and act on larger social issues. Also, members asked to participate frequently share values systems with educators and administrators and seldom represent the broader community in number or worldview (Anderson, 1998).

For instance, Malen and Ogawa (1988) found favorable school-shared governance practices in place in Salt Lake City. Stakeholders were trained and had latitude to affect policy without threat of retaliation by those in power positions; these provisions should have resulted in significant influence on social issues. Yet, due to their composition, site councils served as "ancillary advisors," highly influenced by the principal's agenda; therefore, parents' and teachers' participation in decision-making acted to maintain traditional school practice (Malen and Ogawa, 1988, 256).

Schultz (2006) provides a rational for supporting authentic participation by the community based on his literature review and asserts the nature of interactions between members of the school and broader community change as current efforts have failed. This new approach to school-community engagement must also acknowledge the

current successes of strategies for poor urban students and families of color "to achieve empowerment on a broad scale through collective action" (p. 729-730). School-community partnerships that have made community engagement central to their practice and support authentic participation build relationships and take a relational approach to power. Through authentic collaboration, members create power for social and political action and change that impacts the daily lives of students, families, and community members (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009).

In a comparative case study conducted by Warren, Hong, Rubin, and Uy (2009), community-based organizing created openings in the school for partnering that developed "intermediaries," community members who took on leadership or mentoring roles in the partnership. These community intermediaries created conditions that supported authentic collaboration by utilizing two types of social capital. Members of a group develop and share bonding social capital that resides in the relationships and interactions between members and supports collective action based on the shared goals of this group. This form of social capital also supports the development of higher relational trust that can transcend discomfort when pairs from the core group engage in interactions outside of the group. Bridging social capital is developed when knowledge and skills gained in partnership with the school grows your own social capital that you share with your group, thus providing power for your group as you serve as a bridge (Driscoll, 2001; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012; Warren et al., 2009). Thus, intermediaries in the school provide bridging social capital through relationships that extend beyond the local community and provide opportunity to connect local community groups to schools, these intermediaries are also instrumental in "building a

climate of belonging" (Theoharis, 2009, p. 154) Climate sets the tone for respect for diversity of race, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, and values through "ongoing commitment relationships" (Theoharis, 2009, p. 154).

Similarly, Auerbach's (2010) case study of principals with varying community engagement practices and beliefs revealed that principals who see their role as servant to the community and consider involvement and knowledge of parents and families inherently valuable, "co-construct[ing] the school" with their community (p. 740). One principal in particular sought to connect "disenfranchised parents with one another and the broader community to reduce isolation and raise political awareness" through parent-leadership training with a community partner (Auerbach, 2010, p. 747). Integrating the community's "funds of knowledge" through culturally relevant pedagogical practices further extends the climate of belonging and engages students in a celebration of culture and diversity (Theoharis, 2009, p. 154).

An ethnographic study of two urban school communities further supports success for interdependence of school and community to meet the needs of families and children. Morris (2004) examined two elementary schools, one located in St. Louis, the other in Atlanta. Selected for "manifesting agency in spite of persistent racial inequalities and poverty," he sought examples of collective agency (p. 69). An extensive historical description of the context of each school, community participation in education, and the role of faculty and administration in promoting community engagement revealed changes over time in the community and school due to desegregation.

As fewer teachers continued to make their homes in the community and teachers of color retired and were not replaced, more pressure was placed upon principals and veteran teachers to maintain a climate of belonging. Daily celebration of the unique cultural capital of the African American community served by the schools continued, and focus remained on building long-term relationships of trust between teachers and parents even as community composition changed. Community-based organizing, coupled with the schools' efforts to promote engagement in the best interest of children, encouraged authentic participation by families and a view of school personnel as vested members of the community, even as few were living in the neighborhood. Morris (2004) attributes the deep, high-quality nature of community engagement to collective agency that community members have developed over generations of positively perceived engagement with the school.

Recent research extends previous understanding of the impact of community-based organizing to provide tangible benefits through the development of bonding and bridging social capital. Lawson and Alameda-Lawson (2012) conducted an ethnographic-embedded case study of a parent engagement program in a low-income, largely Hispanic community. The parent engagement program was designed to support parents to access resources for their families through a parents-helping-parents design. A parent training program that transforms each parent into facilitator of services for a growing membership supported the development of bonding social capital within the group. Bridging social capital was also developed and utilized as adults branched out to access resources for the group in the larger community and make resources available to all members. Within the program parents facilitated activities for their peers, including

a talent-sharing exchange to meet individual family needs while also valuing the gifts all members have to share.

Through participation in the program, parents were able to identify and overcome barriers to securing the "health, well-being, and development of their children and families" including "fear" and "social isolation and sense of powerlessness" in their interactions with the school and other social institutions (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012, p. 675). Three important benefits of participation in the program included improved "psychological senses of community" for parents (Cantillon, 2006; McMillan & Chavis, 1986), social capital, and "collective efficacy" (Sampson, 2003). With regard to parents' psychological senses of community, participation in the program acted to enhance their feelings of connection, belonging, and influence within the community, as individual talents and ideas were valued and incorporated into services provided through the "parent-to-parent helping structure" (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012, p. 676).

Social capital was enhanced through interactions within the program as bonding capital supported the development of trust and mutual regard, and bridging capital was developed throughout the membership as parents moved from mentee to mentor and their talents were accessed and shared (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). Finally, collective efficacy was developed in a setting that served as an intermediary between the social institution of school and the home (Sampson, 2003; Sarason, 1972). The parent engagement program met in a church-owned building across the street from the school, a setting that allowed "parents to merge their own funds of knowledge with the formal institutional process and scripts of schools, social service agencies, and other

helping institutions at their own pace and time" (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012, p. 678-679).

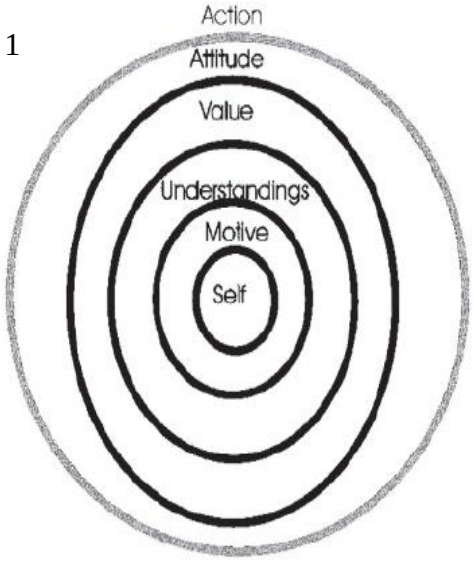
Implications for School Leaders in Support of Authentic Participation

In the face of increased urgency to engage families and community members to support and enhance the education of children living in urban communities of poverty, school leaders struggle to engage community members. Auerbach (2010) suggests educational leaders are being provided few tools for supporting authentic participation by community members, given most leaders report utilizing traditional methods of involving parents. Authentic and transformational leadership scholarship offers insights useful for developing a framework for supporting authentic participation as a school leader.

Begley (2003) proposes that authentic leadership requires that the leader be conscious of his or her personal values and the influence exerted in making professional decisions; often these decisions require a dialogue between personal and professional values and benefit from the contribution of multiple perspectives (Begley, 2003; Branson, 2010). Begley (2003) reminds us that leaders "act as agents for the values of their society" and must be self-reflective in their employment (p. 3). This process is represented in Figure 1 below and requires the leader be aware that actions and speech are the only outward evidence of a person's underlying values, preferences, and motives. Actions and speech can be incongruent with underlying components. For the individual, interactions between the self and others through family groups, professional affiliation, work life, community engagement, culture, and the spiritual dimension shape values. These activities may also bring value systems into conflict or result in

deconstruction and evaluation of one's intentions and motives. This process of continual examination is an opportunity to grow and develop one's belief system. Reflection also fortifies individual moral purpose to meet current and future challenges from other levels of interaction to remain intact or be reconstructed under the individual's control. When the moral purpose of the self and other levels of interaction are congruent, values are reinforced and cooperative work to realize purpose is satisfying for members involved. When purposes are at odds, the individual's preferences or underlying motivations may win rather than the common good of the organization if opportunities to examine this dynamic are absent.

Figure 1



Begley, 2003, p. 5

As leaders inviting community members to authentic participation, close and constant examination of motives and intention of engagement are necessary. Begley (2003) suggests this process occurs through personal reflection; however, a community-based perspective as suggested by Morris (2004), Warren et al. (2009), and Schutz (2006) would include a collective effort to orient intention and action when addressing

the social and political issues facing the broader school community. The benefit of multiple perspectives in this reflection process offers the opportunity to challenge the status quo and hierarchies of privilege that mute the stakeholders who stand to lose the most by losing their voice (Anderson, 1998; Delpit, 1988; Schutz, 2006).

Starratt (2003) supports engagement of the wider community as he suggests the first step toward realizing moral purpose for a school community is to develop a shared school-wide vision. While Strike (2003) refers to this process as developing a shared educational project that when successful:

> …has a vision of the education it wishes to provide which is known to, and agreed upon by the members of the community. This vision is rooted in a common vision of human flourishing, and it involves aims that require cooperation in order to secure. This shared educational project is the basis of the community's self-understanding, and is the basis for articulating roles within the community. It grounds the community's educational practices, rituals, and traditions, grounds the community's governance practices, and is the basis of the community's ability to achieve the goods of community such as belonging, loyalty, mutual identification, and trust. (p. 75)

Therefore, the values that support the purpose of the school are gained through "shared and cooperative practices" honored by the school community (Strike, 2003, p. 73-74). Thus, shared values are rooted in shared vision that incorporates the personal values of community and is grounded in a deep understanding of the unique context of the community and is congruent with the values of that community's culture (Starratt, 2003; Strike, 2003).

Developing relationships of mutual regard with community members requires the school leader to develop a deep knowledge of the history of the community, school, and its staff (Starratt, 2003). The leader must do more than research; she must go further to connect with community members to build trust relationships and create the possibility of open dialogue and deliberation to develop, share, pursue, and sustain the

moral purpose of the school (Fullan, 2001). Engaging diverse stakeholders from the school and broader community are common practices supported by many transformational leadership models (Branson, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Starratt, 2003); however, the depth and breadth of these relationships and engagements are seldom described.

Strike (2003) describes four types of communities that illustrate the depth and nature of the relationships between members of a school and wider community. Strike (2003, p. 74) characterizes the cohesiveness of each community based on the type of "social glue" that forms deep connections and holds the group together. Tribes (Sandel, 1982), congregations (Rawls, 1993), orchestras (MacIntyre, 1981), and families (Noddings, 1992) are metaphors characterizing the level of inclusion, cohesion, and durability of the four community types. Sandel's (1982) tribe-like community members have the same way of life and, therefore, intuitively understand each other because of their common identity. This type of community is resistant to change and dissociation, it is exclusive, and tends to reproduce the status quo. Congregation members do not share a common way of life but have shared commitments around common beliefs (Rawls, 1993). The "social glue" that holds this community together is "trust and mutual regard" developed through cooperative service activities congruent with the group's belief system (Strike, 2003, p. 77). Congregations are moderately cohesive, more tolerant of diversity, yet exclude those with different beliefs, thus at risk of sustaining the status quo (Strike, 2003). MacIntyre's (1981) orchestra is a band of friends tied together by a shared practice and vision. Because the orchestra has a shared practice, it can also be exclusive. Noddings' (1992) "large, heterogeneous family"

metaphor for community is held together by "unmediated caring" (Strike, 2003, p. 76-77). Strike argues that this "family" community may be inclusive, but it is easily dissolved because it lacks strong "social glue" (Strike, 2003, p. 74).

Strike suggests that these community types form a continuum based on the thickness of the social glue holding its members together. The metaphors that are most viable models for school community in Strike's opinion are the congregation and orchestra (Strike, 2003). He argues that they have moderate cohesion and moderate inclusion that makes them better options than the tribe and family (Strike, 2003).

Yet, in order to increase engagement of parents and family, it would seem the heterogeneous family community offers the best support for transformational, holistic education and authentic participation by all community members. Strike fails to see that the "ethic of caring" described by Noddings is a theme that is woven throughout the school's curriculum and practice as a living component of the community's moral purpose and an important mediator of community engagement (Branson, 2010; Morris, 2004; Strike, 2003, p. 78). The family metaphor values and celebrates diversity, is student-centered, does not require conformity, and encourages tolerance. All three alternatives to the family community are exclusive and have the potential to marginalize members.

From the perspective of the school, congregation and orchestra community types are favored as positive as they support the schooling agenda and values of white, middle class education professionals. However, these community types are exclusive and privilege particular experiences and social capital that are not conducive to authentic participation by the community outside of the school. Additionally, because the other

metaphors for community fail to seek the perspectives of others, they have limited ability to change practices that discriminate or otherwise harm its members. In order to realize a transformational school environment, the community must be willing to seek, respect, and include the perspectives of the larger community in school practice. The congregation and orchestra metaphors for community already exist in a school-centered perspective of community engagement and cannot provide an equitable experience for all students or empower all members of the school community.

Noddings charged that ethics are the act of being engaged in caring relations that require an active encounter with specific individuals through personal, lived experiences. She saw education as an opportunity to "enhance our natural tendency to care" (Tong, 2009, p. 168). Further, according the Noddings, it is through unmediated caring that evil can be vanquished, not through punishment and fear but through the development of caring relations that reduce helplessness, isolation, and the "pain of separation" (Noddings, 1989, p. 221-222). From this perspective, overcoming evil requires "a sense of community" (Tong, 2009, p. 173). Noddings' large heterogeneous family model aims to create this sense of community that nurtures an ethic of care. If communities are built upon common goals, all members must invest in relationships that further the needs of the whole group before the individuals' needs are addressed. Participation by both male and female members to create wholeness, cohesion, and relationships are outcomes of this practice that employs ethics as modes of thinking and acting to "overcome pain, separation, and helplessness" (Noddings, 1989, p. 221-222).

Community-centered leaders, therefore, must employ an ethic of care to guide actions and compliment efforts to grow leadership within the larger community and

support community organizing efforts. According to Devecchi & Nevin (2010), all members of the school community must be leaders and able to share in all responsibilities of the school; in order to prepare and sustain this leadership capacity, transformational leaders make the process of leadership transparent (Branson, 2010). As lifelong learners, they stay informed and educate themselves about current pedagogical practices and new content (Branson, 2010). As a learner and educator, the leader also understands that her expectations of teaching staff and community partners should enhance rather than detract from their ability to effectively serve students and families. Therefore, the leader "cultivates" conditions to make the moral purpose of the school possible (Branson, 2010; Starratt, 2003, p. 18).

Alignment between transformational leadership practice and community engagement for authentic participation is paramount to realizing the moral purpose of education for a school community and challenging social and political circumstances for families in poverty. The creation of a responsible, democratic, participatory citizenry is a potential outcome of this effort and could be sustained by their marriage. Authentic participation through community engagement provides the means for individuals to develop "delicacy and diplomacy" in their interactions with one another as they learn to respect and engage multiple perspectives and become reflexive and critical thinkers (Starratt, 2005, p. 126). Engaging an ethic of care as a major component of our moral purpose encourages the development of compassion, forgiveness, and humility. Transformational leadership creates the holding environment that makes the development and valuing of these attributes possible (Drago-Severson, 2009) and the development of collective agency that makes possible the achievement of

common goals (Schutz, 2006; Starratt, 2003, 2005). As children have altruistic tendencies and are open to and invite opportunities to share and give to others, transformational education supported by transformational leadership can nurture this tendency to become a habit of the mind for all members tied to the school community (Starratt, 2003).

Place as a Mediator of Authentic Participation

Place holds a collection of interactions that serve as the foundation for our development within our family, culture, and society. Places are, therefore, pedagogical. We learn who we are and how to interact with others and the natural world through our experiences in a particular location, time, and context (Gruenewald, 2003; hooks, 2008). As such, place, along with mother and home, is one or our first teachers, providing us with unique experiences as we explore and engage a world beyond ourselves (hooks, 2008). However, place is often neglected as a dynamic partner in our education, for as we experience place, we are simultaneously place-makers (Escobar, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003).

Global economic development reinforces a shift away from local place and toward global space. Spaces are characterized as the objective, universal, divisible, discrete portions of our existences, while places are viewed as subjective, particular, bounded, and entangled. As place calls for a focus on the local, environmental, and cultural, space supports globalization, exploitation of resources, and overdevelopment (Casey, 1993; Dirlik, 1998; Escobar, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003). Yet it is through "immersion in place" and not "absoluteness of space" that culture develops and individuals are enjoined to become members of society (Escobar, 2001, p. 143).

Inasmuch as schooling has become about producing citizens who can compete as producers and consumers in economies driven to explore, develop, and profit from exploitation of natural resources, it has also cemented "placelessness" as a central condition of our modern existence (Escobar, 2001, p. 140). Yet if we view education as a holistic enterprise, we must engage an exploration of place as an agent of socialization. Gruenewald (2003) charges that place-conscious inquiries can illuminate connections between culture and place. If we assume place is the product of people interacting with each other and the natural world in a context that is dynamic, continuous, and situated in history and context, then place is a good place to start an examination of culture (Gruenewald, 2003). Yet our conscious engagement of place is tentative. Activities common to our experience reduce the influence of place. Rather, as lists of tasks to be accomplished and focus on competition, efficiency, and production weight our view of success, place fades from view (Escobar, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003). Yet place is educative, experiential, historical, political, and contextual. Our lives progress in constant conversation with the "places" we call work, home, school, and pastime. Therefore, consciousness of our interactions with place makes possible closer examination of unique cultures of place. A deeper examination of the five dimensions of place: a) the perceptual, b) the sociological, c) the ideological, d) the political, and e) the ecological is instructive (Gruenewald, 2003).

A perceptual dimension of place explores the experiential nature of the active physical world to which we respond and with which we interact (Abram, 1996). Consciousness of our interdependence with and relationship to the places around us can begin the process of reconnecting us to local environments (Abram, 1996). Yet schools

seldom support a reawakening and celebration of our unique locality; instead, they dull our perceptions of place, separate children from the natural world, and reduce opportunity and ability to learn in natural environments. Schooling isolates us, organizes us in discrete units by age, content, and ability; it sedates us with sterile, uniform environments reliant upon controlled stimuli to maintain focused attention and order.

A sociological dimension of place honors the construction of culture as the weaving together of "places, memories, experiences, and identity…over time" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 625). As these interactions and constructions occur in a physical world, they are situated in place and place is thus constructed in the process. It is through these processes of being in and making place that culture is manifested through developing knowledge, tradition, and ritual (Gruenewald, 2003). An education, therefore, that fails to acknowledge and incorporate the sociological dimension of place in the formal schooling of children further alienates them from their unique culture and prevents closer examination of deleterious local practice and ineffective policy. When the sociological dimension of place is explicitly tied to educational experience, students have the opportunity to explore action that may unseat unchallenged, globalist agendas of competition and patriarchy operating within in the community (Escobar, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003).

An ideological dimension of place calls for critical examination of spatial relationships and culture. Closer examination of geographic spaces, economic advantage, and power from this perspective make possible identification of hegemonic practices and policies that protect patriarchal agendas (Gruenewald, 2003; Said, 1994).

Critical geography has provided insights regarding the power relationship at the heart of property ownership. Capitalists view the colonization of new lands as warranted practice to maintain competitive edge (Escobar, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003). From this perspective, space is inert, waiting to be discovered and conquered, those living on the "unclaimed" land less than human or uncivilized. When paired with values of competition, the accumulation of wealth and space necessitates overdevelopment or uneven development of resources that is not environmentally sustainable (Foucault, 1980; Gruenewald, 2003; Korten, 1995; Said, 1994). Pressure of land ownership brought to frenzy by capitalist perspectives on competition that necessitates the constant, hungry acquisition of more reduces place to individually divisible, discrete spaces with a dollar value (Escobar, 2001; Korten, 1995). Holding private property further legitimizes the global economy and a steady march toward the relentless extraction and development of limited resources until all have been discovered and exploited (Escobar, 2001; Said, 1994). With regard to education, school districts are often the wealthiest landowners in a community, with comforts, security, and access to resources inaccessible to the community it serves. Thus, "control of space" through property ownership by schools "tends to legitimize and reproduce (their) authority" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 629).

A fourth dimension of place is the political that explores the geographic distribution of capital and power. Researchers focused on this dimension explore identity development of members engaged in struggle and resistance to practices at odds with their culture of place. Practices that centralize power and homogenize society embrace white, middle-class values and norms at the expense of the local community's

needs (hooks, 1984; Yosso, 2005). From this perspective, attempts by public schools to standardize, normalize, and centralize learning is political oppression that seeks to emphasize the center rather than consider the margin (Delpit, 1988; Gruenewald, 2003; Yosso, 2005).

Finally, an ecological dimension of place calls for a focus on daily life in the local. Proponents challenge us to acknowledge and examine participation in local activities of production, consumption, and waste in order to encourage ecologically sensitive practices (Berry, 1987, 1992). This dimension parallels concerns for preserving cultural diversity with concerns for preserving biodiversity in the face of a global economy that exploits people and their environments (Bowers, 2001). Schooling complicates possibilities for engaging this dimension as it promotes values of competition that dismiss other cultural perspectives and have destructive effects on the natural world (Bowers, 2001).

Thus, the nature of our engagements within our community contexts is central to developing a place-congruent vision for education of our children and community. Authentic participation is the vehicle for establishing that shared vision within communities of poverty whose membership have seldom had a strong voice in decision-making. Leadership from this perspective is service and nurturance developed among all members of a large heterogeneous family through care, collaboration, and critical examination of the obstacles which threaten opportunities for success.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In order to gain insight into the culture of a community and explore how its members learn about their value as participants through experiences in school and community places, I have engaged critical ethnography research as my methodology (Wolcott, 2008). Critical ethnography engages the researcher as participant-observer within the context of the study and as the primary research instrument (Carspecken, 1996; Madison, 2005; Wolcott, 2008). This methodology parallels ethnographic research first introduced in the field of anthropology and provides the researcher with the opportunity to learn the ways of a culture through direct observation of and participation in the routines, ceremonies, communications, and interactions of the cultural group to develop a thick description of the dynamics present (Geertz, 1995). According to Wolcott (2008), ethnographic research is "a way of seeing" and includes "all of the ways one may direct attention in the field" (p. 70, p. 46).

The ethnographer uses many tools, typically including participant observation, interviewing, and archival research. These tools correspond to the actions or processes of ethnographic research: "experiencing," "enquiring," and "examining" (Wolcott, 2008, p. 48). An emergent methodology, ethnographic research begins with experiences and includes what the researcher sees and hears as a participant observer; next, enquiring moves the researcher to actively "ask what is going on"; and, finally, in the examining process the researcher "turns attention to what has already been produced." (Wolcott, 2008, p. 49-50). Thus, ethnography is both the process and the product of the research (Wolcott, 2008). Several expectations are associated with ethnographic research, including an assumption that the "researcher will go somewhere to conduct

the study" and "collect their own data," avoiding dependence on the data and findings of others (Wolcott, 2008, p. 45). Ethnographer Michael Agar (1980) offers further insights into the processes of ethnographic research offering:

> In ethnography…you learn something ("collect some data"), then you try to make sense out of it ("analysis"), then you go back and see if the interpretations make sense in light of new experience ("collect more data"), then you refine your interpretations ("more analysis"), and so on. The process is dialectic, not linear. (p. 9)

Ethnography is an appropriate method for this inquiry, as it supports the "study [of a] human group seeking to understand how they collectively form and maintain a culture" via a long-term immersion in a setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 19). Culture is therefore the central focus of ethnography and involves the analysis of activities, engagements, and artifacts that reinforce "the way things are" and "how one should act" (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 19; Patton, 2002). Because ethnographic studies are time intensive, in an effort to provide some baseline data to warrant an in-depth examination of the community school culture, I have conducted an interview-based study as a first step in this inquiry. The data collected during this initial study is included in the ethnography, as these interviewees became key informants. This inquiry was constructed from Wolcott's (2008) *experiencing*, *enquiring*, and *examining* (emphasis mine) processes model for fieldwork and utilizes field notes capturing the experiences of the researcher, interviews to satisfy the researcher's enquiries, and documents and archival data pertinent to the study site for examination around the nature of community engagement in the community school.

Researcher Positionality

As a native of the town and school district under study, with family and friends living and working in neighboring communities, I have a vested interest in seeing reform efforts and equity strategies employed to improve the lives of children and families in the area succeed. As a young person and student within the same school district, I did not see the inequities present at that time and persisting today. I rode my bicycle and played along a river that separated my experiences from the experiences of children and families living on the other side. I did not ask about life on the other side; I operated under the assumption that all schools and communities were like mine. It was not until I began graduate school that I learned of the history of discrimination and pain that persists in the place I call home. I am compelled to take a closer look.

The methodology I have chosen for my journey is qualitative. Trained in pure science as an undergraduate, my first research opportunities in college and after graduation were in physiology, studying the effects of carcinogens on mice with different percentages of protein in their diet and exploring the neurobiology of angina pain in rats and monkeys. When I returned to school to be certified as a science educator, I was intrigued by the application of a pure science paradigm to the complex system of integrated variables in public education classrooms. Even as I was teaching my students about statistical analysis in order to communicate the significance of results yielded in our investigations, I saw the limits of quantitative analytical methods for capturing the spectrum of variables underlying student engagement, cognition, and achievement.

In my doctoral education and research, I seek to explore and describe complex phenomena in a connected and experiential way to uncover deeper understanding of community engagement in a specific context. Thus I am engaging critical theory to reflect upon the intentions and power-relationships playing out within school-community cultural interactions and address implications of equity for members of the school community under study (Carspecken, 1996; Patton, 2002). The nature of the work I long to do is critical in nature, the theory I have relied upon to frame my journey also critical, a critical methodology is appropriate to investigate my research question: *What is the nature and who are the participants of community engagement in an urban elementary community school?* My stance is one of activism, as I seek to "take a clear position intervening on hegemonic practices" and "advocate in exposing the material effects of marginalized locations" (Fine, 1994, p. 17).

Setting

Interventions designed to interrupt the cycle of poverty and low performance within urban communities have been injected into the educational system in the Eleanor Evans community, which is the site of this study. Eleanor Evans is one of eighty-seven schools within the Pleasant Public School System, yet this West Pleasant community has maintained a level of independence from the district. Most Eleanor Evans students attend a single middle school with peers from two other west-side schools and feed into a single high school. At this time, all three west-side elementary schools are engaged in the equity strategy of community schooling, with Eleanor Evans having established community school partnerships for several years. The feeder system on the west-side of the river has managed to remain isolated from the rest of the district, a circumstance

most living in the area are proud to share, yet this reality limits opportunities to gain additional resources.

The Pleasant Community Schools Initiative, or PCSI, is organized under the Pleasant Service Council as an initiative of Pleasant's Metropolitan Human Services Commission and is dedicated to providing support for the development and maintenance of community partnerships (Pleasant Service Council, 2010). The mission of PCSI "provide(s) leadership and influence to engage local communities in creating and sustaining community schools that support academic success and strengthen children, families, and communities" (Pleasant Service Council, 2010). PCSI provides support for seven core components or strategies that provide additional support and services to students and families within each school community served. Eleanor Evans Elementary is the study site for this ethnographic inquiry and is engaged in the equity strategy of community schooling under the PCSI umbrella.

Over the last three years, Eleanor Evans has also become the site of neighborhood revitalization work by a local nonprofit, Pleasant Neighborhoods, which has sought and received U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Choice Planning and U.S. Department of Education Promise Grants. The outcome of the planning grant work is the development of a transformation plan for the community that addresses several components, including: "transforming distressed public and assisted housing"; supporting positive health, safety, employment, mobility, and educational outcomes for residents in the community; and "transforming neighborhoods into viable mixed-income" communities with access to resources (FY2010 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Agreement, Article II.A). Pleasant Neighborhoods is also in the process

of securing a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant to execute the transformation plan that has been developed during the planning grant and has submitted an application for a U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, which supports community development around a strong education pipeline.

Data Sources

This research relies on several data sources, including field observations, individual and group interviews, archival records, documents, and artifacts produced within the school and broader Eleanor Evans community. These data sources examined together provide the possibility of answering the research question by asking the larger community how they perceive their opportunities to participate in the school and community. The names of participants and the organizations that are described in this study have been changed. Citations are included to indicate the participant or document that is the source for the statement or quote presented. Dates of publication or interview are unaltered; names of people and organizations have been altered.

The Journey: The Inquiry Process

Following Wolcott's (2008) *experiencing*, *enquiring*, and *examining* emergent ethnographic research processes, field notes take priority as "first-hand experience through participant observation is both the starting point and the filter through which everything else is screened as we make sense of all that we have observed" (p. 53). Thus my ethnographic journey began in the spring of 2011 and continued until December of 2013. I began as an outsider observing community school practice and ended the study as a participant in many of those practices. My initial visits to the

school in April of 2011 sparked a desire to learn more and fueled two studies. Beginning with those first visits, I kept a journal of field notes and reflections on my *experiences* at the school. These experiences are the first pieces of data that informed my selection of a research topic and question at Eleanor Evans Community School. The second leg of my journey allowed me to pose *enquiries* to school community members regarding student success and authentic participation, first in a small interview-based study in 2011 focused on indicators of student success and then focused on community-engagement opportunities during the 2012-2013 school year. Finally, a variety of archives, records, and artifacts collected from the school and community accessed online between 2011 and 2013 provided further opportunity to *examine* engagement within the Eleanor Evans community (APPENDIX C).

Researcher Experiences in the Eleanor Evans Community

Initiating the emergent design in the spring of 2011, I conducted an interview-based study with eight members of the Eleanor Evans Community School, including the school principal, faculty, and community school partners. In semistructured interviews, participants were asked to describe indicators of student success and how community school practices impacted student success. Three major themes emerged. Support for setting and accomplishing personal goals was mentioned as an important practice occurring in classrooms and in after-school programs. Participants also mentioned that building relationships of mutual respect impacted students' interactions inside and outside of school. Finally, empowering students to "take control" and responsibility for their lives was supported throughout school with behavioral intervention programs,

such as PBIS, and after-school programs through the incorporation "community circle" as a safe sharing space.

When interviewees were asked if and how the community school model provided support for student success, most said that the school was a "safe" place for students in a neighborhood that was "not safe," and school staff and community school partners were closely connected to families. Additionally, the after-school and intersession programs provided by the community school umbrella provided students with opportunities they would not otherwise have for extended learning and participation in music and athletics programs. These opportunities were extolled as producing students who were achieving academically and acting responsibly. As I engaged school and community members in these interviews, I also attended school activities, such as community dinners, Garden Time programs, bike club, and cooking class. I was able to see the potential of many of the opportunities that were mentioned by my participants but was still considered an outsider by most of the community, as my presence seemed to signal a single purpose, conducting interviews. I longed to learn more about the structures and practices that made this school successful. As I submitted my final paper to my professor that summer, I could not help but wonder what opportunities the community school was providing for parent and family success.

Following this interview-based study, I took advantage of an opportunity to learn more about the school through a leadership field experience course. During the spring of 2012, I completed a 150-hour principal internship at Eleanor Evans under the supervision of their principal. During this internship I had the opportunity to visit every teacher's classroom for observations and/or walkthroughs. I participated in community

dinners, field trips, after-school activities, and a variety of meetings with faculty, family, administration, and community partners. In order to fulfill internship requirements, I facilitated after-school programming, morning meetings, faculty meetings, professional development, school tours, and a community blood drive.

As an outsider to this school community, principal internship provided me with an opportunity to become a participant in the day-to-day life of the school. As I was learning how to be a member of the school community, I created notes of activities, interactions, and experiences that were novel to me. My descriptive field notes outline a story that emerged as I became immersed in this school community; inherent in these descriptive accounts are my interpretations and perceptions of the activities I observed. The field observations reflect my own thoughts on a particular set of interactions occurring in the community setting. Field notes, therefore, reflect my own biases, priorities, and preferences in the snapshot I have created and captured at the time of recording (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) (Field Note Sample Entries APPENDIX A2).

After nearly a year in contact with the school, I was still trying to understand many new things, chief among them were expectations of community engagement. As a first-generation college and graduate student, I was influenced by my mother and grandmother, who held education as a priority for me. My mother participated in parent-teacher conferences, occasional PTA meetings, fundraisers, and special events. Their engagement "got the job done"; I graduated from high school, as did my sister, and went on to college. Through my internship field experience, I was able to see how structures and practices within the school provided and prevented opportunities for the

wider community to participate and influenced the practices that are credited with creating student success; yet I was also experiencing disequilibrium, as the outcomes of community engagement within the Eleanor Evans school community appeared to maintain the status quo rather than encourage community-based decision-making and action. The interview-based study I conducted in the spring of 2011 and the experiences I documented in my field notes and reflected upon for principal internship coursework continued to bring my focus back to community engagement. From these experiences in the school community, a critical ethnographic research question for inquiry emerged: *What is the nature and who are the participants of community engagement in an urban-elementary community school?*

For two-and-one-half years I was engaged with the Eleanor Evans community school. During my initial field observations in the spring of 2011, I was an observer and outsider seeking to learn more about how a community school works. With principal internship, I gained access to the school community as a temporary member learning "how to do" community schooling and enjoyed participation as a peer with educators within the school. My initial experiences in the community made it possible for me to develop an ethnographic research question and access the members of the community, many of whom become key informants in this inquiry. As my engagement with the school continued, I had opportunities to maintain "experience-near," which allowed me to stay informed about current engagement practices, as well as "experience-distant," as I was able to step out of a participant role and engage in the "dialectic of experience and interpretation" within a space that allowed contemplation of broader concepts of community engagement and power (Geertz, 1983, p.57).

A Framework to Guide This Inquiry

To guide this ethnographic study, I employed Anderson's (1998) central questions of authentic participation, which provide a conceptual frame for determining the degree of authenticity of participatory practices surrounding community engagement (p. 586). These questions guide my inquiry:

1) **Participation to what end?** The intention of this question is to examine the end-in-view, seeking coherence between means and ends and transparency in acquiring ends. By asking "to what end?" it may be possible to uncover intentions and motivations that fuel participation.
2) **Who participates?** The end-in-view guides invitation to participate. The question intends to uncover who is invited to authentic participation. Who makes decisions about the services and resources within the community school and broader community, and who acts on those decisions?
3) **What are the relevant spheres of participation?** The domains of decision-making and action in which community members participate. To which decision domains do community members contribute?
4) **What conditions and processes must be present locally to make participation authentic?** The organizational structures and process that support authentic participation by parents and families in schools. This question supports exploring the extent to which community members are able to navigate local micro-politics in order to participate in decision-making.

5) **What conditions and processes must be present at the broader institutional and societal levels to make participation authentic?**

   Addressing systems of power that are served by the status quo and thus deter authentic participation. To what extent will broader institutional systems tolerate authentic participation?

These five questions support closer examination of the intentions that underlie the engagement activities taking place in the community and reveal which actors in the community are experiencing authentic participation. As I began to enquire about the types and purposes of engagements taking place in the community, I consulted Anderson's (1998) questions. And as my own field experiences have biased my perspective regarding the depth and quality of particular engagements as authentically participatory, I understood that asking questions is a "culture-specific" act (Wolcott, 2008, p. 60). Therefore, I crafted interview questions with the intention of soliciting participants' constructions and perceptions of community engagement through their own definitions of participation.

Enquiring About Community Engagement

Data collection and analysis continued to follow Wolcott's (2008) ethnographic process as community members were asked about opportunities to engage. The inquiry began with my own field experiences from which the research question emerged, guided by Anderson's Framework for Authentic Participation. In order to elicit participants' perceptions of community engagement within the Eleanor Evans school community, I asked a series of five questions during initial interviews (APPENDIX A.4)

1) What is your history in this community/school, and what is your role in the school/community?
2) What opportunities exist for parents and families to be engaged at the school?
3) In what ways are parents and families engaged? Do they have opportunities to make decisions about the events and activities they attend and the resources they receive?
4) What barriers or obstacles impact community engagement?
5) What is your vision for community engagement?

Follow-up interviews with various participants, discussed below, explored recent opportunities for engagement and perceptions of the depth and quality of authentic participation opportunities in the community. From participant responses, my aim is to address the first three of Anderson's (1998) central questions: 1) Participation to what end? 2) Who participates? and 3) Relevant spheres of participation? The interview questions provide the possibility of discerning the purpose of engagement activities, the actors who are doing the planning and decision-making, and the types of decisions being made by those actors.

Actors

A total of thirty-five participants were selected from a purposeful sampling of community school members, including administration, faculty, noncertified personnel, community liaisons (nonprofits), family members, community partners (academic support), service providers (student and family needs), volunteers, mentors, and former students for interviews. Participation from a variety of community members provides multiple perspectives on school and community engagement. In order to capture a clear

picture of experiences from diverse membership, I asked participants to refer me to others to whom I should speak regarding community engagement. I also solicited interviews from members who are not suggested but may have different views of participation in the community school. A total of 58 interviews, totaling over 31 hours of interview transcript data, provide insights into participants' experiences and perceptions of community engagement.

Consent to participate in the study was secured before initial interviews, which occurred at a site within or convenient to the Eleanor Evans community and of the participants' choice. All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participant and later transcribed and stored on a password-protected computer. Any hard copies of the interview data with identifying information were kept in a locked filing cabinet and shredded upon completion of the study. Participants are not identified by name and were invited to choose an appropriate pseudonym for reporting purposes; the role of the participant within the school community is the only identifier reported.

Twelve district personnel participated in the study, including a district-level administrator, retiring and incoming principals, four teachers, two teaching assistants, school counselor, school social worker, and parent facilitator. Of the district personnel interviewed, three lived or had lived in the Eleanor Evans community, and three had lived in the larger community of "West Pleasant." A total of 23 adult community residents or community partners participated and included four parents, one former student, twelve school and community partners, three neighborhood-revitalization community organizers, one early childhood program administrator, and two public housing service coordinators. All initial interviews for adults lasted between 30

minutes and 2 hours in length. During the initial interview, participants had the opportunity to discuss the consent process. Subsequent interviews lasted one hour or less and occurred in individual or group settings. Each interview began with a review of transcripts from the previous interview to allow participants to clarify or revise interview content. Questions for follow-up interviews emerged from transcript data analysis of previous interviews in order to allow individual participants' experiences in the community to frame their responses regarding authentic participation. Group interviews were treated as captured conversations rather than researcher-facilitated interviews and were reviewed consulting Anderson's (1998) central questions. Member checking was engaged to evaluate the goodness of this analysis process, thus participants reviewed transcripts and data analysis drafts for this purpose (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) (APPENDIX A3).

Examining Archival Records, Documents, and Artifacts

Beginning with my first visits to Eleanor Evans Community School and associated partnering organizations in the spring of 2011 and continuing until December of 2013, I have accessed public archived and online records and collected a number of artifacts and documents, including informational flyers, policy information, statistical information, maps, schedules, newsletters, reports, and such. These records, documents, and artifacts are treated as data and are coded and themed in order to further explicate the nature of community engagement taking place in the school and community. I recognize that my selection of archival records and documents, based on my experiences first and foremost in the field, reflects choices particular to me and my

field experiences (Wolcott, 2008) (List of Reviewed Eleanor Evans and Pleasant Documents from 2011-2013. (APPENDIX A5).

Synthesis

Making sense of the data collected throughout ethnographic research produces three outcomes as I consult Wolcott's approach to transforming the qualitative data from the field (Wolcott, 1994). The foundation of the synthesis is descriptive accounts from my experiences, interviews, and archival records. Data from these sources were coded and themed in order to develop thematic strands (Madison, 2005) around Anderson's (1998) central questions of authentic participation. This process is iterative in this ethnographic research inquiry and continues in the transformation of the data into description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994). Beginning with interview transcripts, I aggregated the engagements described in the interviews around Anderson's (1998) question: *Participation to what end?* I constructed a table organizing these engagements by "end-in-view" themes as well as by actors engaged in decision-making and the relevant spheres of engagement in order to focus the study around specific community interaction events for further analysis and interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) (APPENDIX B).

Using this table of engagements, I revisited my field notes and reflective journal looking for my own experiences of these engagements and sought support from documents accessed and collected to address trustworthiness. Credibility, confirmability, and dependability of my experiences and participant descriptions of engagements is supported by coordinated accounts of the same events described in field notes, interviews, and documents and presented in a logical manner (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). Only those engagements that appear in all three data sources are included for further analysis. Chapter 5 Findings are presented around the three "end-in-view" themes of engagement, beginning with excerpts from my own field *experiences*, which provide a snapshot of the event as it occurred from my perspective, followed by participants' descriptions and perceptions of the engagements revealed through *enquiries*, and then support from *examination* of public and archival documents related to the event.

As accounts of particular community engagement activities are reconstructed from field notes, interviews, and documents, themes emerged around participants' responses about obstacles to participation, changes in participation, and strategies employed to increase participation. These subthemes emerging from the "end-in-view" themes provide possibilities for exploring local conditions and broader institutional and societal conditions that make participation authentic (Anderson, 1998). Chapter 6 Interpretations develop these subthemes in concert with relevant literature around community engagement to address Anderson's (1998) final questions regarding conditions for authentic participation: 1) What conditions and processes must be present locally to make participation authentic? 2) What conditions and processes must be present at the broader institutional and societal levels to make participation authentic? Finally, Chapter 7 Conclusions includes a discussion of implications for school and community practices derived from the subthemes of conditions for authentic participation. Before moving on to the presentation of findings, Chapter 4 Context offers a closer look at the Eleanor Evans community and the participants who have contributed to this inquiry.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT

West Pleasant

Artifacts of "progress" litter the landscape in the West Pleasant Community served by Eleanor Evans Elementary. Industrial activity has enjoyed over 100 years of longevity in this five-square-mile community, bounded by the river and a concrete plant to the north and east; highways, railways, and rail yard to the north and west; and refineries and oil storage on nearly all sides. Beginning with the discovery of oil in a neighboring west Pleasant community in 1901, growth happened quickly in large part due to thriving industry (Breed, 2006); however, investment in industrial practice in the area did not necessarily increase the value of the community to wealthy business owners and oil barons on the east banks of the river which divides the city.

In fact, exploitation of land, resources, and labor on the west bank are practices of precedent. Prior to the discovery of oil in the area, the FRISCO railroad saw the west bank as a prime location for convergence of three routes that today form a junction joining routes from Pleasant to St. Louis, Kansas City, Dallas, Chicago, and Los Angeles (Miller, 2006). Early construction of a growing railroad brought laborers to the area, immigrants looking for a better life (Gomez, 2008). Local refineries were established before statehood and have changed ownership multiple times in their hundred-year lives. Each remains active despite recent and historic violations of OSHA Environmental Health and Safety regulations. In fact, the refineries are now united, their two-mile separation now connected with additional pipes in order to run as a single facility (Walton, 2012).

The legacy of industrial intensification is a community living in squeezed, polluted, and loud spaces. Walking to a neighbor's house is a tricky navigation of busy intersections, chain-linked fencing, and railroad tracks. The constant hum of a multilevel network of highway overpasses requires normal conversation to reach stadium volume in order to be heard. People who grew up in the area in the mid-1900s remember an independent, thriving community with movie theaters, pubs, grocers, churches, merchants, and other services. Blue-collar workers of the 1930s and 1940s enjoyed a variety of housing options, from hotels, apartments, boarding houses, and two-room shacks to comfortable single-family dwellings. Today the Eleanor Evans community resides primarily in two small housing additions and three government-subsidized, low-income housing complexes—a community pressed into half the space it once enjoyed in prosperous times (Gomez, 2008).

Based on historical society documents and archived interviews with residents of the community, changes did not take place overnight; it has been a punctuated process spanning more than 100 years. Several dramatic events illustrate the unsettling nature of change in this community. Failure to sustain independence from Pleasant shortly after statehood, river flooding in the 1920s, a violent and lengthy refinery strike in the 1930s, and urban renewal beginning in the 1960s contributed to the creation of a disinvested West Pleasant community.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the oil boom brought many people across the river to work in oil fields and refineries, to set up businesses, to build houses and roads, and to bring a community together around church, school, and civic life. For a time, land on the west bank was highly valued, as the promise of oil prompted many to

buy parcels in the area that remained undeveloped. West Pleasant became incorporated just before statehood and began building a public school to attract workers and their families to live in the community. After two years of independence, Pleasant applied pressure to annex the community under its jurisdiction and gain access to tax revenues collected on the successful industries on the west bank around 1909. For two decades, work on the railroad, in the refinery, and construction of the community brought thousands of people to West Pleasant. As the population swelled, businesses began setting up shop along Main Street. A toll bridge replaced the ferry to cross the river from downtown Pleasant and deposited visitors in the heart of the West Pleasant community. By 1930, West Pleasant had a Main Street lined with businesses, grocers, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment. Two movie theaters and a water park were within walking distance.

As refineries became a major employer in the community, attempts to negotiate safe working conditions and competitive wages were handled by local unions. In the 1930s, union workers decided to strike when bargaining came to a standstill, and numerous grievances were not addressed. Nearly two-thirds of the employees participating in the strike were fired and not rehired. Seven years of unemployment led to many refinery workers relocating and abandoning homes for employment in other towns and states while the court system considered grievances (Historical Society, 2007; Gomez, 2008), yet hard times did not collapse the community.

Residents living in the community at this time did not see their experience as disadvantaged. Others who resided across the river in Pleasant could not understand why people would live among refineries on the river bank. Flooding was also a

concern, as the river regularly left its banks until a dam was built upriver by the Corp of Engineers in the late 1960s. Fires in the refineries or oil storage tanks were also commonplace, according to residents' accounts. These hazards were part of their experience and, from their perspectives, did not inhibit them from being successful. Many West Pleasant residents still celebrate their common identity as "hard working" and "loyal to the community."

The community continued to grow and thrive, functioning in near independence from Pleasant. Several residents expressed pride in their ability to have their needs met by the businesses within the community and confessed they avoided going across "the bridge" if possible. In 1959 Pleasant formed a committee, the Urban Renewal Authority under a state housing act to address "blight." As the city had grown and residents had moved from its center to the suburbs, many buildings and houses were left abandoned and in disrepair. The Urban Renewal Authority's reach extended to West Pleasant and focused on the homes abandoned by factory workers and managers decades earlier. Their aim was to create a "sound" community on the west-side of the river. In 1964 the West-side Citizen's Council was formed and included the principal of the community's junior high. This council's role was to advise the Renewal Authority and communicate with the community regarding planned changes. According to one resident's account, with the promise of a new and improved Main Street, the council and Renewal Authority decided that several businesses and over 700 homes in West Pleasant would be demolished to make room for the new highway interchange system, expanded rail yard, and industrial businesses to be located in the area. As a result, the community's Main Street was wiped out, residential lots were

enlarged, dilapidated homes removed, and apartment complexes built to accommodate displaced residents.

An environmental assessment of the area conducted recently provides additional evidence of changes in the community. Uses of the property owned by the City of Pleasant were examined through an intensive historical assessment of 42 acres extending from the river into the Eleanor Evans community. Data from city directories indicates that in 1925 a drugstore was in the area, and residential listings were present beginning in the 1930s and continuing until 1945. Beginning in 1950, aerial photographs document engineering and water works for the city are present near the river, as well as a refinery to the south and residential housing continuing to be built in the community. In 1955 the city's water department was established near the river, and a neighborhood grocery store appears in the city directory. In 1960, additional residential listings appear, along with the city's water and sewage department and a manufacturing company, and, by 1965, a concrete plant is present. From 1970 to 2000, industrial activity and the Pleasant Public Works offices and maintenance facilities fill in space around residences and apartment buildings.

Additionally, environmental concerns based on current and historical use of property in the area have been raised during the recent 2007 environmental assessment. The evaluator reported multiple regulation reviews that resulted in environmental concern for the area related to the presence of gasoline and oil storage tanks and the release of hydrocarbons due to industrial activity in the area. Concerns include the presence of a Federal Superfund site, facilities in the area that have required corrective

action to clean up the release of hazardous wastes, and the presence of several hazardous waste-treatment facilities.

Today, few businesses or services are available in the community. In 2012, the closest full grocery was four miles away; two convenience stores provided food for the community. Four blocks of the original Main Street remains, and includes a couple of automotive businesses, gas station, and churches. Thus, the Pleasant Urban Renewal Authority's work during 1960s and 1970s created additional fractures in the West Pleasant communities, as improvements to the interstate highway system for the benefit of commuters wiped out the community's business district (Gomez, 2008).

Pleasant Public Schools and the City of Pleasant

The first schools in Pleasant were established in 1884 by the Presbyterian Church, which were taken over by Pleasant Public schools in 1905. The first school building was Pleasant High. Before statehood, construction and management of the schools in Pleasant were based on the tribal school systems of the Creeks, which required each neighborhood to build a school building and elect three local trustees for each school. Between 1906 and 1929, Pleasant schools underwent rapid growth and expansion as the population of the city grew fiftyfold from 1901 to 1920 (Pleasant Preservation Commission). In 1910 Pleasant had sixteen office buildings, which grew to ninety-three by 1916. From spring to fall of 1906, enrollment grew by 25 percent (Pleasant Preservation Commission). In 1908 the district had eight public schools, and by 1909 bond issues were being passed to build new schools and expand existing buildings.

Growth in schools mirrored growth of the city as oil took over as the top industry. Between 1920 and 1929, twenty out of twenty-four new buildings erected in Pleasant were in the Oil Capital Historic District. At that time, Pleasant "was headquarters to 1,500 oil-related companies, it was the heart of a major oil field which produced two-thirds of the nation's oil" (Pleasant Preservation Commission). During the 1930s and 1940s, the Great Depression and World War II took their toll on Pleasant, reducing the number of oil-related businesses. However, after the war, the Oil Capital District repositioned itself as "the heart of the city's business community" (Preservation Commission). In the 1950s movement from the city to the suburbs sparked concern that abandoned buildings were becoming a hazard and an eyesore. And with the formation of the Urban Renewal Authority, downtown Pleasant was transformed. During the 1960s and 1970s, many of the buildings constructed in the 1920s were razed to make room for parking garages and new office parks. Finally, decline in oil prices as other parts of the world increased production led to a bust in the oil market in the 1980s and a steady decline in growth in Pleasant.

Recent data indicates the city to be experiencing 0 percent population growth since 2000, and student populations are fairly stable with less than 2 percent change in total enrollment since 2005 (Quality of Life Report, 2011). Yet, the district's demographics continue to change. Between 1998-2008 Caucasian enrollment decreased by 11 percent; African American enrollment increased by 10 percent; Native American enrollment increased by 53 percent; and Hispanic enrollment increased by 248 percent (Community Service Council, 2009).

Quality of Life comparison data collected and presented by the Pleasant City Council display trends over the last several years for the city. Five-year trends with other comparable cities find Pleasant ranking better in the areas of "Economic Vitality, Neighborhood Vitality, and Citizen Engagement"; relatively low housing costs and a stable housing market are important to this result. However, Pleasant ranked lower than peer cities in the areas of Human Investment mainly due to poor health statistics, a higher per capita crime rate, and low levels of recreational activity. In the last fifty years, population growth has slowed, yet the land area of Pleasant has increased at a rate of six times population growth. With regard to regional production, employment opportunity, and income, Pleasant ranks in the middle among peer cities. Support for families in the form of food stamps has increased considerably since 2007, and crime is high, which pushes the city into the bottom half when compared to peer cities. More residents in Pleasant rent rather than own properties, and mass transit support has decreased as funding support has been cut over the last fifteen years.

Today Pleasant Public Schools is the second largest school district in the state, serving approximately 42,000 students in eighty-seven schools with the support of seven thousand employees, 2,500 of which are teachers. Students within the district are diverse. By race 28 percent are Caucasian, 28 percent are African American, 28 percent are Hispanic, 7 percent are American Indian, and 1 percent are Asian, while approximately 8 percent identify as more than one race (NCES, 2011). Per-pupil spending in the district is above the state average of $8,651 at $9,096 in 2010. Yet, the school district reflects the changes in the city in the last several years. Pleasant Public Schools is considered a central city district serving twice as many low-income students

and students from single-parent families as suburban districts in the state. Based on data from the 2011 Quality of Life study, the ratio of juvenile offenders is also much higher in Pleasant Public Schools, where one out of every thirty-six students is charged with an offense in 2009-2010. Compared with other suburban districts in the state, Pleasant students are also absent more often, more likely to be receiving reading remediation, and fewer of their parents are attending parent-teacher conferences. Changes in these demographics for Pleasant mirror changes in the Eleanor Evans community.

West Pleasant Schools

The first school in West Pleasant was established by the Clinton family as a high school on land claimed by the family in an allotment in 1884. Clinton was the high school until 1938; when a new school was built in 1925, it then became a middle school. Eleanor Evans was built a block away from the original high school in 1929. Eleanor Evans was included with several other schools in the Pleasant Public School District on a facilities bond that passed and supported the construction of a new building. In 2005 a new school building was constructed for Eleanor Evans students that sits on the original Clinton home site. Today, Eleanor Evans, along with three other elementary schools, feeds into a single middle school and high school on the west-side of the river.

The West Pleasant community served by Eleanor Evans School does not enjoy a booming, thriving community. Few residents work in the plants and refineries that surround the school or the rail yard to the south; few community businesses, merchants, or service industries thrive in the area; thus, few opportunities to earn a living wage in

the community exist, and the economy continues to be depressed for the area in comparison to the city of Pleasant as a whole. New job opportunities remain scarce, as do affordable food and reliable transportation as West Pleasant remains isolated from Pleasant, across the river surrounded by industrial activity.

American Community Survey data for the census tract that includes the Eleanor Evans community provides five-year estimates of 2008-2012 for the community and indicates median earnings to be $17,529 for all Eleanor Evans community members compared to a median income of $40,123 for the city of Pleasant. Of the 634 families surveyed, 71.5 percent had children under eighteen years of age, and 54.6 percent of families had a female head of household. More than one-third of the community makes less than $10,000 per year, with 62 percent of families with children under eighteen living below the poverty level, and 85.2 percent of families receiving public assistance (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Most families (78 percent) live in multi-unit structures or apartment complexes that were built more than twenty-five years ago. Over half of the housing options in the community have one or no bedrooms. Only 12 percent of the community owns their home, while more than half of the community pays more than 30 percent of their income in rent. About one-quarter of the community does not have a vehicle (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Community Schools/Full-Service Schools

In 2008, a coordinated intervention by Pleasant Community Schools Initiative (PCSI) with support from Pleasant Public Schools brought the equity strategy of community schooling in a formal way to the Eleanor Evans community. PCSI is a

community school umbrella nonprofit connected to the city's Family Services. PCSI supports students and families by orchestrating strategic partnerships around seven core components, which include: early childhood development, health and health education, mental health and social services, family and community engagement, youth development out of school, neighborhood development, and lifelong learning (Community Service Council, 2010). Currently thirty-three schools in Pleasant are engaged in community partnerships for student and family support and success through PCSI, Community Services Council, and school district efforts (PSCI, 2012). During the 2011-2012 school year, a new director was hired by Pleasant Public Schools to oversee PCSI's role and take over many administrative responsibilities for the initiative from Pleasant Service Council during the 2012-2013 school year and continues to support Pleasant Schools in this role. Private donors continue support for site community school liaisons, yet liaisons now report to both the PCSI director and school district leaders who govern the school site to which they are assigned.

Site Description

Eleanor Evans Elementary School is one West Pleasant school that has experienced academic success as measured by quantitative performance indicators such as test scores, attendance rates, and retention while engaging community school practices under the Pleasant Community School Initiative (PCSI) umbrella. A closer exploration of the partnerships and the modes by which community members are engaged to determine and develop partnership opportunities for the benefit of the community was conducted at this site through an ethnographic place-conscious inquiry. Situated in an industrial area, the immediate school neighborhood is characterized by

generational poverty. This Title I school serves approximately 421 students in prekindergarten through sixth grade, with a teacher student ratio of 1:15.04 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). Six years ago, Eleanor Evans began its journey with PCSI to become a "community school" and currently engages community partners to provide after-school and extended learning programs and various health and dental service options. Additionally, a local faith-based organization has committed to provide mentors for a school-wide mentoring program and built a community center with classroom space, teaching kitchen, and grocery store.

Community school practices are established and enjoy success at Eleanor Evans; yet recent changes impact the community. In July of 2012 the principal who endorsed the PCSI model and shepherded it into her school retired. During her last eight weeks as leader, she was invited to mentor the incoming administrator and took advantage of the opportunity to share rationale, processes, and policies for a variety of practices and partnerships that had evolved over her nine-year term at Eleanor Evans. Additionally, a new wing was added to the school in the spring of 2012 to house early childhood classrooms

With the change in leadership, several other changes occurred. Personnel shifted. Some moved to different roles within the school; some left. Policies and procedures also changed as the new principal sought to bring school practices in line with district expectations.

Pleasant United Methodist Church

Built in 1928 in downtown Pleasant, Pleasant United Methodist Church (PUMC) was first organized in 1886 before statehood. The sanctuary was designed by

a Philadelphia architect in the gothic style and is just a short five-mile drive over the bridge from the school. Today, the congregation has grown over time to include about 8,000 members who commute from the suburbs to attend services and activities. The facility includes the large original church building with sanctuaries and offices and was expanded to include a youth and community center that includes an athletic facility. Several civil groups also meet at the youth and community center. PUMC has been actively engaged as a community partner with Eleanor Evans School for twenty years, with several volunteers actively involved in mentoring programs and school-community events established during this partnership. Several employees and community partners are members of the church and have come to the community to teach and serve based on first introductions through PUMC involvement.

Pleasant Neighborhoods

A more recent partner in the community is the Pleasant Neighborhoods Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. With financial support from philanthropic donors from the city of Pleasant, Pleasant Neighborhoods has established a presence in two low-income urban communities. Locally funded foundations provide for the operating costs for this umbrella organization, whose mission is to "provide…residents the resources and support to improve their schools and neighborhoods" by unit[ing] multiple community partners and residents in efforts to share mutual responsibility for results in the neighborhood" (Pleasant Neighborhoods). Beginning in 2011, Pleasant Neighborhoods has also sought financial support through Choice and Promise Neighborhood Grants.

Pleasant Neighborhoods work began in the Deer Field community, which also served to address the needs and families in the community under the PSCI umbrella. In both the Deer Field and Eleanor Evans communities, affiliates of Pleasant Neighborhoods focused on early childhood education and started programs to serve children eighteen months old to four years. Results of research studies around this early childhood intervention indicate that this program can prepare children for school and program students outperform their peers who did not attend the early childhood program. However, further research on student performance once children entered the public school indicated that the gains realized through early childhood preparation were negligible by the time children reached second grade. This loss was one reality that led to the Pleasant Neighborhoods work. During the 2011-2012 school year, Pleasant Neighborhoods received a CHOICE Neighborhoods Planning grant to begin the process of transforming the Eleanor Evans community.

Actors

I interviewed a total of thirty-five school and community members and partners between April of 2011 and March of 2013. Several participants agreed to be interviewed more than one time to produce a total of fifty-eight interview sessions. Although a majority of the participants are directly connected to the school, other organizations also provided a variety of engagement opportunities and are represented within the participant descriptions that follow.

Pleasant Public Schools/Eleanor Evans Personnel. Twelve public school personnel participated in the study and represent two school principals, a district

administrator, four teachers, two teaching assistants, school counselor, school social worker, and parent facilitator.

Claudia came to Eleanor Evans in 2003 from another "west-side" elementary to be principal. When she arrived, a number of community partnerships existed, and under her leadership the school joined the PCSI umbrella that provided additional support and resources for community partnerships to grow and flourish. Claudia was named for a Medal for Excellence in Elementary Teaching and Administration when this study began, and she retired two years later. An Arkansas native, she came to a Pleasant suburb to start and raise a family with her husband of twenty-eight years. A key informant in this study, Claudia is a larger-than-life personality and used her substantial influence to bring resources to the Eleanor Evans school and community.

Bliss is a resident in the Eleanor Evans community. She moved from the East Coast into one of the houses on the north side of the community with her husband and son. Her family has lived there for the last fifteen years; during that time she has been a parent volunteer and is currently a teacher's aide. She has established long-term relationships with parents and families at the school and was a strong supporter of Claudia. She has seen the school led under four principals now and continues to assert that the school should be the center of the community and support parent and family success.

Gwen has been a resident of the Eleanor Evans community and is currently a teacher at the school, serving in that role for more than twelve years. She first came to the community with her husband and purchased a home in the community, where they started a family in 1978. When the community began to change, she moved to the other

side of the river in 1993, only to return to Eleanor Evans as a teacher in 1994. As a member of PUMC she has been actively involved in a variety of community outreach efforts, as well as supporting the children and families in her second- and third-grade classrooms.

Evelynn is the school counselor and has been at Eleanor Evans for eight years. Her endless work to identify and meet the needs of students, families, and teachers in the building keeps her at the school many hours longer than most. She is one of the first to enter the building each morning and last to leave, yet one never feels that he/she is interrupting her, as she clears her desk to talk to anyone who comes to her door. The school enjoyed a jump in test scores a few years ago, which brought positive attention and praise; however, at the time of this study scores have fallen, and bringing them up seems to be the focus of many conversations and interactions.

Penelope is the art teacher at Eleanor Evans. She came to Eleanor Evans because of Claudia's persuasion. Penelope grew up on the east side of the river, although her father's family was from the west-side. She is a teacher leader, volunteering to serve on a variety of committees and sponsoring art projects and camps in out-of-school time. She works diligently to create new ways to celebrate student success as head of the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) committee. She is positive and warm. Penelope was a strong supporter of Claudia but has seen merit in some of the changes the new principal has implemented. She has devoted herself to the Eleanor Evans community and commutes over an hour each morning and evening to be a part of the community school.

Margie is currently serving as a Teaching Assistant in the pre-k program at Eleanor Evans but has held many roles in the community over the last twelve years. She first came to the school as an AmeriCorps member and spent half a day at Eleanor Evans and half a day at an apartment complex with the resident coordinator. When she was given the choice to go to Pleasant Housing Authority, she chose to stay at Eleanor Evans and work for Pleasant Public Schools. Her son and his family live in a house in the Eleanor Evans community, and Margie babysits her grandchildren after school each day.

Caroline has west-side roots and attended middle school and high school in West Pleasant, along with most of her family. Her extended family continues to live on the west-side, with several cousins maintaining a Facebook page dedicated to the memory of west-side experiences. She first came to Eleanor Evans several years ago as a member of PUMC to participate as a mentor; for the last four years she has been a special education teacher. Caroline's son-in-law also came to the Eleanor Evans community to work in the Garden Time program and teach science. Now a half-day teacher at Eleanor Evans, Caroline does not participate in the activities of the school as regularly as she would like but continues to feel she was meant to finish out her teaching career at the school.

Olivia is a school social worker who, at the time of the study, had been in the school for 2.5 years. She communicated her goal to be "taking down all of the obstacles that would prevent students' success in their education." She focuses her attention on assessing the situation and determining prevention and intervention strategies and then

evaluates the success of those strategies. She is also involved in crisis intervention and can provide insights into student behavior.

A native of the area, *Rhonda* left after high school to live in the South, where she worked to attain a PhD in Educational Leadership. Recruited by the district, Rhonda was looking for an opportunity to move back and care for her aging mother. As a new principal within the district and newly acquainted with the community school model at the time this study ends, her transition as the leader of Eleanor Evans brought many changes.

Carrie is a west Pleasant resident. She attended Westside High School and has raised her five children in the area. Before coming to Eleanor Evans as parent facilitator, she was parent facilitator at the high school and middle school in the feeder pattern. Prior to serving as parent facilitator, she owned and operated a beauty shop on the west-side. At the time of this study, she has just entered the role of parent facilitator under the leadership of Rhonda.

As Director of the Community Schools efforts at the district level, *Daphne* oversees the community schools within PPS. As a former administrator in a community school for several years, she supports sitting administrators in her schools and asks as liaison for them in her work with district-level administration. A product of private schools, she comes to public education and community schoolwork from the perspective of a parent with a special needs child, which motivated her to return to school to pursue a degree in special education and teach Title I students, followed by a move to administration.

PCSI Employees: The Community School umbrella nonprofit that supports schools to engage in the equity strategy of community schooling secures external funding to provide a site community schools coordinator for each community school, as well as access to a network of partners and providers to support student and family success. The director, *George*, and the Eleanor Evans community schools coordinator, Hari, were interviewed to gain insights into the practices that support community engagement.

Hari was the Community School Coordinator at Eleanor Evans for five years. A key informant in this study, she provided insights into the structure and function of the community school umbrella. I spent many hours with her volunteering in her after-school programs and helping her prepare for the after-school events for the day. During an internship during the spring of 2012, I stepped into her shoes for a week to assist with the programs she supported. Hari worked in the community for several years as a resident coordinator in one of the public housing complexes before coming to the school. Her background in Seminary and Social Work provides a lens for community engagement that supported organic, relational events for participation. Hari struggled with both principals at times, but during the spring 2013 semester she was slowly nudged out of her role as coordinator.

George was the director of the Community School Umbrella at the time of the study. He came to Pleasant with his wife after attending college and serving in the Peace Corp. His Peace Corp work focused on community development in a small country with a variety of leaders and stakeholders. When he first came to Pleasant, he worked for a small nonprofit connected to another community school in Pleasant, which

was led by *Daphne*, who would later become the Director of Community Schools for the district. George enjoyed his work with the community but left again to attend graduate school and then participate in urban conservation work in Chicago. When he returned to Pleasant, he moved into a community school neighborhood and moved into the role of director of the umbrella. He served in this role for just under one year during this study.

Pleasant United Methodist Church (PUMC). The longest-running partnership with the Eleanor Evans community is between PUMC and the school. Many existing mentoring and teaching relationships and community partnerships were first nurtured through engagements sponsored by PUMC. *Dana* spearheaded the commitment in 1994 by adopting the school and taking a group over to the school to meet the principal and learn more about their needs. Prior to the adoption, a few church members had been volunteering about forty-plus hours per week; the existing relationship helped PUMC with the decision to support the school. Out of this partnership came after-school programs, summer programs, and other special events, such as neighborhood clean-up days and monthly birthday celebrations, as well as resources for the Big Bucks Store, parent-teacher conferences, and community dinners to name a few. Dana shared that the intent of this involvement was to provide ongoing support for students with the hope of transforming the community.

The Bounty is a community market, teaching kitchen, worship space, meeting place, and classroom for the Garden Time program. The work done by The Bounty is sustained by volunteers from PUMC and community members. A member of PUMC, *Carter* owned an energy company based in West Pleasant very near the Eleanor Evans

Community. When he retired, he created a 501(c)(3) and purchased property to build a small market, offices, and a prayer room next to the school property. Carter was an influential man and brought many resources and people to support his work in the Eleanor Evans community. He passed away in 2012, leaving *Matthew* to continue the work he began.

The Bounty Church is a community-based church that was seeded by a small group of people who wished to grow a church in the Eleanor Evans community. *Matthew* was invited to a leadership position in the Bounty Church by PUMC member and philanthropist Carter. Carter began a 501(c)(3) to provide a small grocery store, prayer room, church, and space for the Garden Time program in a building next door to Eleanor Evans. Matthew has been in the community for four years, most recently as director of The Bounty. The church being onsite supported the partnering of The Good Samaritan Clinic, which provides free care each week for community members.

Garden Time is a science and peace education program that is housed at The Bounty. *Hannah* is the director of the Global Gardens and a native to Pleasant and member of PUMC. Hannah returned to the area after working in the Harlem Children's Zone to develop her own garden education program alongside schools, churches, and communities in her hometown. The Garden Time program has been integrated in three schools and a church community at this time of this study.

Adele is the community outreach coordinator for the Garden Time program. She is responsible for maintaining the website, creating and distributing flyers for upcoming events and inviting new and maintaining existing partnerships with community members and other groups like Junior League who would like to engage in service

activities in the communities the program serves. Over the last few years the program has grown, and Adele spends most of her time developing communications and calendars for events and activities. When this study began she spent several hours each week engaged with students participating in the program.

Until the fall of 2012, *Benny* was a teacher in the Garden Time program. He worked with teachers at Eleanor Evans to provide at least one science lesson each week for their classes in addition to working in the garden. Benny came to the program with a great deal of experience working on a community farm. His wife is from Pleasant and brought him with her when she returned to have their first child. Benny's mother-in-law, *Caroline*, is also a teacher at the school.

Pia came to the Eleanor Evans community as a high school student attending PUMC. She participated in a variety of volunteer activities, including reading tutoring, spring break camps, and other outreach programs. An elementary education major, she received special permission to do both semesters of her student teaching at the school and became a classroom teacher upon graduation. She currently serves as teacher in the Garden Time program.

Pleasant Heath Center is a medical school located five blocks from Eleanor Evans. *Jessica* is the community engagement coordinator on the medical school campus. This branch of the state university is housed in a large complex just five blocks from Eleanor Evans School and has an outpatient clinic one block north of the school. Jessica began working for the university seven years ago and was involved in an "adopt a school" program that brought her into contact with the Eleanor Evans community.

LifeTime is an onsite mental health services provider for students of Eleanor Evans and their families. *Shelley* first came to Eleanor Evans through an internship to address truancy with the juvenile bureau while she was finishing her degree in social work. Shelley continued to work at Eleanor Evans with the *LifeTime* program, which provides onsite counseling to students. Shelley was a strong supporter of Claudia and has not enjoyed Rhonda's leadership style or policy changes. She stays at Eleanor Evans because she wants to make a difference in the lives of families there but feels frustrated by the leadership transition and its impact on her work.

The Mission is a food ministry located one block from Eleanor Evans and serves food-insecure families in west Pleasant. *Lydia* is a west-side resident who volunteers at the Mission. She helps cooks for community members who visit to receive groceries and a meal after a nondenominational worship service. She confides that she is grateful for the Mission, as there have been times she needed help and was thankful she was able to help others when they are struggling.

Pleasant Neighborhoods is a neighborhood-revitalization umbrella organization administering Choice and Promise Neighborhoods Revitalization Grant. *Kevin* is director of the Pleasant Neighborhoods program and coordinates the efforts of a team of three in the Eleanor Evans community through the generous donations of local philanthropists for education. Kevin lives in a community school neighborhood that is also going through a neighborhood-revitalization process. His wife is a principal at an immersion school in the school district. Kevin has the influence of his supporters to make the changes proposed for the Eleanor Evans community.

Kris is the Eleanor Evans Pleasant Neighborhood site coordinator. A Pleasant native, she left to attend school and work in Georgia and Portland. Her work in a mentoring program to encourage students to engage in civic activities in Oregon was something she enjoyed. When she came back to Pleasant, she found a job with the Pleasant Housing Authority as a property manager; she admits that she enjoyed being able to help disenfranchised people living in low-income housing but did not enjoy "collecting the rent." She stated working with Pleasant Neighborhoods is "exactly what I wanted to do" and enjoys the opportunity to "organize the community."

During my first visits to the school, everyone mentioned *Bruce* as an important member of the Eleanor Evans community. Claudia Smith counted on him to help her engage ELL students and their families, as Bruce spoke Spanish and greeted every patron with warmth. As a resident of the community for thirteen years, he knows many of the long-term residents and at one time worked at a local gas station. After attending a local university, he remained in the community, working first at Eleanor Evans as the registrar before taking a job with Pleasant Neighborhoods as resident coordinator. Before I ever met Bruce formally, I saw him interacting with community members at the school and in the neighborhood. He is one of the most visible and recognizable members of the community. He considers staying and working in the Eleanor Evans community to be an "opportunity."

Curtis is the director of the Early Childhood Program (ECP), which is next door to Eleanor Evans Community School and owned by a Pleasant Neighborhood affiliate. Curtis works closely with the Pleasant Neighborhood employees to engage parents and provide resources for families attending the early childhood program. Curtis first

worked as a teacher at Eleanor Evans for several years before coming into the director position at ECP and was a friend and advocate of Claudia, although he admits she made his work more challenging at times. He has worked throughout the city for over twenty-five years to promote early childhood learning and has experience working in communities of poverty in the area.

Bridgeport is a government-subsidized housing complex owned by a Pleasant Neighborhood affiliate. *Natalie* is the resident coordinator at Bridgeport, a government-subsidized apartment complex recently acquired by a Pleasant Neighborhood affiliate. She comes to the position after most recently serving at Family and Children Services Early Childhood Programs, where she supported families of children enrolled in HeadStart. Her role at Bridgeport includes providing programs and resources that can help families living in the complex address their needs and become financially independent. Natalie works closely with Bruce to coordinate programming and encourage resident participation in a variety of activities in the community.

Rivercrest is a government-subsidized housing complex serving Eleanor Evans community members. *Victoria* is the resident coordinator of a government-subsidized apartment complex and works for Pleasant Housing Authority. She comes from a human services and mental health background. A nonnative to the area, she describes herself as coming from a "city," not a "town," but says God brought her back to Pleasant. She admits she has been here before about ten years ago but does not expand on this point. As resident coordinator for the complex, she sees her role as one of influence, describing success as helping one person see new options and begin making better choices.

Eleanor Evans *parents and families* include the PTA president, a grandparent of a Pre-K student, and two mothers who have lived in subsidized housing for several years. *Rose* is a member of the Eleanor Evans community, living in condominiums several blocks north of the school. Her daughter attends the school, and she has been PTA president during this study. She has worked closely with Pleasant Neighborhoods to bring stakeholders to meetings and discuss the potential impact of the neighborhood revitalization project. She is also on the West Main Street Chamber of Commerce. Rose is a real estate agent and is excited to see west Pleasant become an economically viable area.

Robert is the grandparent of a pre-K student attending Eleanor Evans. He is a retired widower who is participating in the education of his grandson to support his single daughter. A Pittsburgh native, Robert came to the state in college to play football and met his wife soon after. His wife was raised on the north side of Pleasant as a girl and served as a teacher within the school district for thirty-four years before her recent passing. Robert lives in the condominiums on the north side of the neighborhood near the medical school campus. He is an active member of the Eleanor Evans PTA.

Jen is a parent and after-school program leader at Eleanor Evans. A member of the community for eighteen years and living in public housing adjacent to the school, she is a familiar face in the school and community. Jen has seen all four of her children attend Eleanor Evans. A strong supporter of Claudia Smith, Jen has struggled with the transition in leadership but has not allowed changes in policy to impact her participation. She is paid a small stipend to lead the Upward Bound basketball teams and spends several hours each day working with the team, in addition to coaching them

at games at night and on weekends. Jen is the matriarch of her family, living with her mother and sister, children, nieces, and nephews. Jen recently found a house outside of the community and has moved her family to the north side of Pleasant, but she continues to drive her children to school on the west-side of town.

I met *Jewel* for the first time at the McDonald's across the street from the school a couple weeks before Christmas. I quickly learned she had recently returned to Pleasant. Her daughter attended Eleanor Evans for a couple of years before she packed up her car and drove cross-country to New York to care for her aging mother. Jewel's daughter was her first child to go to Eleanor Evans and enjoyed attending school and participating in the Garden Time Program. Jewel shared that she had participated in a variety of activities at the school prior to moving to New York and returned to the school last year to find that Ms. Smith would soon retire. Jewel describes this news as a "crushing blow." A strong proponent of Ms. Smith, Jewel has admittedly struggled with the transition in leadership at the school.

Jared is a former student and tutoring provider at Eleanor Evans. A current junior college student, he earns some money by providing four to six hours of tutoring help to students at the elementary in a work-study program. Jared attended Eleanor Evans until the sixth grade and then applied to and was accepted into a magnet middle school and high school program within the district.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

As I began to ask participants about opportunities to engage, it quickly became apparent many engagements opportunities exist beyond typical activities like parent/teacher conferencing and PTA meetings. Many opportunities to access services and resources were available within the community school model in place at Eleanor Evans. Specifically, work done by the Pleasant Community School Initiative (PCSI) umbrella organization and the community school coordinator working with PCSI indicated seven core components were guiding partnerships within and for the benefit of the community. It was the existence of these additional supports provided through partnership that attracted me to the school as a study site in 2011. As I observed students and families participate in activities and events aimed at improving "early care and learning, health and health education, mental health and social services, family and community engagement, youth development and extended learning, neighborhood development, and lifelong learning," I was immediately intrigued and quickly learned. PCSI leveraged existing relationships with service providers such as CampFire, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Family Services, Garden Time, and others to provide services to students and families, including extended-learning opportunities for students beyond the traditional school day and partnerships within the school community to nurture the development of children and adults (PCSI, 2010).

Community Engagement End-in-view

In my quest to learn more about the nature of community engagement in the school, I transcribed the semistructured interviews conducted between December 2012 and March 2013, and sought to find the purpose for each engagement or the end-in-

view, as briefly covered in Chapter 3. Beginning with the interview transcripts, I constructed a table organizing these engagements by "end-in-view" themes as well as by the actors engaged in decision-making and the relevant spheres of engagement. Only those engagements that appear in all three data sources are included in this table for further analysis (APPENDIX B). Findings are presented around the three "end-in-view" themes, beginning with excerpts from my own field *experiences*, which provide a snapshot of the event as it occurred from my perspective, followed by participants' descriptions and perceptions of the engagements revealed through *enquiries*, and then supported by *examination* of public and archival documents related to the event. As accounts of particular community-engagement activities are reconstructed from field notes, interviews, and documents, themes emerged around participants' responses about obstacles to participation, changes in participation, and strategies employed to increase participation. These subthemes emerging from the "end-in-view" themes provide possibilities for exploring local conditions and broader institutional and societal conditions that make participation authentic (Anderson, 1998) and will be explored further in Chapter 6 interpretations.

From field notes, interviews, and document analysis, seventy-three different engagement opportunities were available to Eleanor Evans students, families, community members, community partners, and school personnel outside of typical school day engagements. These activities were aggregated based on Anderson's first three central questions for authentic participation: 1) *Participation to what end?* 2) *Who participates?* 3) *What are the relevant spheres of participation?*

The end-in-view for a given community-engagement activity or event is the outcome. I looked at both the explicit outcome of engaging community members as well as the hidden or unintended outcome. It should be mentioned that authentic participation depends on transparency, and that espoused theories match theories in use; this type of participation is democratic participation in which members engage in decision-making and action (Anderson, 1998; Argyris & Schon, 1974). Confusion, frustration, and disengagement are likely consequences when members have different understandings of the purpose or intended outcome of the activity (Anderson, 1998). Actors are invited to authentic participation based on the end-in-view. For instance, teachers may be involved in decisions that impact the curriculum they are teaching if the end-in-view is to seek teachers' knowledge and experience in selecting appropriate curricula. However, teachers may not be invited to participate in decisions around an end-in-view that involves effective scheduling of janitorial services. This partitioning of decision-making opportunities addresses relevant spheres of participation. In the above example, teachers are typically asked to be engaged in decisions that relate directly to the work they do in classrooms with students, which is their relevant sphere. Asking school community members to make decisions about policies, practices, or engagements that do not relate to their work or interest may also frustrate authentic participation, as actors involved may feel their time is being wasted (Anderson, 1998).

The community-engagement opportunities that I experienced or observed or were described by participants and from archival documents were compiled to document the scope of engagements available to Eleanor Evans community members

between 2011 and 2013. This table includes seventy-three events or activities included for analysis, and three end-in-view themes for engagement emerged.

1) **Community Service Engagements** (CSE) involved school-connected groups or individuals and provided resources or services to the school, children, and/or families in the community.
2) **Student Enrichment Programs (SEP)** utilized a community school connection to provide resources and services for programs connected the purpose of the community school.
3) **Community Development (CD)** engagements were primarily nonprofit organizations providing services to the larger Eleanor Evans community with no identified partnering tie to the school.

Community service engagements typically involved donations of resources in the forms of clothes, food, supplies, time, expertise, or other gifts to children and families within the school community. Of the seventy-three events/engagements experienced and described, twenty-three fit under this theme. Decisions and planning to determine the services to be provided by these events and activities did not directly engage the students, families, or community of residents served by Eleanor Evans Community School. Instead, community school personnel, along with community and business partners, planned and implemented the engagements. These are purely volunteer functions with no promise or long-term commitment by any party required; yet many events and activities have become regular and expected occurrences. Examples include Eagle Scout Projects conducted by Boy Scouts outside of the community, community dinners for residents of the community, Thanksgiving and

Christmas food and gift giveaways, parent-teacher conference incentives, and campus-beautification projects.

Student Enrichment Programs tie service activities to the academic needs of students and the seven core components (early care and learning, health and health education, mental health and social services, family and community engagement, youth development and extended learning, neighborhood development, and lifelong learning) of the community school model in place at Eleanor Evans. Of the seventy-three engagement opportunities examined, thirty-one fit under this theme. Student Enrichment Programs provided volunteers and resources in consultation and collaboration with the community schools coordinator or other school personnel to develop programs to meet student and family needs. Many engagements were developed to support the community school's "Out of School Time" (OST) programs, including sports, tutoring, mentoring, music, gardening, and civic engagement. Examples include Cub Scouts, CampFire, UpWard Sports, community school site team meetings, PTA meetings and activities, daily morning assemblies, family nights, and Academic Bowl. The intention of many partners engaged in these activities was to provide academic and behavior interventions and improve attendance. Again, most of the program planning and implementation was spearheaded by school personnel, primarily the community schools coordinator and the Student Enrichment Program liaisons. Several of these engagements did include community residents, families, and students in determining the services to be provided or the direction in which programming should evolve (the community school site team meetings, PTA, Garden

Time Program, 6th Grade OST, and Pre-K OST, counseling and attendance programs, for instance).

Engagements facilitated by nonprofit entities around **Community Development** ends-in-view fit in the third themed group. The nonprofit groups orchestrating the activities and events have no ongoing collaborative or invested connection with the school. They may use the school's connections to families to distribute flyers about upcoming events, but relationships with the school were otherwise limited to invitations. Of the seventy-three engagements catalogued, nineteen fit in this theme. Community Development groups provide services to meet the needs of community residents, including school students and families of Eleanor Evans. Access to clothing, food, dental and medical care, tutoring, job training, early childhood education, health and housing needs were available to residents from these entities. Some nonprofits also provided educational or networking engagement opportunities. For some groups within this theme, engagements included collecting feedback or products from residents to be included in reports, research, and grant applications around neighborhood and community-development plans. These engagements represent several opportunities for community residents to provide input or feedback regarding the needs of the community and what they would like to see happen, such as community planning, literacy, mentoring, job coaching, faith-based activities, and health-related needs and services.

Thus, of the seventy-three engagements themed, approximately 32 percent were Community Service Engagements in which community partners provided services and resources to families and students within the Eleanor Evans Community School with little-to-no engagement of these families to determine their needs or make decisions

regarding the programs and activities provided. Forty-two percent of the community-engagement opportunities were Student Enrichment Programs (SEP) aligned with the academic needs of students and/or the seven core components of the community school model in place at Eleanor Evans. Of the thirty-one engagements in this category, seven engaged families and students in making decisions about programming and addressing the needs of families and students living in the Eleanor Evans Community. More than half of the engagements included for analysis are facilitated through Student Enrichment Programs, yet only 23 percent of the programs in this theme included community residents' insights and participation to determine services and tailor programming for students and families. Finally, community-development engagements account for 26 percent of the engagement opportunities examined. A majority of these engagements offered support for residents to be involved in making decisions about the resources available to the community and proposed changes in the neighborhood.

PUMC Community Dinner - Experiencing Community Service Engagements

A community service end-in-view is illustrated by a longstanding, monthly community dinner hosted by Pleasant United Methodist Church. My own first experience of this engagement is highlighted in field notes I kept during principal internship in the spring of 2012. The narrative that follows is an excerpt from my reflective journal.

It was my first full day at the school as an intern. I arrived at 6:30 a.m., as Claudia, my supervising principal, suggested. We sprinted through the day. It was trial by fire; I should have worn my running shoes. As she was sharing policies, procedures, and practices that were in place at the school, she reminded me that there would be a

community dinner tonight. Pleasant United Methodist Church (PUMC) hosts a dinner for the community on the last Friday of the month when school is in session, and it was January 27, 2012, the last Friday of the month. My parents still lived in Pleasant and let me camp out with them as I completed the requirements of principal internship, so I quickly called my mom to let her know I would not be there for dinner, and we resumed our speed walk through the events of the day. At 5:45 p.m., Claudia and I ceased our work in her office and made our way to the festivities. The event is always well publicized, advertised on the school's digital sign all day and communicated with flyers sent home in Thursday Folders. This monthly dinner is counted as an engagement success by several members of the school staff and members of PUMC. When I walked in, I noticed that the gymnasium had been transformed into a huge dining hall. There was a large crowd tonight. Claudia hinted that the Christmas food giveaways had likely run out, and holiday spending might have families running a little short at the end of January and it was too early to file taxes and receive a refund. The room was full, at least twenty-five tables, each seating between seven and ten community members. Families waited patiently as Pleasant United Methodist Church (PUMC) volunteers brought them bottled water and salad to begin the meal, followed by Frito chili pie and cobbler dessert. PUMC volunteers, I was told, are from various Sunday school classes who have also brought teenage children to serve community members as well. As families eat and talk with each other, Claudia and I circulate; it feels awkward for me to follow her as she travels between families celebrating successes and listening to stories of their lives. I am an intruder on this ritual, but families are kind as she introduces me; they shake my hand with smiling faces and words of support. Finally, Claudia's

husband and grandchildren arrive, and she finds a table near the door. She had told me in the afternoon that she would stay for the meal but had to leave soon after, as her family had early Saturday morning activities planned. I find a spot out of the way and watch as families continue to arrive and eat between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m., until a PUMC member brings out a microphone at 6:30. After a brief prayer for the food was offered, several announcements are made by Claudia, PUMC members, Junior League, and the Pleasant Neighborhoods Revitalization Initiative representative. Each person talks about upcoming events. PUMC will have a Birthday Buddies celebration next month, Junior League shares the schedule for community cooking classes at the Bounty in February, and a Pleasant Neighborhoods representative encourages family members to attend a forum to gain input about changes to the neighborhood. Finally, the microphone is returned to a PUMC member to announce that BINGO (for non-food items) will begin in twenty minutes, followed by a prayer session for those who would like to participate.

As I watch the events of the evening unfold, it strikes me that the experience for residents in the community might be patronizing, as wealthy and middle class PUMC members humble themselves and serve them a meal at the end of a long month when food stamps are a few days away, and the school offers warmth and food. Maybe the community members are humbling themselves too; I wonder what it costs them to participate in this event.

The experience of this community dinner, along with many other experiences, sparked more questions about engagement in this community school. As a result, I finally discovered my research question: *What is the nature and who are the*

participants of community engagement in this urban elementary community school? In my interviews with participants in the Eleanor Evans school community during the 2012-2013 school year, I asked each person to describe opportunities for community engagement they had seen or experienced and asked them to think about those activities that engaged community members to make decisions about what was happening in the school and the services being provided to students and families.

PUMC Community Dinner - Enquiring About Community Service Engagements

As I began asking participants about community engagement opportunities, it became apparent that a wide variety of activities were considered community engagement. Some school personnel in particular did not distinguish between community service and community engagement in initial interviews. A few participants expressed confusion when I asked if there were engagement opportunities that invited families to make decisions about the school or community services provided. A couple of participants revisited their understanding of community engagement in later interviews after reflecting on the engagement opportunities present in the school and community. Evelynn, Penelope, and Hari in particular pointed out that community service engagements had become the norm for the community.

In fact, the PUMC Community Dinner was the most frequently mentioned monthly activity. School staff, PUMC members, community partners and residents, and Neighborhood Revitalization partners shared that they had attended and seen the event publicized widely at the school, in the community, and on the internet. The dinner has been a mainstay for Eleanor Evans. Families who began attending the dinner nearly a decade ago are still familiar faces each month. Dana, the PUMC Minister, shares that

the whole community is invited; the church does not distinguish between those with children in the school and the greater community, yet she thinks the "regulars" come from the neighborhood of houses north of the school rather than the low-income apartment complexes. Evelynn, the school counselor, suggests one of the most important opportunities that arises from the Community Dinner is the BINGO game and giveaways, which include items that cannot be purchased with food stamps, such as household cleaners, toilet paper, soap, and feminine hygiene products.

Bruce, the resident coordinator for Pleasant Neighborhoods, attends the community dinners as an opportunity to network with a wide variety of residents and share the efforts of the initiative, including inviting residents to informational and interactive forums and plans for upcoming resident events. Olivia, the school social worker, shares that the regular monthly dinner is one of the few ways school personnel, student enrichment programs, and community development entities can gain access to parents and families for face-to-face conversations. She also shares concerns echoed by the PTA president, teachers, counselors, and others that this engagement does not go far enough. They would like to see opportunities for conversations or small-group discussions focused on promoting academic success for students and soliciting information from families about their specific needs (Olivia, Susan, Penelope, Shelley, Hari, Robert, Dana). Additionally, several participants shared concerns that the incentives that made the event successful (e.g., free dinner, babysitting, prizes, non-food products) were the primary reason for engagement, and there were few new faces each month.

I had also noticed several changes about the PUMC community dinner when I returned to Eleanor Evans during the 2012-2013 school year. My first community dinner experience occurred the previous school year, which, by most accounts, was a successful time for this engagement. However, between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, levels of participation by the community had decreased from about 350 to 500 people to less than 150 (Olivia). This drop was overwhelmingly attributed to the change in school leadership. When Claudia retired, Rhonda, the new principal, continued to support the event, sending home flyers and posting them in the hallways; however, numbers of attendees decreased every month as reported by school personnel and families. Families such as Jewel's plan on the PUMC Community Dinner for a meal at the end of the month. She reflects on the change in the level of participation in the dinner, stating:

> The community dinner is usually a very large turnout, but it has reduced because of the leader change. You used to have people standing waiting for a seat; that may not have been the best situation, but you got a big turnout. Now there are empty seats all the time, there is space, you have choices of seats; it's not the same. It makes it better for BINGO though. I got a ham last time at BINGO; I have been winning so maybe I should shut up. (Jewel)

Margie, a teacher's aide and former Eleanor Evans resident, shared her disappointed in the low participation but offered a suggestion to improve engagement.

> I wish that they could get more parents involved, but I think in order to do that somebody may just have to go to their homes or community centers to talk to them about being involved. Maybe they would be better in their own environment. Then when they get to the community center then discuss participating with the PTA. And maybe they could give them some kind of little prize, say if you join PTA, what usually works is when they have the community dinner once a month—the little Bingo game so they can win paper towels and toilet paper. I know I need paper towels and toilet paper. I bet other people will need that as well. (Margie)

The idea to go out into the community to increase participation was echoed by many school personnel and community partners. Bruce from Pleasant Neighborhoods shared that he felt the strength of his success was based on his connection to the neighborhood as a long-term resident. He walked the streets and met people in their apartment complex community rooms to solicit feedback regarding the neighborhood-revitalization project underway. As suggested by Margie, he used incentives to garner their participation and attendance to a variety of events and meetings; however, concerns that "incentivizing" participation was the heart of the participation problem led Rhonda to begin her first year as principal establishing a new vision for community engagement, which favored "giving hands up rather than handouts" to support families in the Eleanor Evans community.

Under Claudia's leadership, several programs to provide resources to families and students in need were readily available and accessed by the community. Claudia admits that she may have been fooled once to pay someone's light bill or fill their gas tank, but it didn't happen often. Other school personnel also shared that they had paid a bill or purchased groceries or clothes for students or family in the school, but stated it was their choice to do so. Evelynn pointed out that Claudia usually asked parents who requested help to serve in the school by either weeding the school garden, assisting with an after-school program, or serving as an aide in a teacher's classroom. These types of assistance became characterized as "handouts" under Rhonda's leadership and were discouraged. Instead, Rhonda proposed that families and children be asked to serve the school before or in exchange for services as a matter of habit. Carrie, the parent facilitator, shared that her parent volunteer program was one way that parents could

earn things like household cleaning supplies or linens in exchange for service. This change in "giving" philosophy was also identified as a potential barrier to participation by a majority of participants interviewed. Nearly equal numbers of participants aligned on either side of the issue when mentioned.

PUMC Community Dinner – Examining Community Service Engagements

Participation benefits related to the community service-type engagements, like the PUMC community dinner, have been described by interviewees as opportunities to celebrate, receive rewards and gifts, and alternatively as taking bribes and, at times, encouraging a sense of entitlement. A flyer that is distributed the week before the community dinner and posted throughout the school and community advertises the event and includes reminders that all community members are welcome to share a meal, fellowship, Bingo, and prayer. Internal and community calendars for the school have this event listed each month. Under Claudia's administration, the event was also included on the school's website calendar and home page.

Claudia sought the church to begin this regular event soon after she became principal of Eleanor Evans and describes her proposal to PUMC to begin having a monthly community dinner in her published memoir, stating:

> A Sunday school class approached me and asked me what I thought the community needed. I suggested that they start having free community dinners at the end of the month, when the need was the greatest and food stamps had run out. Their answer was unequivocally "Yes!" So on the last Friday of every month, members from [PUMC] drive up to [Eleanor Evans] in their Lexus's and SUV's, park in our parking lot, and serve the people of our school community with a heart for God. They feed them, serve them, love them, pray with them. This happens every month. Six years later, on the last Friday of the moth, our gym is packed with people ready to eat, ready to be served, ready to be engulfed by the Holy Spirit. The [Eleanor Evans] community looks forward to the community dinners. Never once have I had to call security. Never once have I had to call the police during one of these dinners. It is a peaceful place to be the

> last Friday of every month. Parents will walk through the halls to find me, "You having the dinner this Friday, Ms. [Smith]?" I'm always so humbled to say, "Yes, we are. Come on down!" (Claudia).

PUMC Community Dinner Reflections

As I reflected on the community meal, it struck me that this monthly dinner has become almost a ritual for the Eleanor Evans Community School. The dinners began early in Claudia's tenure at the school. If the community was engaged to make decisions about the purpose or outcome of the event in the beginning, there is no current evidence they are engaged to make decisions and plan the dinners. Rather, on the last Friday of the month, beginning shortly after lunch is finished, PUMC members converge upon the school, bringing tables to set up in the gym and food for meal preparation.

Many of the church volunteers are retired and share that they enjoy spending this afternoon preparing the meal. Some volunteers arrived at the school to set up after having lunch together in the shopping district just over the bridge. Regardless of what brings these volunteers to the school, it is clear there is a system. Procedures are routinized. A number of volunteers have particular jobs preparing for the event, which they have enacted many times over. Thus, actors who were engaged to plan and execute the first community dinners have left a legacy for current participants to reenact. Collection of items for the Bingo game is relegated to individual Sunday school classes within PUMC and is an ongoing practice. Food for the meal is purchased with money regularly donated for that purpose by other PUMC groups. Decisions-making around this event has been reduced to determining the menu and recruitment of volunteers, and these decisions are made by PUMC members. The school provides the space for the event as required under district policy.

Christmas Angels – Experiencing Community Service Engagements

A second community service end-in-view engagement is an annual Christmas present drive that includes every child in the school. The "Christmas Angels" ifting event is a coordinated effort that consumes a great deal of time for those planning and executing the event. During December of 2012, I was able to spend several days at the school that happened to coincide with the gift-collection phase of this engagement event. Field notes I recorded at that time reveal the scope of the preparation necessary.

As I walked into Hari's office for a visit, I made my way through a sea of gift bags to her work table and rearranged a stack of gift-filled boxes in order to take a seat. She is always kind and seldom turns me away when I ask for an interview; today she is friendly but noticeably busy as she checks her class lists to be sure that every child in the school will have gifts. The gift-opening party will happen later this week, and most Partners in Education (PIEs) have already delivered gifts for the class(es) they have agreed to sponsor; however, Hari checks each and every delivery to be sure that the most recently enrolled students were included. As we visit and check the gift inventory, Jessica, the community outreach coordinator from Pleasant Medical School, arrives with gifts for twenty-five students in third grade and a bag of gifts for recent enrollees in other grades. Somehow we make more space for the additional gifts and thank Jessica for bringing them. As Jessica exits, fourth-grade students walking with their teacher to P.E. poke their noses into the room for a quick peek. One young lady, whom I tutored in math the previous semester, spots me and takes the chance to sneak a hug and get a closer look at the gift inventory. Hari allows her a quick visit and then sends her back to line, which has slowed considerably and bulges into the room a bit before

snaking back to the other side of the hallway and into the gymnasium. Once the door is securely closed and locked again, Hari collapses into the chair for a quick rest before she returns to her lists. She gives me a brief update about the events surrounding the gifting and pointed out that working out the details of this engagement event has become one of her duties. Her role as Community School Coordinator does not explicitly align with coordination of this community service event; however, she was asked by Claudia when she came to the school in 2008 to take over these duties and she had found a way to juggle it, along with her other responsibilities. She mentions that today she is really pressed for time as she will have to act as substitute for one of the after-school programs. I take this as my cue to leave her to her work and carefully maneuver my way to the door.

Christmas Angels – Enquiring and Examining Community Service Engagements

During interviews, several participants mention the Christmas gifts and other giveaways that have been tied to the holiday season. Dana, minister at PUMC, shared that the tradition began when PUMC members decided to give Christmas presents to all of the children in the school in the late 1990s. At that time the church provided all of the gifts. Over the years several additional partners were engaged, and more presents were given to each child. She shared concern that the excitement children expressed in the first years of the event had waned, as students had come to expect the gifts. The intention at that time was to have every child at Eleanor Evans "have the opportunity to have and receive a Christmas like our children would."

And yet she realized that this engagement was not benefitting everyone in the same way, saying:

> Some of them would open them [the gifts] while we were there, and the delight on their faces…. We all like to feel good, if I can give twenty dollars or go buy a Christmas gift that makes me feel great. But you have to think further than that, you have to think: What does this do for the parent? We come in, we provide all of the Christmas gifts, and you can just see the parents' faces just kind of glaze over in sadness, because here are these people outside of the family bringing in Christmas gifts. You know, I think we tend to think "let me give money" and that is engagement. (Dana)

Residents of the community also expressed consequences of the holiday community service activities. Jewel admitted that the community has become "spoiled." Robert communicates frustration with donors at holiday time. He was concerned that Pleasant doesn't think about the needy families at Eleanor Evans until the holidays, and then they focus on giving money or gifts. He pointed out that the groups that organize those giveaways are all but forgotten during the rest of the year. Robert also feels that those who work for the Partners in Education (PIEs) see engagement at the holidays and other times of the year as a function of their work-life, saying:

> Do you see community involvement here? No, you see people coming in and doing things, but that is not community. You see State Bank come in; they don't live anywhere near the school. They don't know anything about the school other than that they are coming in to provide something for their company. It is a company thing. What State Bank does makes them look good. (Robert)

In addition to being an episode of giving rather than a long-term engagement from the perspective of community members and community partners, the events require time and planning, which is delegated to Hari, community school coordinator. Each event takes Hari away from the work that is aligned with the seven core components that are the foundation of the community school work. The Christmas Angel engagement event alone required that Hari begin finding community partners in October each year in

order to have a sponsor to provide a total of three gifts for every child in every classroom. Claudia had added to the PUMC work when she arrived and envisioned providing every child with a book, an item of clothing, and a toy of the child's choosing. Increasing the number of gifts per child meant increasing the number of sponsors and, therefore, time finding sponsors. Additionally, because Eleanor Evans is a highly transient school, Hari spent many hours updating class lists, clothing sizes, and gift wishes of children in each class as new students were enrolled every week leading up to the gift-opening party.

In 2010, Hari writes about the gifting event in her December monthly report, stating:

> The event felt like a success, ten local businesses and associations came together to sponsor every student (422) grouped by class or grade level. This way each student received a toy and book of their choice, and an article of clothes in his/her size. The sponsors are invited to communicate with teachers of their adopted classes if they would like to come watch the children open their packages. Some choose not to come. Most do in their own way. For example, State Bank adopts all the kindergarten classes each year. They bring Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus and the bags of gifts to each of the classrooms. A new group this year, S&T had first- and second-grade classes. They delivered the gifts on Wednesday to be hidden in the classroom closets. On Friday representatives attended the class parties to watch children open their sacks. Every sack had a new pair of shoes, a toy, and a book. Both classrooms received a set/series of grade-level books and the teacher a $150 gift certificate to The Learning Shop. (Hari)

As Hari celebrates the community service events in the school, she also reflects on them, expressing realizations and concerns in her monthly reports submitted to the Pleasant Community School Initiative. In her December 2010 report she states the events are possible because "we work together with flexibility and a collaborative spirit" to realize each group's goal; however, pulling off all of the engagements that are proposed becomes more difficult

when there are few limits set. The expectations of those engaged in the holiday events are described well in another excerpt from the same report.

> The holiday season is a crucial time for community engagement. There is tremendous interest and high expectations for 'good feelings' and the sense of 'making a difference in the life of a child.' When these desires are frustrated, we lose good will and some momentum toward enlisting support through the longer, more mundane times. I will also say the obvious, that our children and their families also have heightened expectations and fantasies around the holiday season. (Hari)

Hari also describes the tensions she feels as she works to make the engagements meet the needs and expectations of donors and community residents at Christmastime.

> Cross-boundary leadership requires an ability to understand the fantasies of our neighborhood residents as they are grounded in their reality, while understanding and indulging, to a degree, the fantasies of our guests, wishing to share their resources. This is not said with spite or with predilection, as we are all always both, residents and guests. I also believe that disappointment/ disillusionment is inevitable. My goal must then be for the resident and visitor both, to share in the disappointment/disillusionment and to experience a part of the miracle as well, and for reality to become better for everyone. (Hari)

All the while, she remains very aware that the events of the holidays impact the consistency of routine within the school, which can also impact the academic progress of Eleanor Evans students, and thus she strives to "keep energy positive, while maintaining the routine and structure that children need." She also wonders, "*How do these children internalize and make sense of the contrast created by this yearly wave of hyperempathy and generosity?"*

Hari mirrors Robert's concern that the needs of communities of poverty are primarily addressed during the holidays, when those with resources are reflecting upon their good fortune. Hari describes the feast and famine that accompanies the season of giving and perceptions of the community as greedy. As community partners notice a

lack of appreciation for the gifts given each December, Hari offers an explanation as she also wishes for more balanced donations throughout the year rather than a single extravagant Christmas feast.

> What appears to be "greed" and the sense of "entitlement" during the holidays, among persons in poverty can perhaps be compared to the psychological phenomenon of hoarding. Folks who experience times of real hunger will fill purses and pocket with food as they move along the buffet. The food is here now but may not come again for a while. Hoarding is emotional because it feels like, and sometimes is, a means of survival. Is this the same as greed? (Hari)

With the transition in leadership between the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, Rhonda brought her "hands up rather than handout" perspective to the holiday-giveaway tradition. Although the Christmas Angel gifting event changed little from previous years, Rhonda expressed an expectation that all who receive gifts be asked to write a thank-you note or in some way show their appreciation. This practice had been in place for several years in individual classrooms as teachers worked with their classes to create thank-you notes for their class sponsors. The new principal now asked adults to complete a thank-you card for holiday meals that were donated from community partners, a practice that was exercised on all occasions of gifting or donation. Gwen, a second-grade teacher, expressed her appreciation for this increased expectation of families. As a member of PUMC, former resident of the community, and classroom teacher, she supported Rhonda's change in philosophy from "handouts" to "hands up."

Dana, PUMC minister, also rallied behind Rhonda to change the function and outcome of the community service activities her church members organized and suggested that, to "empower the parent," they must be more than a "passive

recipient" of the gifts and services provided by outside entities. She charges that there must be a change in the "whole dynamic" and admits that "coming from middle-upper class White America, it is much easier for all of us to think, *Let me just get my friends to donate all these thousands of dollars and we will provide coats and shoes*." Dana continues, "It is easier to fit twenty dollars into the budget, but to fit in having to work alongside these people…it takes more work to do that." Relationships must be developed in order to really impact the lives of the families at Eleanor Evans from Dana's perspective; relationships are not developed when giving or receiving "handouts."

Similarly, Robert expressed concerns that the community had learned to "go where the resources are," and so families had no strategies to gain resources on their own; they just "follow the gravy train." "When one group stops giving, they find another group to get the resources from." Robert charged, "We can't just give, we have to teach," referencing the Chinese Proverb: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." When I asked Robert how to begin that process, he expressed another concern. As Rhonda had come in and changed things in the school, she had also lost the trust that Claudia had established with the community. Robert had very little confidence that Rhonda would be able to gain the trust of the young single mothers who make up the majority of the community and, therefore, little hope that her "hands up" strategy would be embraced, saying:

> She has lost what the other principal had, the trust of the mothers. The young ladies will not go in to her because they don't like her. They say she doesn't want anything to do with them. So they don't participate unless there is a free meal involved or something like that. (Robert)

Robert went on to share that he was a child of poverty, growing up in foster care in Pittsburgh, separated from his mother and family in grade school. He pleaded for parents to be involved, for the school to find a way, and cautioned:

> If you don't have a parent involved with their child through the fourth grade you are gonna lose that child. Especially a male, a black male particularly, because the forces are greater outside of school and he is going to go that way. So you have babies raising babies, but you have to figure out how to get those young people engaged in the system. (Robert)

Christmas Angel Gifting Reflections

Like the PUMC Community Dinner, the Christmas Angel gifting event was an annual tradition with a long history. Dana shared that PUMC started this tradition early in their engagement with the school in the 1990s; however, there were more changes to this community service event over time than are reflected in the community dinners. Claudia decided to increase the number of gifts and requested specific items for each child. The decision that each child should have an item of clothing in the proper size, a book, and a toy of their choosing required more partners be sought to provide for all students. Prior to these criteria, PUMC members held gift donation drives for the school and the counselor and a team of volunteers, sorted gifts, and made decisions about which child should receive each present. Claudia's criteria meant that each child needed to be consulted regarding their clothing sizes and preference in toys. When Hari came to the school in 2008, this task was handed to her. She shared that she spent many hours interviewing children to collect gift data, and as new children came to the school every week, this process was nearly continuous from September to December. Hari was also asked to find sponsors for each class and began this process in October each year. Like the community dinner, this yearly event had become a ritual with routine

practices and sets of actions that may be adjusted slightly but overall remained very similar from year to year. Decision-making was done by school administration, the community school coordinator, and Partners in Education (PIEs). Students were consulted regarding their preferences, but parents were largely left out of the process.

Community Service Engagement Ends-in-view

Community engagements such as the monthly community dinner and holiday gifting share a community service end-in-view. Community service is often a component of community engagement within a variety of organizations; however, the engagement typically entails members of the school or organization giving back to the community at large. For Eleanor Evans Community School members, community service engagements make students and families the recipients of the community service efforts, with little opportunity for Eleanor Evans community members to invest in their own school through service. Additionally, as recipients of community services through Eleanor Evans, the residents have had limited opportunity to be involved in decision-making and in determining the needs they would seek to be met. The realized end-in-view of these types of engagements are described by Pastor Matthew as "hit-n-run volunteerism."

> I regularly get calls from church youth groups in the city that want to come do a one-day cleanup of the neighborhood and wash graffiti off of the sides of the buildings. I appreciate at some level their heart and attitude, why they want to do it. But it doesn't foster the idea of partnering with people in the neighborhood for the long-term to transform the neighborhood with their involvement and ultimately with their leadership of it. To me, I need to separate between the people that want to do the sort of 'hit-n-run volunteerism,' -that is what I call it- versus the long-term partnering with people. And so if there are people from outside of the community, like people from our church, who have that idea, 'I want to invest in this community even though I don't live there. I want to invest with my time and energy, and I am going to kind of adopt this community and be involved and do stuff,' then that is great, because I think the longer they do

> that they might build a desire to come be a part of the community and actually live here. That is the difference… I think that the 'hit-n-run volunteer' stuff isn't good for either person, the giver or the receiver. I think for the giver it lets them off the hook too easily and lets them go home and feel like they have made a significant change when they haven't really; they have just picked up trash. (Matthew)

Student Enrichment Ends-in View

Student Enrichment Programs (SEP) provide academic support for children, encourage communication with families around student learning, and also seek to provide resources for family success. Central to the creation of SEP is the support for the community school model and the seven core components for student and family success that are aligned with the work done by the Coalition for Community Schools. The core components include early care and learning, health and health education, mental health and social services, family and community engagement, youth development and extended learning, neighborhood development, and lifelong learning. Improved school performance and attendance are explicit ends-in-view of the Student Enrichment Program engagements.

Community School Site Team - Experiencing Student Enrichment Programs

Student Enrichment Programs offer community engagement opportunities within the Eleanor Evans Community School primarily through the work done by the community school site team in collaboration with the community and business partners to address the specific needs of the students and address the seven core components of the community school model. The site team is a collection of partners interested in addressing the needs for the school community and is led by Hari, Community School Coordinator. These partnering programs leverage relationships with community partners to extend the limits of what the school can do on its own, for example,

providing mentoring and tutoring, athletics, and music enrichment through partnerships that do not cost the school additional money.

I was able to attend three site team meetings during my field experiences and field observations that were facilitated by Hari. An entry from my field notes during principal internship in February of 2012 illustrates the nature of this community engagement activity.

Following today's faculty meeting, Hari asked if I would like to join her for the community school site team meeting in the library. Several teachers stayed for the meeting, and we were quickly joined by about twenty representatives from school and community partners, including: the PTA, two churches, the early childhood program next door, Girls and Boys Club, resident service coordinators from two of the apartment complexes, the Literacy Center, the district's central office, Children and Family Services, health services, and other transition program representatives. After a few minutes of visiting and catching up between members of the site team, Hari leads us in a review of the purpose and goals of the site team for this year. Her agenda always includes a brief review of the seven core components or strategies that we are working to incorporate. She reminds us that "a community school is both a place and a network of supportive partnerships between the school and the community…providing a web of support that nurtures the development of children and adults" (site team meeting agenda 2.6.2012).

The meeting is fairly loose in structure, and several community members address agenda items as each person introduces themselves and gives an update regarding the community engagement opportunities approaching as well as recent

successes. Today, Brenda from the Literacy Center shares her current efforts to have a literacy resource center in each of the apartment complexes to support adult reading; Susan, PTA President, shares that she is providing free classes in the school library to discuss financial management (Ponder Prosperity); and a health services provider relays an upcoming opportunity for women in the community to have a free mammogram. This monthly meeting appears to be an opportunity for community partners to network with each other and learn about resources that would meet the needs of the cross-section of the community they work with directly. Attendees are friendly and appreciative of the information shared, but I am left wondering: *Where are the parents? Where are the community residents who need this information? Where are their voices in determining services provided?*

Hari's agenda refers to "cross-boundary leadership as leaders who believe in community schools and come together from every sector—education, government, business, nonprofits, faith-based groups, health and social services, youth and community development and more—to build supports and opportunities for young people and families." It seems to me that there might be important stakeholders missing from this long list of service providers.

In the spring of 2013, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting of community school coordinators and parents from the schools across two districts engaged in community schooling. The meeting was led by George, Director of the Pleasant Community School Initiative, and took place in a community library one rainy February morning. George opened the meeting by presenting a question to guide our work: "Do people at your school understand you and your community?" Each school was

represented by the principal, community school site coordinator, and at least one parent from the school. Many schools had multiple parents present. Today, Rhonda arrives late. Hari, Jen, and I joined the coordinator from another "westside" school and the parent she had invited. George asked us to work in table groups to learn more about parents' experiences within the community schools to address the question he posed.

Jen shared that her children do enjoy school at Eleanor Evans, but they have struggled some academically, and the transition to middle school had been difficult. She also challenged that the magnet schools and lottery program were attracting children and families away from the feeder pattern, which included Eleanor Evans, and warned that moving away from the community school concept in favor of the "better" schools (magnet and lottery) was bad for her community. Jen also reported her participation as coach in the athletic "Out of School Time" (OST) programs as a positive outcome made possible because of the community school model. Jen provided many suggestions for approaching Eleanor Evans parents, stating, "They want to be respected, and they want their children respected." She also suggested that parents do not engage with teachers and the school because they already feel like a failure and will be "losing face" just by walking into the building. She stated, "People in the neighborhood feel attacked by the school, but they are really just down on themselves and think school people view themselves as better than us." George asked the site coordinators in the groups to brainstorm plans based on the feedback parents were providing. Several parents suggested that the school ask what their needs are rather than making assumptions about what resources and services to provide. Hari suggested that she lead a monthly meeting at Eleanor Evans for children and families to engage in

ongoing conversations about their needs but admitted previous efforts had been difficult because of high mobility of the population. Insights from another group included "making parents the first partner in family engagement" and developing a "parent ambassador program to support ongoing parental engagement."

The meeting yielded insightful ideas and perspectives on parental engagement, and George charged teams from each site to take the information learned back to their schools. As we collected our things to go, Hari quietly expressed a concern to me. Rhonda had arrived late to the meeting and sat with a couple of other school leaders at a table near the back of the room; she did not join us to discuss parental engagement, and she left early, even before individual table groups shared their strategies. Hari has become increasingly frustrated over the course of the school year and now feels that Rhonda is actively trying to disband the community school efforts that Hari leads. How can parents be engaged as part of the team when the team is in danger of being dismantled?

The site team is the primary decision-making and collaborative body responsible for maintaining the momentum of the community school efforts at Eleanor Evans. During a meeting of the site team in the spring of 2013, it became obvious to me that its survival was in danger. Instead of evolving from the conversations of the stakeholders present and driven by sharing the work and successes of each school and community partner, Hari admitted she felt pressured to stick closely to the agenda and deal in concrete, evidence-based discussions of the progress of her efforts at the school. With the agenda she also distributed a four-page spreadsheet addressing the goals of the partnering programs and budget items for the 2012-2013 school year. The tone of the

meeting had changed dramatically; the principal's presence made Hari tense and it was evident. When Dana asked probing questions about the programming, there was an uncomfortable silence. As Hari responded, I could hear the pain in her voice. My heart went out to her, and I wanted to speak up, but I all could do was look down at my notes. The next few minutes were unbearable as Hari responded to Dana's pointed inquiries, their interaction taking over the meeting. I imagined the expressions of others at the table—confusion, discomfort, sympathy—as Dana would not allow Hari to escape her questioning and continue the meeting, but still I looked down at my notes. I felt like a coward as I prayed for this moment to pass. Three months later, Hari's fear was realized as PCSI fired her.

This experience in February of 2013 highlights the changes on the horizon for the community school initiative at Eleanor Evans. Collaborations that flourished under Claudia to create programs through the work of the site team and had produced several after-school programs, including tutoring, music, and athletics, health fairs, health screenings, neighborhood-development projects, and transition programs between early childhood and elementary school as well as intersession learning opportunities. As Rhonda stepped into leadership at the school, collaborations changed.

Community School Site Team - Enquiring about Student Enrichment Programs

When participants were asked if and how the community school model provided support for student academic success, several school personnel and partnering organizations mentioned the expanded learning opportunities made possible because of the partnerships that were formed. Teachers and program staff from the Garden Time program shared their perceptions.

Hannah, the Garden Time director, stated, "I think community schools make a lot of opportunities [available] for children that they wouldn't otherwise receive." The community school coordinator facilitates after-school programs and "makes a lot of programs possible [by] mak[ing] connections and bringing new programs in, keeping things organized," which creates "more opportunities for students." Gwen, a classroom teacher, shared that the opportunities offered stretched children to try things "outside of their family's comfort zones." She shared that Bike Club was a great example because it gave the children an opportunity to learn to ride and care for a bike that they earn through participation. This was something that they would not likely have the chance to do because parents could not afford bikes, and bike riding wasn't happening in the community. She stated, "So getting children comfortable doing something they might not be comfortable doing or something that is not encouraged at home broadens their spectrum." Adele, the community outreach coordinator for Garden Time, asserts: "We want every opportunity available to our students, and I think that is important to our success." Students are attracted to different types of activities; we have plenty of options that are likely to "appeal to different students. I think our students learn a little bit about what they might be interested in" by exploring the opportunities available to them. "They might have a talent or skill in something that they didn't know" about; "it might be art or bike club or dance. Having so many opportunities to explore helps them feel successful because maybe one child isn't great at soccer but can feel successful drumming, or maybe they aren't that successful in school but they can excel when they are given leadership in Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, or whatever."

Evelynn, the school counselor, believes that Claudia has been instrumental in creating an atmosphere of safety, kindness, and support. And the community school work continues that tradition. Evelynn shares, "This neighborhood is not a safe place to be. Our children get a little anxious when they know that summer is coming because then they don't get to come here every day." Eleanor Evans "is a safe place; it is a place where they are loved, it is a place where they are fed, it is a good place for them to be, and I think when they feel that way then they can learn."

Gwen shares,

> I was here long before it was a community school. It is 180 degrees different from what it was when I started here, particularly I think the community takes ownership of our school. They call it 'our school;' there is a lot of pride. Whereas, ten years ago it was totally different. The doors were locked and when school was out, it was, 'Get out.' We didn't want parents in the building, and a lot of that was not trusting them or fear that they would come in and steal or damage things. We have totally changed how we look at school now. We consider this our safe place, and we offer a lot of different opportunities for the kids and families so they can come here and participate. It might be sporting events, it might be classes, a lot of different things going on at the school all the time. Having ownership of the school and pride makes them want to do their best when they are here. We say all the time, 'Eleanor Evans is the best school in the whole wide world,' and they believe that. They all say that even the parents say that. So I really feel like they have gained that in their spirit, that mentality that we are the best and we are proud of the school. (Gwen)

Claudia views the school as "the community's building." Parents and families "value all the things we have here, they value the garden, they wouldn't dare let anybody destroy this. It's too valuable to them, and it's something they are very proud of." When people move into the neighborhood, we hear, "So-and-so down the street told me this is a great school." The response is, "It is great school, but that wasn't true years ago." Claudia goes on to describe a community event that took place the previous Sunday. It is early April 2011, and a community church partnered with the school to

sponsor an Easter egg hunt for students and their families. Claudia relates her impressions on that day.

> When I went to see the Easter egg hunt, before it started, while everybody was setting up, there was a group of kids riding bicycles…a group of people walking on the track. There were children playing on the jungle gym. It was just like a city park like the ones you see in wealthy communities. Like a little town square. Well, that's kinda what it looked like, and all of our children were there, all different forms of brown. It's so precious to see everybody getting along and doing well. Picnicking. When we fenced that area, I purposefully left the gates open. I purposefully didn't let the fence go all the way to the wall, and I had to stand and block the fence company. They said, 'Don't you know people will be on your property?' I go, 'That's the point, back off.' And I had to call my superintendent and say, 'Tell them this is okay,' and he said, 'Okay, Claudia, if you think so.' I had to call several people before the fence company would listen to me and say, 'Stop, this is where I want them to walk through. This is their property.' (Claudia)

Adele acknowledges that the community school model at Eleanor Evans has impacted the culture of the school community. "I think that there is a culture that says we are not just a school that closes its doors, or we are not just here to provide an education, but we are really here to lift up students and their families and provide resources in communities that maybe don't have them." Our view of our purpose is "a little more interwoven"; in this "model we are not looking at the student individually." We have to support the entire family if we want our students to succeed.

Extending access to learning opportunities in this safe environment is also valued as important to student and family success. Eleanor Evans Elementary school provides a safe learning environment from 7:00 a.m. each school day morning until 6:00 p.m. each evening. Extended-learning opportunities are available to all students during breaks throughout the school year. By following an extended-learning calendar, students at Eleanor Evans attend school year-round with short breaks between each of the four quarters. Evelynn shared that students are "off for three weeks in October," but

they still have "opportunities that they can still come to school and be safe" for two of those weeks. During the spring intercession, students can also "come two weeks out of those three weeks and have instruction. In the summertime we have three weeks of school," and we are out of school without learning activities for six weeks.

Claudia says her students "benefit every second of every day" from the community school model at her site and the opportunity to provide an extended-learning day and year. Velma, a special education teacher, shared that students have the opportunity to go to summer camps, sports camps, and continue learning in the after-school programs, which are still offered during breaks throughout the year. Evelynn described the opportunity to travel to day camp or overnight camp as an important experience students would not have without the community school program. Specifically, students who participated in soccer in the after-school program during the year had the opportunity to go to a weeklong clinic offered at the beginning of the summer through donations from PUMC and others.

Hari's work has been central to coordinating these opportunities for the benefit of Eleanor Evans students. In a February 2013 conversation with Hari, she provided a metaphor to describe her responsibilities to keep all of the extended-learning opportunities populated with relevant partnering programs.

> I see this work as a spider spinning a web that it cannot stop weaving. I must do it forever. The web is ever-changing, and what it becomes is determined by the skill of those participating and the quality of the engagements. I am in the web, living in the web, and trying to attract others… When I saw things happening, I stood back and looked at the web, and I knew I was doing the right thing, I had pride in my job and was enjoying it. But it was always hard and painful. (Hari)

She saw her purpose as "looking for the places to connect and address the gaps" and confided that she felt "teachers were too busy to have the luxury to do this." She saw

her role as making it happen, whatever it was. "People can't join until there is something to join." So Hari had to make "it happen long enough for people to see it, be attracted to it, and join." The nature of this work is complex; finding natural fits can always be a struggle and managing competing agendas a chief concern. Hari worked often behind the scenes to bring partners onboard to meet specific needs by orchestrating their presence at key meetings or events that would allow them to see the potential of engagement from their perspective. Thus, creating an organic relational network for engagement is the backbone of the community school coordinator's work.

Community School Site Team -Examining Student Enrichment Programs

Hari submitted monthly reports to the Pleasant Community School Initiative umbrella during her five-year tenure at Eleanor Evans. In these reports she addresses the complex and important nature of the work that she does to identify the needs in the school and community and find partners to provide for those needs. She described her partnering experiences in this high-need school in a January 2010 monthly report.

> Describing the course of the academic year in terms of humps, ups, and downs, climbing and coasting falls short. A BMX off-road bike race seems more accurate. Between the gunshot and the checkered flag is a series of curves, corners, and straightaways, bumpy and smooth terrain, humps and hills; some ramping us high above the ground into leaps of faith. We are all racing along the track, maneuvering the obstacles and trying not to collide or fall. Each year represents a race along a new course. (Hari)

Through this BMX analogy she points out the difficulty of the work in which she is engaged. "Sometimes I fantasize about winning the lottery. If I was rich, I could build my own road, a shortcut across the BMX course to the finish line" (Hari). And she concludes her report with the bike race as she asserts that partnering and collaboration create interdependence and a realization that we are all working together for the good of the students:

> The blessing is not when one group is self-sufficient to achieve its own vision. The blessing is that we need each other. Our "conditions for learning" are a quality of right relationship. Our pace is driven by the sense of urgency and importance of not allowing one more generation of children [to] fail. The goal is not to be first, or even to cross the finish line. It is to sustain the race. (Hari)

At times she is purposeful, assembling a web and attracting others, other times a bike race, but always believing that if we follow the "vision," we can pull it together as we go:

> Mishmash or medley; what is the difference? I believe vision is the difference. It gives reason to the process of selecting from the mess of confused things. Our vision links an assortment of various things, creating something coherent, and vigorous—neighborhood schools which are the heart of healthy, responsive, generative communities…. The Community Schools process can feel like swimming through mishmash while assembling a raft. I attached some interesting things to my raft this month. Out-of-school time is always a big piece and over the last few months, I have been adding more to Neighborhood Development/Family and Community Engagement. (Hari)

According to Hari, the community school coordinator must continually assess the needs of the school community around the "conditions for learning" in a "process of connecting and reconnecting to create and sustain those conditions" within a flexible network (Hari).

Community School Site Team Reflections

As the community school practices in place depend on the work of the community school coordinator and the site team to bring people into partnership to meet the dynamic needs of children and families, this site team is also the decision-making body. As they collaborate and share resources, those resources are offered to the community. Hari is the primary instrument for assessing the community needs, and she is in touch with those needs. Having worked in the community for several years as a service coordinator in a subsidized-housing complex and in her current role as site

coordinator, she has had prolonged contact with the community and has earned their trust and confidence. Her concerns that the directions of particular initiatives do not address the realities and needs of the community she serves are included in her monthly reports. Yet, she has few opportunities to call attention to this problem, as she must also honor the needs and wishes of those in power. When parents have requested, she sought partnerships to address needs; for example, when pre-K parents asked for an after-school program for their children, she sought collaboration with community partners to address this need. However, ultimate control over programs that cost money was determined by what she could squeeze into her budget or convince other people to fund. Thus, parent participation in decision-making was minimally evidenced in site team membership and did not result in the tailoring of services to meet their particular needs in general. Rather parents and families were more often dependent upon site team membership to make decisions on their behalf.

As the 2013-2014 school year began, the school no longer had a community school site coordinator. Hari's partnerships are now managed by the parent facilitator, who joined the school in October of 2012. The school's website features a calendar, which in the past was bursting with events and activities; today there are a few parent-school activities sprinkled throughout the semester.

Garden Time – Experiencing Student Enrichment Programs

Garden Time, a peace and science education program, provided by a nonprofit partner residing off campus but utilizing a school garden at Eleanor Evans is an example of one of the Student Enrichment Programs. The Garden Time program is present in three of the community schools under the Pleasant Community School

Initiative Umbrella (PCSI). The garden program employs a full-time teacher who provides science instruction for all Eleanor Evans students weekly in addition to "out-of-school" after-school, intersession, and summer programming, which serves between twenty and fifty students at any given time of the year. Garden Time has been revered by students, staff, and parents as a program that provides important opportunities for students to set goals, build relationships of mutual respect, and take control of their lives.

My first experience with Garden Time was in the spring of 2011 when I was invited to visit the after-school program and participated in the activities for the day. The impact of the Garden Time Program on the research agenda that has brought me to this inquiry cannot be understated; it was through this program that I was first introduced to the Eleanor Evans community. Below is an excerpt from field notes from my visit.

As I arrived I was greeted by the community school coordinator, Hari. Since I was a few minutes early, we had the chance to talk about how community schools came to be in Pleasant and what her role is within the school. When the bell rang for dismissal, she walked me to the cafeteria to meet the Garden Time lead teacher. After introducing me, Hari left to supervise another after-school program.

We walked across the school yard and into the building that houses the Garden Time program. Students placed their belongings in cubbies and sat on a large, colorful rug. I soon learn that Garden Time meetings begin and end with community circle, an opportunity to offer appreciations and share about the day. Benny leads the sharing time masterfully and with patience, reminding each child and adult of the procedures for

community circle and to respect the speaker. Students are meeting these expectations; even the kindergartners are quiet, attentive, and participatory. Once everyone in the circle has had an opportunity to share, Benny offers options for us to consider and decide on for the day.

I am not the only visitor to Garden Time today; two women from South America have come to share recipes from their culture. Camila and Maria are from Peru and have some plantains for the group. Benny asks the students if they know what they are, "Have you seen this before?" Several students raise their hands and share that their parents have prepared them. Benny announces that some students can choose to help prepare fried plantains today with our guests from Peru. He also asks, "Who would like to work in the garden?" Several children raise their hands. Benny asks, "What will you do in the garden today?" Students again share, one at a time, their progress in their individual garden plots. Each child has a garden and makes choices about what to plant. Some students need to weed their gardens, others need to prepare the soil for new seeds, and a few would like to aerate the compost pile.

Once all children have stated what they will spend their time doing, we are dismissed to begin our tasks. I follow seven students to the garden where they busy themselves with tools and tasks. One boy, Joseph, asks if I would like a tour. He leads me from one garden plot to another, telling me who cares for the plants there and the theme of the garden. One child has a pizza garden, which includes the spices to make a pizza; the next is a butterfly garden and is filled with flowers; a third plot is a rainbow garden with plants arranged in arcs of colors. Some gardens are empty, ready for the next theme. As I follow Joseph from plot to plot, my heart is full; he is happy and

confident as he leads me through this beautifully peaceful place. I jot down the word "thriving" in my notes as Benny comes to retrieve us so that we can taste our plantain snack.

Garden Time – Enquiring About Student Enrichment Programs

Several interviewees shared the opinion that goal-setting with support to accomplish goals was an important engagement opportunity for students and families participating in the Garden Time program. Goal-setting activities occur in classrooms and after-school programs with growth in pursuit of goals monitored by Garden Time staff with family input. Hannah, the program's director, described daily opportunities for students to interact, ask questions, and follow their curiosities in an active and peaceful environment while keeping daily goals in mind. Hannah points out students in the after-school program set both short- and long-term goals, which they communicate daily. Students are encouraged to set daily goals that are academic, social, personal, or family related. In the garden program students communicate personal goals for the day's activities in "community circle." During this time students are asked to share what is important to them, what is happening at home, and concerns and successes at school. Adele shared, "they may set a personal annual goal that results in specific, visible outcomes", such as "leading a fundraiser or activity or community circle." The director of the garden program described the types of activities she and her staff support to help children construct and achieve their goals:

> We set daily goals in our program, and we ask our students to state to the group their goal for the day. So I know we are setting goals…at the beginning of the year, we do a personal goal and a garden goal. We help them write out steps to make the goal happen and then we check in with them. So, for example, Seana had a goal of preparing a meal or a snack for the teachers, so we helped her walk through how to do that, and she did it. We came to her party, it was at like 5:30,

> she presented what she made and we shared it. It was really nice. Some children might have a more family-oriented goal, like to improve a relationship or to be able to buy a parent a present or make a meal. Carla wanted to be able to make her mom a cake. Tangible goals. And we can see they are making a good decision, because they are not choosing to buy a [video game]; they are naturally making altruistic goals. That's one way to measure their growth. (Hannah)

Adele is the program's community outreach coordinator and shared,

> Sometimes students suggest the creation of something new that they feel would meet a need of the program, or they have an idea for the garden. When they suggest it, they are showing that they are able to identify needs and set goals to meet those needs or can imagine a possible solution to a problem. (Adele)

Benny, a teacher in the program, shared that "sometimes students are not especially interested in gardening" but want to support others in their gardening activities. Darren, a student in the after-school program, was never very motivated to work in his garden plot. "One day I asked if he would take pictures of the other students working on their gardens, he picked up the camera," and that became his role in the garden. "Most of the pictures on our webpage or flyers are student produced." In this garden program, the mission to end the cycle of poverty includes "working in peaceful ways" with the garden as the medium "to put a plan into action" and see it through "to completion" according to Benny.

Another important outcome of extended-learning opportunities like Garden Time was the inclusion of strategies and practices that encouraged building relationships of mutual respect. Gwen, an Eleanor Evans teacher, describes opportunities for students "to treat somebody with respect and to be able to talk to somebody in a social situation in an acceptable way" as an important engagement. She shares that a student's initial behavior can "kinda curl your hair" and comments that she "can't even imagine these kids being able to talk to adults the way some of them do." Over the course of the year, she sees growth in their personal interactions and notes a

difference in the way they engage each other, with fewer disrespectful episodes occurring. She feels that being able to engage others and interact in mutually respectful ways is success.

Hannah shares that the garden program's "community circle offers an opportunity to become sensitive to the needs of others and encourages a tradition of giving." Benny shares that students are supported to "pay it forward" when they are willing to plant seeds that they may not be around to harvest. With high mobility an issue, many children do not begin or end consecutive school years at Eleanor Evans. Providing healthy food for peers or future members of the garden program requires that students invest in each other. "If you can build a relationship, [there is] no need for threats or man handling, you don't have to get in someone's face or anything" (Benny). Through these relationships of mutual respect, children learn to take control of their lives, manage themselves, and change their circumstances (Adele).

Finally, a third theme arising from student enrichment programs was a focus on supporting students to take control of their own lives. Gwen shares students experience success when they can self-monitor and self-regulate.

> They are able to just be in control of themselves, able to function emotionally and physically so that they are able to function academically. If they are able to use some of the techniques we have taught them to de-escalate themselves, or center themselves, that is success. They often come to school very upset and almost hypersensitive. If they can bring themselves to a point where they can function throughout the day and learn, then that is success. We teach them a lot of breathing exercises,…things to bring them back down and focus again, and if they are able to do that on their own without us having to say 'put your finger over your lip and press and count to ten,' so if they are able to start doing some of these things on their own then to me that is success because they are able to start managing themselves. (Gwen)

Hannah described the breathing exercises used in the garden program at the start of community circle as a strategy that supports students to center themselves and focus on the work they will do to accomplish their goals.

> This is a time when you share, not just venting; we do it in a framework of breathing. Breathing in and breathing out, so when we breathe in that is our oxygen, we need that to live and we keep that. And when we breathe out, that is our carbon dioxide and our waste and anything negative that happens…. which hopefully they can learn to let go. Community circle is a neat time because you get to see their heart a little bit and they really share and are really vulnerable. At the end of the day we do appreciations, we come together and they appreciate each other, and so it is very obvious if you have a child who is never sharing or doesn't want to appreciate people and is always breathing things out and never has anything to breathe in, we need to be aware and get someone involved to help her…. They learn to communicate and share and learn to let things go rather than holding on to them. And they learn what they want to hold on to and what to let go. (Hannah)

Adele and Benny describe student success as really seeing our students be able to take control or responsibility for parts of their lives. Adele offered her thoughts, "we really think that we can see indicators in their lives as they realize that they are capable of things" through experiences in the garden. "They create and care for a garden plot and "are responsible for what comes out of that space, for the fruit" of their effort. Then we see them "begin to invest in their own education, as they begin to ask questions, find things that interest them, and learn more." They "figure out ways that they can get involved." They are "learning how to take control of their lives and their education and start realizing that they can change their situation." This is a "huge reason why people remain in generational poverty, because they feel inadequate to change or don't think that things will ever change." The garden program gives them a place to begin exploring their abilities. It "is all about asking questions. Maybe kids have an innateness to ask questions, but as they grow up and live in oppressive

situations or even in school I think questions aren't always encouraged." And so I think that "if you lose the ability to ask questions, you lose the ability to figure out how to change your circumstances."

The results of these experiences are that teachers notice "a marked change in students" over the year, according to Hannah. They are "more positive, more confident, and working in a more peaceful way in the classroom and with their family." Hopefully "we have an impact on our students to empower them to know that they have choices." To know "they can dream and see their dreams come true. See their dreams happen." They can "choose their future instead of kind of follow a path maybe that just is accidental." "They not only have the ability to change their own life or environment, but that can extend out to the community" the practices they learn in the garden. "They know that they can make a difference in their own life and in their community and that they have something to offer."

The impact of a personalized learning experiences through Student Enrichment Programs for the children at Eleanor Evans is well described by Hannah as she explains the expectations members of the garden program are asked to meet.

> We ask them [students] to make a commitment to [the program] at the beginning of the year. We try to impress upon them when they plant a garden that is a huge responsibility because when they plant a seed, they are basically promising that plant that they are going to take care of it. They are starting a life. It's like having a baby. That is their responsibility, and no one is going to take care of it if they are not…. We have children who are so faithful to the program, never miss, they come every time, and then we have kids who want to dabble in every program, they come for a while or follow friends. As a general rule, we have a pretty strong group, they stay and really feel a connection to the group and the teacher and the space, and their garden, it is theirs…. We offer a lot of ownership of what we are doing, because the children are really making their own decisions…and when someone leaves, the rest of the children realize that they are affected by them leaving. 'We are going to have to take care of their garden, they left a hole.' They learn from watching that first person go and then

> it slows. I think this year we have had the best retention…because of their relationship with the teacher, she follows through and talks with them, and if they miss a few times and come back she has them write a letter and explain why they missed. If they continue to be absent, we have a conversation about what they really want and try to make them aware of their actions and the consequences of their absence. I think kids like to know that they are missed and that they are wanted and that they are not just filling a slot, a name on the roll. (Hannah)

The Garden Time program is primarily a student enrichment learning opportunity, but as I learned in my interviews and field observations, there are several opportunities for parents and other community members to become involved. Growing nutritious foods for the children in the school and their families is a goal of the program, and students learn to prepare items from the garden. Pia states that the children in the program are comfortable improvising with recipes and know how to use an oven and stovetop properly. From time to time, Garden Time will host a meal that includes items from the garden, prepared by students for their friends and families. This is a great opportunity to get community members involved (Pia). Each month there are two cooking classes open to the community that attract between three to ten families for each session (Hannah).

Community work days are another way that the community is involved in the school garden. Each month Garden Time has a Saturday workday and invites parents and families of students to participate. Depending on the season, this might be a chance to weed, harvest, or prepare the ground for new seeds (Pia, Hannah, Adele, Benny). Some family members become interested in having access to the garden to grow food for their families.

> Last year we had two parents that had gardens with their children.… They came regularly; one parent really had kind of a transformational experience because of it. They were showing interest in coming more, and I explained that they could

> have the garden space if they would like it and they jumped on it and did it right away, but because of our space, that is not something we are publicizing. (Pia)

Pia also shared that one of the parents who tended her own plot in the garden had moved and was attending college to study nutrition.

During the 2012-2013 school year, Pia began having parent meetings and was pleased to report that 70 percent of her parents attended. She commented, "I was thrilled because there really wasn't any kind of external reward for coming, there was no food or prize or anything like that." Pia shared that the meetings were an opportunity for her to meet parents and discuss expectations for the program, field trips, and other details. She felt the high participation in these meetings was related to the nature of the gardening program and the fact that so many parents were already involved in community days because the children were vested in the program. Pia's thoughts are supported by Jewel, who described her daughter's love of the program. "I used to help in Garden Time with her. She still does Garden Time, which is her favorite thing. That is all she talked about in N.Y., "Momma, we need to go back to Pleasant, I want a garden" (Jewel).

Garden Time – Examining Student Enrichment Programs

The Garden Time Program exists as an entity separate from the Eleanor Evans community school and has had a web presence since 2008. It is governed by a board of directors with the founder, Hannah, acting as director. Currently, the program has a staff of six who support garden programs in two elementary and one middle school in the city of Pleasant. Additionally, Garden Time supports two community garden efforts in cooperation with local churches (Garden Time website). The mission of the program communicates a dedication "to empowering low-income students and communities

through the process of creating community gardens" as it takes a holistic approach to science and peace education through hands-on, multidisciplinary learning that supports the creation of student-centered garden spaces (Garden Time website). A quote posted on the program's website by a fifth-grade student shares the following hope: "If our garden can be a peaceful place, then our schools will be peaceful, then our community, then our city, then our country, then our continent...and then that peace will spread to the whole world!" The goals of the program posted on the website include:

- Developing science-based community garden spaces, where the community has ownership of the implementation, progress, and maintenance of the garden.
- Encouraging the use of the garden as a central gathering place for the community.
- Teaching an all-encompassing curriculum that connects the garden with other disciplines and allows students to connect the learning in the garden to both school learning and real-life experiences.
- Establishing local, national, and international connections with students through the Internet, based on growing and eating food, and various cultural practices involving plants.

Garden Time Reflections

> *Mission Statement: Garden Time is dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering low-income students to become agents of change in their communities through inquiry-based science and peace education.*

The Garden Time program is enjoying its fifth year within the Eleanor Evans community, a program envisioned and enacted by Hannah, a longstanding member of PUMC. The mission statement above presents a lofty vision. Hannah brings a variety

of experiences and resources to the gardening program and seeks to engage children and their families to set goals, build relationships, and take responsibility in their lives, which seem to be a more concrete end-in-view.

Decisions made regarding the structure of the program are determined by the Garden Time staff, yet the program is built to be responsive to the needs of the community. At this time all of the resources to sustain the program are provided through donations or grant funding. Opportunities for community members to be engaged in decisions that impact the direction of the program and sustainability of the garden by the community are limited but do exist, as students and families exercise the goal-setting, relationship-building, and responsibility-taking practices modelled by the program in other domains of their lives.

Student Enrichment Program Engagement Ends-in-View

Community engagements facilitated by Student Enrichment Programs such as intermural athletics, music enrichment, and garden programs through out-of-school-time engagement share partnering for student academic achievement and family success ends-in-view. As a community school student, academic success is an intended outcome of the organization, and its primacy is apparent in the number of partnering programs in place within Eleanor Evans community school to support students. However, of the thirty-one student enrichment engagements experienced and described by the community, only seven offered the opportunity for community members to be involved in decision-making or ask for resources to have their needs met. The PCSI Site Team and Parent Engagement meeting and the Garden Time program provided opportunities for parents to be directly involved. Other opportunities for parents and

families to be engaged in Student Enrichment Programs included an attendance support program, parent volunteering, sixth-grade OST program, and PTA. A concern is that the students and families partake of extended-learning opportunities and resources that are determined by a service provider or school staffer rather than being asked about the needs of the community. Parents made this point in the PCSI parent meeting, suggesting that school personnel ask community members what they need and then listen and act when parents do respond. Hari's work spinning a web of participation also fell short as her work as a single advocate for the community was overwhelmed by competing agendas and a lack of funding.

The Bounty – Experiencing Community Development Engagements

In the spring of 2011, while visiting the Garden Time program at Eleanor Evans, I was given a tour of the Bounty grocery store and offices. Carter Franks was at the cash register ringing up a customer when I arrived at the market. Sitting at a table nearby were community and PUMC members who had partnered to form a 501(c)(3), which provided the facility's operating costs. Carter was kind and friendly; he shook my hand and said that Claudia had told him I was coming over. He began the tour with the community kitchen, which adjoined the market. He shared that CampFire used the kitchen from time to time, but it was primarily used by Garden Time and Pleasant Junior League cooking classes for families in the community. The room was large with all the amenities, equipment, and supplies of a well-stocked kitchen, including a huge center island. Carter shared that the market space was transformed each Wednesday and Sunday to accommodate the Bounty Church services. Store shelves were on wheels and pushed against walls to open the space for several dozen chairs. On the other side of

the kitchen were classrooms, which housed the students participating in the Garden Time program after school and during intercession. The walls were painted in bright, happy colors; a SmartBoard was easily accessible on one wall, and a large rug was the focal point of the room—a place for gathering during Community Circle. A door on the west-side of the room exited to the garden. Outside a rainwater cistern captured water for future use. Compost piles and equipment shed finished out the garden space.

Just across the alley was another building. Carter led the way to a prayer room, which had been decorated by teachers from the school and was comfortably crowded with overstuffed chairs and a leather couch. We travelled down a hallway to offices that were used by Garden Time and Pleasant Neighborhood staff, in addition to the Bounty Church offices and rooms for visiting missionaries. Carter shared that he and some friends had decided to donate these facilities to the community; he confided that the Lord had been good to him, he had owned successful businesses, and now he chose to give back to those who were in need. Carter and his friends at PUMC purchased the land and buildings that make up the Bounty property and funded the renovations I see today.

In December of 2012, I had the opportunity to attend one of the cooking classes hosted by Pleasant Junior League members in the Bounty kitchen. The Junior League's work is connected to the Garden Time program through the director, Hannah, who is a member. The Bounty provides support for a variety of engagements that bring community members to the facility and operates much like a community center. I was able to experience a single activity, the cooking class, which was hosted by four Junior League members to serve six women in the community and the eight children who

attended with them. On this evening, a variety of other activities were also taking place. While the cooking class prepared a meal, another Bounty Church volunteer came in to set up for a community meeting the next morning, and another resident from the community was translating an application for a neighbor at a table across the room. Meanwhile, next door in the other Bounty building, GED classes were taking place for community members. The account that follows is reconstructed from my field notes documenting the events of the evening.

I arrived at the Bounty as Junior League members were setting up for the class. Adele from the Garden Time program provided facilities supervision and greeted me. She explained that the cooking classes are also connected with three other Garden Time programs throughout the city. She confided that it looks different in each location; some of the sites have great community participation and Junior League members "mingle well" with residents; however, this group is a little different. Adele excused herself to go work in her office, and Junior League members began introducing themselves to me and sharing a little bit about the class. Kara was organizing the class tonight and spent several minutes inventorying ingredients and checking grocery sacks lined up on the counter. I asked about the grocery bags, and Deena explained, "We will be preparing spaghetti tonight, and we have also provided each family with ingredients to cook the meal for their own family." The cost for families to participate is $2, which Deena explains helped to improve participation.

> In the past, we had the class for free and we had many people show up, but they were not as interested in learning about food preparation, they just came for the free meal. By asking them to pay something, we have had better engagement; people are preparing the food with us, asking questions, and offering suggestions. (Deena)

As Deena and Kara finish preparations, community residents begin arriving with their children. Anna also arrives and begins to set up separate tables in the store area for the children. They will be making a different recipe tonight, flatbread pizzas and decorated holiday cookies. The children get started right away, and I notice they are very independent. As each child uses a small kitchen knife to separate the two halves of the flatbread, Junior League member Anna supervises. One boy, who appears to be about ten years old, offers to cut the bread for his sister, who looks to be about eight, but she refuses and carefully takes the knife from him and neatly cuts her bread. I smile as I watch children pick out toppings and help their neighbors prepare food. In the kitchen, cooking class begins. I notice that it is actually a resident who is leading class, and Kara is supporting her. Trisha lives in the community and has three children attending Eleanor Evans. She begins with the recipe and shares the ingredients they will be using to make the spaghetti. Two older students work with their mothers in the kitchen around four cook stations. One group is a bit larger, and I notice that two of the women are Spanish speakers; a third resident is translating for them, but it is clear by the way this group works through the recipe they are experienced in the kitchen. Adele pops in from time to time to check on us and offer support and appreciation for everyone.

Even though the aroma of the nearly prepared meal was causing my stomach to growl, I had to leave before dinner was ready to meet for an interview. As I headed to my car, I reflected upon the class and the divide that remained between the experiences of Junior League volunteers and families attending the cooking class to have dinner and receive groceries. The intended outcome which Adele communicated to build

relationships around a desire to serve nutritious foods to our families, and the realized outcome seemed different to me. As the six community residents cooked, the four Junior League members present "mingled" with them minimally; instead Junior League members took turns huddling together in the corner to talk about upcoming wedding events and holiday vacation destinations when they were not circulating and assisting with cooking supervision. It rubbed me the wrong way. Did the community women notice it too? In the end I was left wondering who this activity had the potential to benefit more, community members who were accessing a resource for food or Junior League members who, if attentive, had the opportunity to experience a reality outside of the day-to-day events of their privileged lives? Either way, it seemed to be just the tip of the iceberg of community development possibilities.

The Bounty - Enquiring About Community Development Engagements

In the fall of 2012, Carter lost his battle with cancer. Months before he sought Matthew out to become the director of the Bounty facilities as well as minister in the Bounty Church. Matthew confided:

> I came because we had started our church with the idea that we wanted to be in this type of neighborhood, a high-poverty neighborhood. We wanted to be in a neighborhood with clear geographic boundaries with specific needs in term of physical needs and development needs. I had been involved with a lot of large suburban churches, and from my personal sense, I felt that [these] churches were focusing a lot on a minority, when there was a majority of people who needed the true social side of the gospel message. So that was kind of the motivation. (Matthew)

Matthew confided that the experience moving into the director position at the Bounty was a whirlwind after only being in the community for a short time. The focus of the work he longed to do with the Bounty church was development: "helping people learn to make better choices in life and take responsibility" and to be "involved in their own

development rather than having outside forces come to bear." Matthew went on to say that the focus of his work was to move away from "handouts," which are "not effective in the long term."

Matthew shared that the Bounty brought several collaboration opportunities, such as cooking class, mentors for the school, Good Samaritan Clinic, and an after-school club. Matthew carried forward Carter's view that "the school was the community center…and the driving force for change in the neighborhood." With regard to the church, Matthew sought to grow its membership from the neighborhood to become "a church of the community." He saw this as a process:

> We didn't come with a huge strategy or five-year plan, other than we wanted to build relationships and start walking through life with people, we wanted to learn from them and encourage them to learn as well, the whole idea of development rather than handouts…. Our philosophy has been to include community people as much as possible in what is happening, rather than making decisions and implementing programs or strategies without involvement from the people that it will impact the most…. As relationships have deepened, we have asked for more involvement: "Would you be interested in being in charge of Sunday school? Would you work in the nursery?" It moved from being "us" and "them" to "we" and "all of us." At our one-year anniversary we had a celebration, we focused on the blending. We have encouraged more people from the local neighborhood to be involved in leadership areas. (Matthew)

Matthew admitted the challenge has been "high turnover"; it is difficult to develop your leadership team when people move around so much, "so it has been a slower process than we had hoped." He also shared a goal of hiring someone from the neighborhood to work in the market, which was realized when they hired a community resident to work part-time. Matthew shared:

> We have more people shopping now because they walk in and see a face from the neighborhood and they know that this is not an outside organization, this is a neighborhood thing. So that simple act of having one [community] person behind the register has built the confidence of the neighborhood in the intentions of the store. (Matthew)

Other recent examples of broader participation by the Eleanor Evans community at the Bounty included a community volunteer working with the health clinic program and a woman from the community volunteering her services translating for Spanish-speaking community members. Matthew commented, "It has taken time to get the community to realize we are not just here for a little while and then will leave." Developing trust and having residents believe we were not some "outside group coming, doing something, and then leaving" was a process.

During the last few years the Bounty has developed a strategy for increasing involvement from the community and growing leadership.

> We made the decision to put more resources and intentionality into working with the children and youth with the idea that [we provide] intervention before they get too far into the cycle that goes on in the neighborhood. It is not that we are not dealing with adults, we are, but the idea that [is to] work with the children and the youth who haven't necessarily made a lot of the bad decisions or found themselves in certain situations. It is easier to give them the right tools for making the right decisions and being able to go to college or trade school if they want, so that they can make those better choices. Our hope has been that if we continue to do that, those will be people who [we] will turn to for leadership roles within the congregation and the store, etc. We are excited as we see that happening, we have a couple of kids who have been faithful in their involvement and growing in their leadership. This summer we are trying to employ the students part-time at the grocery store, because they are both fifteen and at the age they would like to try to work a little bit, which I am thankful for, that they want to work. (Matthew)

Beyond the work the Bounty does to develop leadership and participation in the community, access to nutritious food provided by the market is seen as a benefit by many. Families and community members had few options for groceries before the store opened. Several community members described the difficult process of buying and transporting home a week's worth of food for their families. Most shared that the bus ride alone required a two-hour round-trip commute to reach a grocery store four to ten miles away. The

bus schedule does not provide direct routes to a reasonably priced grocery store; residents often endured bus routes of twenty miles or more one way in order to shop for necessities. Once they have made it to the store, choices must be made about how much can be transported back through mass transit. Because of the difficulties of transportation, two local convenience stores/gas stations had a captive community before the Bounty market arrived. Bruce, the Pleasant Neighborhood resident coordinator, asserted prices for nearly expired milk were over $6, and most foods were poor quality or expired.

The Bounty -Examining Community Development Engagements

Claudia's memoir celebrated the presence of the Bounty and outlined her efforts to procure a neighborhood grocery store. Based on her account, Carter Franks and his wife made an appointment with Claudia to offer additional support to the school. As members of PUMC, the Franks had served as mentors to Eleanor Evans students. Claudia describes the meeting occurring while she had a child in her office who was abused, hungry, and recently homeless. Carter noticed the girl and was shocked by her appearance, malnourished and covered in burns; he committed at that moment to help. When he asked Claudia what he could do, she said, "We need a community grocery store." In the spring of 2009 the Bounty market opened.

Today, the work being done at the Bounty is highlighted on their website, which merges work done by the health clinic, the church, and the market. The website provides information about services and resources available as well as upcoming events. Uncluttered by blogs, calendars, and advertising, the website is minimal but features church services times, invitations, and prayer requests; the market webpage conveys the

mission to provide west-side community members with affordable and nutritious food, and the clinic website includes partnership and appointment information for west-side community members who have no insurance to receive healthcare.

Flyers from the church and clinic are distributed regularly through the school and community and communicate dates and times for meetings and support groups for cooking and GED classes, bible study, youth activities, health care, and Alcoholics Anonymous available at the Bounty. Other than these flyers, there are few direct partnerships with the school, save a single Student Enrichment Bible club program that has been offered periodically.

The Bounty Reflections

My first experiences with the Bounty were in its first years. The cooking class engagement I have described previously reveals a potential frustration of the community development end-in-view, as Junior League members more likely thought of their engagement as community service. However, I choose to include it, as I wish to highlight the difficulty of uniting intention and action toward a true community development outcome.

Since then, leadership has changed, and a variety of new engagements have the possibility of moving the organization closer to a community development end-in-view, as partnerships between Eleanor Evans residents and Bounty volunteers and employees have resulted in more collaborative outcomes recently. As the Bounty has grown in its engagement of the Eleanor Evans community since 2009, it has increased its inclusion of community members in the organization. When the Bounty market was first opened, PUMC volunteers manned the cash register, stocked the shelves, and led the programs

that were developed through partnership. In 2013, more than half of the congregation is comprised of Eleanor Evans community members, store employees represent the neighborhood, and community service projects attached to the Bounty are envisioned and carried out through collaboration with community members. A community development end-in-view is being realized as residents of the community become invested in this multifaceted neighborhood-based community center.

Pleasant Neighborhoods - Experiencing Community Development Engagements

When I first began exploring the work of the Pleasant Community Schools Initiative (PCSI) in the summer of 2011, I participated in a Community Schools 101 course, which provided basic information about the PCSI model. After a couple of visits to the Garden Time program at Eleanor Evans and another community school served by PCSI, I asked a few graduate students who had expressed interest in learning more to visit the school district with me during the Community Schools 101 course. PCSI is a community school umbrella that supports a total of thirty-three schools in two districts, the Pleasant Public Schools District and Anderson School District. We started with a meeting in an Anderson school that had a clinic for students and community and then travelled across town to a Pleasant district school, Deer Park. Deer Park was not only a community school but a school undergoing a neighborhood-development initiative that included improving housing, transportation access to residents, and economic development plans, in addition to the services provided within the school. Pleasant Neighborhoods Revitalization Initiative (PNRI) is a nonprofit umbrella organization funded with local and federal support to develop the Deer Park community. In the spring of 2011, Pleasant Neighborhoods had sought to expand their

efforts to include the Eleanor Evans community and later received a Choice and Promise Neighborhoods Planning grants for this purpose.

Community development efforts within the Eleanor Evans community school coincided with the work of Pleasant Neighborhoods. Pleasant University's public health program initiated two projects during the 2010-2011 school year. Beginning in the summer of 2010, Pleasant University engaged residents from across the city to participate in an action research project in coordination with PCSI to learn more about health-related issues experienced by residents. Five members of the Eleanor Evans community were selected to join forty-eight other Pleasant residents in documenting where they live, where they go when they are ill, where they buy their food, and what they do for entertainment. During 2011, another program, Neighborhood Planning Academy, engaged community members to develop a plan to improve their neighborhoods, A team from the Eleanor Evans community participated with the support of the community school coordinator, Hari.

Pleasant Neighborhoods is also associated with the early childhood education program adjacent to the Eleanor Evans community school and purchased one of the subsidized-housing complexes in the Eleanor Evans community. Community engagements organized by Pleasant Neighborhoods were aimed at attaining input regarding the changes residents would like to see in the community. The process of collecting this input began with hiring a resident coordinator who lived in the community. Bruce was a resident and a success story, graduating from the west-side high school and going on to study political science at a prestigious private university. Bruce worked at Eleanor Evans as the registrar and was relied on heavily by Claudia to

connect with parents and families. In 2011, Pleasant Neighborhoods attracted Bruce to the position of resident coordinator, a position he continues to hold. Bruce feels his membership as a resident before and during the neighborhood development initiative is a strength for him in this work. He continues to attend a variety of community and school events to stay in touch with the Eleanor Evans residents. His work for Pleasant Neighborhoods includes inviting residents to forums with city and neighborhood planners in order to collaborate in the change process. He also has a resident council that reports directly to Pleasant Neighborhoods Leadership and Advisory Council, with members representing a cross-section of the community. Beginning in 2013, he has supported a resident council member to start a youth council that includes high school student residents in planning and decision-making for the community.

In April of 2012, I had the opportunity to attend one of the Pleasant Neighborhoods community forums to begin the process of determining what needs residents would like to have met in the development of the Small Area Plan for West Pleasant. The following account is reconstructed from my field notes taken as I participated in the community forum.

About thirty-five community residents and partners attended the meeting, which began with dinner, and then children went with adult volunteers to play on the playground while residents met with Pleasant Neighborhood organizers Bruce and Kris. Bruce explained that we were meeting to brainstorm ideas about what would make this community better. Kris mentioned that one of the things she had done recently was to meet with a community business, which converts trash to energy, and requested recycling bins for the entire community. The money generated by converting the

recyclables to energy would then be returned to the community. The trash-to-energy plant was already a PIE for the school and participated in the mentoring program; a partnership to provide money for improvements to the community was presented as another important win for Eleanor Evans.

Announcements of community engagement opportunities were also mentioned, including a Pleasant Neighborhoods informational booth at the upcoming street carnival. Finally, the meeting turned to the evening's focus topic: job creation and access. Bruce and Kris highlighted the work of Goodwill Industries to provide support for residents through job training and résumé writing, and also admitted that the job market was meager in the area, with temporary work and contract labor being most prevalent. Kris and Bruce asked the residents about their experiences looking for jobs in the community. Few residents responded; those who did agreed that the job market was poor. Kris offered, "SuperGas is coming, that will provide a few jobs. What other commerce do we want or need in the community?" One resident mentioned, "It is hard to find a job if you have a criminal record." This comment was not addressed. Instead, Kris moved on to the work groups for this evening.

Work groups address eight different issues that were brainstormed during the first neighborhood forum sessions and represent concerns such as transportation, safety, education, jobs, and commerce. Each work group includes a "neutral" facilitator who is described as having "no real tie to the result" of the process and at least three residents. Hari acted as the facilitator for her group. I joined a group of residents who are looking at transportation facilitated by a faculty member from the medical school a few blocks away. After about fifteen minutes of brainstorming, each group was asked to share their

ideas, and residents had the opportunity to comment or ask questions, although few did. Finally, Kris explained that she would be taking our work back to the leadership network to be "vetted" and recommendations developed that would be presented to the Pleasant Neighborhood Advisory Council for consideration. The advisory council was comprised of board of education members, the United Way, the Pleasant Public School superintendent, Early Childhood leaders, PCSI, and the City of Pleasant representatives.

As the neighborhood forum meeting came to a close, Bruce provided an update on current neighborhood development efforts. He shared that the Bridgeport apartment complex would be moving to the abandoned West Pleasant park area one building at a time. Residents would make application to live in the new multi-income complex, and as residents moved to their new homes, the empty apartment buildings would be torn down so that the area could be developed commercially. Bruce also reminded residents that this $60 million grant would transform their neighborhood into one with wifi access everywhere. Cameron, the communication director for Pleasant Neighborhoods, reminded residents to join the initiative's Facebook page and follow it on Twitter. Plans for an October 2012 launch of the website were also communicated.

Another engagement activity I was able to participate in that engages community residents in decision-making around the neighborhood-revitalization work being done by Pleasant Neighborhoods was a resident council meeting. In February 2013, I was invited to attend the monthly resident council meeting by Bruce in order to learn more about residents' opportunities to be involved in decision-making. The following account is reconstructed as I reflect upon my field notes taken during the meeting and the meeting agenda.

The resident council is a planning and decision-making body engaged by Pleasant Neighborhoods to assist in neighborhood development work done for Choice and Promise Neighborhood Grants sought by Pleasant Neighborhoods leadership. This informal meeting began with a meal and conversation about events going on in the community. Attendees of today's meeting included a homeowner, Matthew from the Bounty Church, apartment residents, apartment service coordinators, and Pleasant Neighborhoods employees. The council discussed plans for a mural to honor Carter Franks and his work in the community, an upcoming community "clean-up" day, a NeighborWorks celebration, and resident retreat. Residents managed the agenda items, discussing options and making decisions about next steps. Bruce made it clear to me and other attendees that his role was to support their work. If they needed a meeting space, childcare, or a meal in order to get residents together to plan or execute an event, he was glad to help.

In order to make plans for the mural, Bruce invited a local artist who also taught at the school in the past to discuss next steps. Residents asked questions and considered options presented by the artist and expressed pride in their community, saying, "Come back and see it," "We are doing great things," and, "You will want to visit us." They communicated the plans that were underway to make improvements, rebuild apartments, start a farmer's market, and build a SuperGas station and convenience store. Residents were familiar with land and commercial property for sale, their history, and who was considering the purchases.

Pleasant Neighborhoods – Enquiring About Community Development Engagements

In general, community residents' perceptions of the work being done by Pleasant Neighborhoods to "revitalize" the area are positive. Jewel shares that she has attended a community forum and believes "it could be really great if this all works the way it is intended," and felt the forums are a place where community members can be involved in decision-making. Rose, an Eleanor Evans resident, serves on the Pleasant Neighborhood resident council, advisory board, and the community Chamber of Commerce. Rose is a real estate agent and brings insights from her career to the task of community development. She supports the work Pleasant Neighborhoods is spearheading and shared that they have invested in the resident council in a number of ways so that its membership can be engaged in decision-making that will benefit the community. She shared that Pleasant Neighborhoods sent the group to a conference during the summer of 2012 to learn more about communities undergoing and resulting from neighborhood-revitalization plans like the one being developed for the Eleanor Evans community. From her experience as a realtor and the education provided at the conference, Rose mentioned several neighborhood models the group had explored. Rose's vision for Eleanor Evans is tied to economic viability, and she shared that she is excited to see what possibilities are realized in her community.

As the resident coordinator, Bruce described the increase in participation in community forums and the work of the resident council:

> I remember when I first started back in February of 2012, our first community forum had six people…not six families…six people, that is it. Slowly but surely over the past year we have grown, now we have a steady stream of about twenty-five to thirty families that show up…. They are involved in designing this neighborhood, what it is going to look like, and [I am] keeping them up to date. We really don't do anything without their consent, and we have a resident

> council that meets…. We try to get people from all parts of the community so we have someone from [each apartment complex] and the houses. We try to get everybody involved so that it is all kind of equal standing…. We don't do anything without the residents' consent; we also have residents on our advisory board. (Bruce)

Other entities also engaged in community development have joined forces with Pleasant Neighborhoods. The Bounty has become tied to Pleasant Neighborhoods, as they have office space in the Bounty's facilities and share many of the same opportunities to engage community residents. Matthew has attended the resident council meetings and community forum from time to time and participated in many events coordinated by Pleasant Neighborhoods. He shares:

> We [Bounty with Pleasant Neighborhoods] have done a community outreach. We have done one every summer, a neighborhood block party with inflatables and face painting…. We serve hamburgers and hot dogs, and each year we have done it we have more people from our church that are from the neighborhood volunteering…. They have been the ones behind the table doing the face-painting or handing out the food. It builds the sense that our church and the Bounty and everything here is going to be here. (Matthew)

For Bruce, his employment by Pleasant Neighborhoods as the resident coordinator determines his participation be to support the community members he serves, which means he must refrain from offering his perspective at times.

> That is my biggest thing…I want residents involved. I am a resident, but I gotta kinda stay out of it because I am biased, so if they make the choice, then they also know that the choice affects me and the choices I make affect them. (Bruce)

Bruce's concern that residents will not have a voice prompts him to go into the neighborhood regularly, encouraging everyone to participate.

> I go door to door giving out flyers. I have walked this neighborhood numerous times. I do it every month. I strike up conversations with people and see who is out there and if they are interested in change, I will invite them onto the council, and encourage them…say, "You need to be a part of this. We want your opinion and feedback to change this community for the better…." My biggest

> fear is that they get forced out, when you get to working with stakeholders and big business and these higher-level city people, people get forced out sometimes. That is my biggest worry. I don't want them forced out. I want them at that table because this is your home, you should be here. Don't let other people speak for you. You need to speak for yourself, because no one is going to do it for you. Sometimes it is hard for me to separate myself, because I want to sit at that table too, but I can't. My work, this job, it is kind of conflicting…. I let them make those choices and they are good choices. They have great ideas, and they give some great feedback. It is great to hear them express their concerns and what they think could be done. (Bruce)

Bruce also shares what his role looks like for the community and how he supports other residents with an example of taking action:

> Say that there is [a] street over there we have a concern about. No streetlight, it makes this corner very dark, which makes it open to crime. What can we do about this corner? Here is the number to have the streetlight fixed by the city, and if they don't answer, keep calling, 'cause eventually they will come and fix the streetlight. If one of you calls just one time and everyone in the community calls, we will blow up his telephone, he is going to answer the phone, and fix this light because [we] keep calling. So if you all do it, we can get it fixed, and even though it is just one light, it is step in the right direction…. The community fixed the light, I didn't do it, I just told you who you could call, so that is what we are all about…the residents taking ownership of their community. To say, this is where you live, take ownership. Be proud of it. If we work at it we can make it better. That is what I am trying to do is encourage the residents to be active themselves. Yes, I will support them from behind. What do you need to make the meeting happen, what do you need from me? I can provide food, the space, but you have got to sit here and talk about what you want to happen. (Bruce)

Kevin, director the Pleasant Neighborhood Initiative for both neighborhoods, mirrored Bruce's perspective of the resident coordinator's work and shares the importance of that work, saying:

> Our resident engagement coordinators have a plan to provide an opportunity for connection for every household over the course of the next two years. Through neighbor circles, it is an invitation of folks to come together and engage with one another and have meaningful conversations, and then we will begin mapping those networks over the course of time, so that…[the] primary role of our resident engagement coordinators will be as a connector hub, so that if you call me and say, 'I thought through who I could call to help me with this problem and I don't have money to take care of it, do you know somebody that

> can help me?' I say, 'yes'…. They [resident coordinators] don't do the work, but they help make the connection. (Kevin)

Pleasant Neighborhoods - Examining Community Development Engagements

In 2012, the work done through community forums and the resident council resulted in the creation of the Pleasant Small Area Plan in coordination with the City of Pleasant. This document includes the input of community residents and reflects a comprehensive plan for neighborhood development as required by the Choice Neighborhood's Planning Grant process. This product is the proposed vehicle for an implementation grant as a "transformation plan" (Choice website sheet and FY2010 Planning Grant Agreement Article 1.E). Further, the Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan must address assisted or subsidized housing to make it "financially viable over the long-term"; "positive outcomes" for "residents' health, safety, employment, mobility, and education"; and "transform neighborhoods of poverty" (FY 2010 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Agreement, Article II.A). Coordinated effects are expected to support "residents to attain the skills needed to be successful in all aspects of daily life"; generate "commercial assets"; create "recreational assests"; and "physical assets – housing, commercial, building, roads, sidewalks, bike paths etc." (CHOICE Neighborhoods Planning Grant Agreement, Article II.B).

The result of a series of community forums was the creation of the Small Area Plan, which incorporated the SWOT analysis work done by residents to identify areas in the community that residents considered strengths, including "affordable housing," "proximity to downtown," "strong churches," "access to recreational areas near the river," good schools, and the Bounty market. Weaknesses reported by community residents included "limited public transit," "confined by the river, highway, and

refineries," "limited variety of housing options," "substandard affordable housing," and "lack of services – grocery, pharmacy, etc." Opportunities that the community desired to have explored were additional bus routes, development of a "youth center, library, adult education programs," "improved park amenities," "increased lighting,"safe street crossings, and "more neighborhood retail". Finally current threats identified by residents as impacting community development included: "increased traffic," "reduced mobility," "disinvestment in affordable housing," "fear of displacement from homes and community," "loitering," "environmental effects," "crime," "industrial accidents," and safety concerns (West Pleasant Small Area Plan, 2013). The recommendations for neighborhood development in the Eleanor Evans Community put forth in the Small Area Plan included proposals for changes to housing, the adoption of a Crime Prevention and Environmental Design strategies, health and wellness support, infrastructure changes, transportation options, and economic development strategies.

Hari writes about her perceptions regarding forums for residents to be involved in community development plans for West Pleasant when the initiative was first presented to Eleanor Evans stakeholders in 2011. She feels it is a good opportunity for families to be involved, however, is concerned that the forums may not represent all residents, stating:

> Our low-income families appear to be included in the City's mixed-use development plans. This could create a unique opportunity for them to participate and share in the profits generated. However, despite good intention, the actual voices and individual concerns of residents, families like ours go unsolicited or unheard. I believe that my role is to assure that these folks are not isolated and left behind in the process but are informed and able to share in the gain. (Hari)

After a site team meeting in May of 2011, when Pleasant Neighborhood's revitalization plans were discussed in coordination with the city planning office, Hari conveys the role she sees for herself in this process again, saying:

> Our Southwest Pleasant City Planner …explained and answered many questions about the City's RFP for our area. My hope is to put myself in the loop for information from all of these groups and then find ways for students, families, and the different sectors to know what is going on and participate and profit in developing our neighborhood. (Hari)

Reflecting on Pleasant Neighborhoods

I was introduced to the Neighborhood Revitalization work being done in Pleasant in the Deer Park community in 2011. When engagements at Eleanor Evans began to include community forums to begin the neighborhood development plans for the community, I was concerned. Pleasant Neighborhoods has employed research-based approaches and strategies to engage and organize the community in order to collect input regarding neighborhood revitalization. However, mechanisms for ongoing feedback to assess the impact of the changes occurring in the name of community development are not in place (Kevin & Kris, Pleasant Neighborhoods). Additionally, it is not clear that those making the decisions represent all Eleanor Evans community members, as attendance at forums included about twenty-five families or fewer.

As community development activities have been organized and hosted by Pleasant Neighborhoods, incentives have been a primary tool to garner participation. Plans to develop smaller networks of families in order to sustain change are imagined but have not been put into action. Thus, the end-in-view of the community development engagements featured here may be confused. Do families and parents engage in the decision-making process in order to receive dinner and a gift card? Are

they being paid or bribed to participate? If the engagements hinge on incentives being given, is this authentic participation?

Additionally, decision-making has involved stakeholders through "work groups" that have addressed several components of the community through SWOT analysis; however, the ideas and plans developed by residents must then be submitted for "vetting" by a leadership team and finally the advisory board. These processes are mentioned but not explained during the community forum. If the advisory board has the last word on community development plans, are residents really holding the reins for this initiative? Additional inquiries of Pleasant Neighborhood leadership about transparency in the decision-making process fail to illuminate the path.

Community Development Engagement Ends-in-view

Community Development initiatives converge upon the Eleanor Evans community from many directions between 2009 and 2013. The Bounty grocery store opened in the spring of 2009 and, by the spring of 2011, several engagement opportunities provided families and children with nutritious food, healthcare, and spiritual support. Matthew conveyed a community development journey end-in-view for the work the Bounty was doing in West Pleasant. He sought to grow the church from residents and have them leading and serving in their own community. He confessed that the process of growing the community's participation had taken time, and he encountered obstacles such as "turnover." Yet, within a couple of years the Bounty's membership had become representative of the community, developing the neighborhood in the direction membership envisioned by building a foundation upon the experiences, skills, resources, and desires of community residents.

In contrast, Pleasant Neighborhoods employed an outside-in design to community development. This process did not begin within the community but was born from statistical data from surveys administered throughout city and census data to identify Eleanor Evans as a community at risk. Next, influential stakeholders from the city of Pleasant, including school superintendents, city officials, and others, were approached to propose the revitalization initiative and garner support. Finally, with a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant already submitted to partially fund the community development work, Pleasant Neighborhoods approached the community and hired a resident engagement coordinator to begin bringing residents together to discuss revitalization plans. And although residents have a voice in beginning the plans that will be translated into community development outcomes, the Pleasant Advisory Council has the final say in how those plans are enacted.

In closing, a handful of community engagements experienced, enquired about, and examined within the community school of Eleanor Evans have been offered for closer consideration. As residents participated in a variety of activities connected to the school and broader community, I have sought to discover and describe the nature of community engagement and who participates. As participation occurs around particular ends-in-view, it is instructive to revisit the outcomes of these engagements, whom among participants were engaged in authentic participation, and the relevant spheres of decision-making.

Ends-in-view for these engagements brought residents together to receive community service, enrich students' experiences, and develop the community. Overwhelmingly, decision-making to realize these outcomes occurred without

community residents' participation. Engagements that included residents in authentic participation to make decisions in the relevant sphere of their school and community were isolated and infrequent. Rather, decisions regarding programming for students, resources and services needed by residents, and community development were made by those who do not have students in the school or live in the community.

Chapter 6: Interpretations

Experiencing, enquiring, and examining engagements within the Eleanor Evans community, I have travelled a journey to explore the nature of participation by residents. Three ends-in-view, community service, student enrichment, and community development frame participation opportunities for families within this West Pleasant community. In this place, authentic participation has been a reality for few residents, as only 27 percent of the seventy-three engagements explored involved parents and families in decision-making to determine needs to be met, appropriate resources and services, and pathways for change in the community. Of the twenty opportunities to engage residents in decision-making, only two sought to develop the community, with residents taking the lead. As I reflect on the initiatives taking place within the community, community schooling and neighborhood revitalization initiatives are seeking participation from the community, yet fall short. Exploring perceived obstacles to participation is instructive.

Sub-themes tied to particular ends-in-view for community engagement emerged as I reconstructed events from my experiences, the experiences of others, and archival records to explore Anderson's (1998) central questions of authentic participation. Findings presented in the previous chapter present these sub-themes around perceived obstacles to participation, changes in participation, and strategies employed to increase participation. In this chapter I will explore these sub-themes in more depth by employing the final questions from Anderson's (1998) framework for authentic participation: 1) What conditions and processes must be present locally to make participation authentic? 2) What conditions and processes must be present at the

broader institutional and societal levels to make participation authentic? Relevant literature is interwoven to connect subthemes to extant research regarding participation in urban communities of poverty engaged in educational and broader societal reform.

Interview questions developed to uncover local and societal conditions necessary for authentic participation included: What barriers or obstacles impact community engagement? What is your vision for community engagement? These questions were included in all first interviews with participants and revisited frequently in follow-up interviews. When Hari, the community school coordinator at Eleanor Evans School, was asked about barriers to participation, she described the work being done under Pleasant Community Schools Initiative as actively addressing barriers to child and family success, including participation. The conditions for learning that PCSI asserts are necessary in any school are characterized in the following six statements.

1) The school has a core instructional program with effective teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.
2) Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school.
3) The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
4) Mutual respect and effective collaboration exist among students, families, and school staff.
5) Community engagement and school efforts promote a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful, and connects students to a broader learning community.

6) Development is fostered through seamless transitions that are sustained by a system of supports that are intentional and coordinated that nurture development throughout the educational pipeline, P-20 (prenatal through postsecondary/workforce).

Broad in their scope, these learning conditions are the touchstones Hari returns to time after time to reflect upon the work being done in the school. PCSI's seven core components are strategies for creating these learning conditions that Hari consults to address obstacles to her work. The seven core components include: early childhood learning, health and health education, mental health and social services, family and community engagement, youth development and Out-of-School Time, neighborhood development, and lifelong learning. As PCSI serves Title I communities, poverty is a common circumstance of the families served. Thus, the crux of the community school work aims to address realities for low-income families that frustrate academic success and to reduce the achievement gap between children living in conditions of poverty and children living in more resourced families.

Hari has described herself as spinning a web to "attract" potential partners while also continuing to "make things happen," each engagement a networking opportunity to make new connections with potential new partners and address an obstacle to achieving the conditions of learning. Thus, Hari's work is congruent with Burt's (1992, 2005) social capital theory concepts of structural holes and structural autonomy. As structural holes are "the gaps between nonredundant contacts," Hari actively sought to define the gaps in support services and access diverse partnerships to meet her community's needs (Burt, 1992, p. 47). She acknowledged that she pushed herself to seek out groups with

which she had not been affiliated in the past in order to bring new ideas and perspectives to her site team. Diverse participants from a variety of experiences and contexts collaborated to make programming decisions, thus her new partners offered "additive" rather than "overlapping" expertise for the community's benefit (Burt, 1992, p. 47). Burt (1992) identifies these structural holes as providing access to new social frontiers, as individuals from different realities or organizations can meet and collaborate. Communities and groups who have become practiced at creating "extensive bridge relationships beyond the group" can realize structural autonomy, as members have strong ties to others with resources and ideas, project collaboration is creative and innovative (Burt, 2005, p. 141). Thus, the social capital theory that undergirds Hari's community engagement practices supports innovative and creative approaches and partnerships to meeting the needs of families in the community she serves.

Realities for Families Living in Poverty

As the community school model in place within Eleanor Evans Elementary School is an equity strategy engaged to address the need of children living in neighborhoods of poverty, it is responsive to the dynamic needs of this context. A host of variables in the lives of poor children act to diminish the work being done during the school day; seldom do the expectations of their homes match the supports demanded to create schooling success (Anyon, 2005; Berliner, 2006, 2009; Crowder & South, 2003; Evans, 2004; Rothstein, 2004; Warren, 1998, 2005). Hari acknowledges that the work schools can do to prepare students is also frustrated as the districts ask parents and students to participate in something beyond their experience. As the institution of

education is built on a white, middle class value system to produce benefits only those with resources can realize (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Maguire, 2006).

> Most of the things we are asking them to participate in are things that middle class people participate in…. We automatically assume that things like carpooling to soccer practice and attending PTA meetings are part of our responsibilities as a citizen and parent [and] makes [you] a good parent…or…a good person…. You should be motivated to do that, well the motivations are completely different, completely different. This is totally out of their [families living in poverty] experience; it is not part of their expectations. You don't motivate a person of poverty by saying, 'Your child will get into the best university if they do….' We are dangling carrots in front of them from the end of a stick that don't look like carrots to them. (Hari)

Hari views her work as an opportunity to discover what a carrot looks like to her families, as they are not interested in adopting white, middle class values (Gewirtz, 2001; Lareau, 1987).

The realities of a life of poverty require parents and families to function in particular ways, ways that are foreign to the lives of more resourced communities. For families living in poverty, tasks that must be completed to commute to work, access resources that are beyond the limits of a minimum wage, part-time income, and care for children and other family members consume the day. These activities take up more time, may extend beyond the conventional eight-to-five workday, and require creativity to find access to resources that are temporary and ever changing. For instance, without a vehicle and with poor mass transit design, parents may have to plan on a commute that exceeds two hours round trip. Childcare is another concern; the Eleanor Evans community makes great use of early childhood programs with greater than 50 percent of children enrolled in pre-K programs, a necessity with few licensed childcare centers in the community (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Most families spend at least 30 percent of their income in rent, and with more than one-third of the community making less than

$10,000 per year, there is little income to cover all of a family's expenses U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Several school and community members described the manifestations of these experiences on the school community.

School personnel shared that the constant stress to pay bills, keep the lights and heat on, provide food for families, and get around town takes a toll on students' families. Parents are tired, stressed, overwhelmed, ready to give up, running away, and moving around as they are doing the best they know how (Olivia, Bliss, Shelley, Gwen, Evelynn, Claudia, Caroline, Hari). Attending and "arriving to school on time is not even on the radar as a priority" (Evelynn). Several school personnel shared that the school hands out alarm clocks to children, even primary-grade students, in order to get their parents up and make it to school on time. Several also confided that the system (subsidies for low-income housing) and isolation from good transportation and lack of neighborhood jobs made it easier for families to continue to live off of the government (Matthew, Hari, Gwen, Caroline, Carrie, Velma, Rhonda, Penelope, Shelley, Olivia, Victoria, Rose, and Robert). Thus the conditions that families living in poverty endure make placing education as a priority a difficult task (Gewirtz, 2001).

Parents also mentioned focusing on family rather than looking for work outside of the community that was time intensive and tended to yield low-paying part-time jobs (Jewel, Jen). Matthew, pastor at the Bounty, refers to this existence as a mind-set or culture of the community and implies there is some choice in the matter; he assumes individuals decide whether or not to change the course of their life (Raffo et al., 2010), although he also admits that there are some realities that must be addressed in order for things to change, saying:

> Some of the things that are built into the community that are challenges are: there is not a lot of local economy [which impacts] people who want to get work and see that as the first step to changing their life, tak[ing] care of their family, rebuilding…it is very hard for them…. Some people don't have transportation or may have a criminal record, no high school degree. These are some of the systemic problems with a community that is highly dependent on the government. We have people that regularly say to us, "Why should I work when I get a check from the government?" The community has a level of satisfaction with a very base level of living. (Matthew)

Teachers and parents conveyed that coming to the school to participate can pose problems, as several adults living in poverty have not had positive experiences in their own education and are uncomfortable coming to the school to support their children. They feel like they are failures and do not want to be told that their children are failing or misbehaving (Jen, Jewel). Some parents struggle with primary-level reading and cannot support their children with homework or reading; that further hinders their children's opportunities to succeed academically (Gwen, Evelynn, Olivia, Velma, Bliss, Carrie, Caroline, Pia). In the end, families are trapped in the community and in the cycle of generational poverty. Isolation from educational opportunities, jobs making a living wage, efficient transportation, and affordable, nutritious food stalls them out (Rothstein, 2004). Additionally, Jen shared that most adults in the community spent their time consumed with "drama" rather than focusing on bettering themselves, or "giving back" by volunteering at the school, or engaged in work or other activities that would help their families. Hari refers to Paulo Freire's concept of the "tyranny of the moment" to describe the overwhelming and stressful daily lives of her families trapped in the moment and offers; these experiences do not support planning or reflection by parents (Freire, 2009/1970).

And just as I might become very depressed thinking about the cycle repeating itself at Eleanor Evans, Hari reminds me that changes can be made if we are willing to

set aside our middle class perspectives and value system, that there is a space we can work within to address the needs of the community and our children and make changes for the better, because, after all, we are all still human.

> It's a different world.... I think what really makes a difference is when people from other backgrounds are on the same level together, that they change each other. And you begin to admire and love things in one another and make that part of yourself, those particular things. And then all of us take the best part of each group and we are better than any single one. And I go through the motions of doing all of these programs. Although [they provide] important ways to have their [residents'] needs met, physical, emotional, education things like this. But, more profoundly, these are all just the venue for transformative relationships to occur and…. What transformation for me is…the building of an authentic community in the present context; not creating a 1952 Middle America. It is creating a society where the most people flourish. (Hari)

Hari worked in the community for nearly a decade doing direct service work to support families and children to be successful. She described the work as challenging. Her supervisors expected her to provide services and resources that were tracked to provide documentation for various grants and other funding that required a certain number of community residents receive services. Hari reported that often the missions and agendas of the different programs that were employed to receive funding were contradictory to each other and the requirements nearly impossible. When she sought solutions from her supervisors, she was frequently told to "make it work." She admitted that she had to construct reports that gave the appearance that work was being done, services were being provided, and residents were attending in sufficient numbers. She shared that supervisors applied pressure to those in direct service positions to be creative with reports so that the organization could "continue to collect subsidies or meet grant deliverables" (Hari). She shared that she asked supervisors how to meet so many deliverables.

> I didn't really shine a light, I was just…really working. My supervisor instructed me to have people sign sheets for my programs that I was supposed to be giving just so it would look like people came. So they, in a lot of ways, were encouraging people to commit fraud. They applied for all these grants to run this, but they had no overarching philosophy or mission for it, it was just a matter of 'getting.' When I used to write our reports, I used to have to stay up all night to write the report because it was so long, because it had to include so many different things to answer the questions that all the different grants wanted. I had a one-bedroom apartment that we were supposed to be having all of these classes in and it wasn't big enough and they just said, 'It is.' In other words, 'Don't say that, don't complain. It is going to happen regardless of whether or not it can happen.' (Hari)

Service coordinators at two of the low-income apartment complexes in the Eleanor Evans community confirmed Hari's complaint that attendance to service events was very low. Natalie shared that she saw few residents taking advantage of services or referrals she could provide. When she did see someone, it was often for financial support to pay a bill. When the resident sought her assistance, she took them through a goal-setting session as part of the bill-paying agreement, but she seldom saw the person again to talk about progress toward the goal (Natalie). She suggested, "I am offering things that they might not be interested in, but I could easily change that. I don't have any feedback from them to tell me what they want" (Natalie). She shared that she used surveys to collect feedback, but survey completion was very low as well.

The pressure direct service providers experience working within nonprofit partnering organizations to accomplish tasks that are highly regulated and demand participation from the community has been encountered in other high-poverty urban communities. Miller, Wills, and Scanlan (2013) interviewed Promise Neighborhoods project planners who were awarded the first grants in 2010 to discuss obstacles encountered during the planning process. Urban grant awardees shared that planning was difficult, as schools were dealing with "initiative fatigue"; there were a number of

interventions in place to address school failure, and community members did not have the time or energy to give 100 percent to all initiatives (Miller, Wills, & Scanlan, 2013, p. 565). Thus, while some are participating in a variety of mandated and highly regulated activities, community members, the recipients of these efforts, are disengaged.

The strategies for surviving in and serving poor communities develop and evolve over time in contact with a particular context. Closer examination of habits or practices engaged for survival cannot be fully understood in isolation from the "specific structural conditions and power relations in which poor people have to develop their strategies of survival" (Rehmann, 2011). Looking at the larger context and mechanisms reveals the function of particular modes of operating.

Disenfranchised and Disinvested

A condition that frustrates authentic participation in this local context has been described by some participants as "disenfranchisement" and alternatively in the community development literature as "disinvestment." A Google search of the term "disenfranchised" yields the following definition: "deprived of power, marginalized." Merriam Webster defines disinvestment as a "reduction or elimination of capital investment." Naparstek & Dooley (1997) offer "disinvestment is a series of progressive steps by which area lending institutions extricate themselves from neighborhoods they expect to deteriorate." Yet disinvestment has a wider impact on a community than is felt by "redlining" alone (Naparstek & Dooley, 1997). Schools have experienced disinvestment in the last several years, as spending cuts have left most urban schools underresourced (Lipman, 2012). Together these terms describe communities in crisis, experiencing failing schools and communities, environmental degradation, poor health,

economic collapse, and resource depletion (Hastings, A., Flint, J., McKenzie, C., & Mills, C., 2005; Lipman, 2012; Murray, 2012).

Engagement of the Disinvested and Disenfranchised

Living in disinvested, disenfranchised communities is an experience that impacts authentic participation. Residents in the community shared that the apartment complexes were dangerous places and that they could not count on their neighbors to watch out for their children or belongings (Jen, Jewel, Bliss, Bruce, Gwen). Few people are willing to "do the right thing," and many idolize and follow gang members in the neighborhood who are larger than life (Jen, Robert). Participating in school activities is driven by residents' motivation to "take advantage" of the school or others providing resources, as participation that includes "giving back" to the community is seen as weakness (Jen). Yet some people do participate. Jen and Jewel have participated in the past. Jen continues to work with the afterschool program but confesses she must defend herself. Community members "take a risk by doing the right thing and giving back" (Jen). Gail and Robert are on the PTA and engaged as decision-makers, although each admits that they are not "representative" of most Eleanor Evans families. Bruce offers his own experiences in the community to highlight the difficulties engaging his neighbors.

> It is a climate of mistrust. You know, when I first moved here I was the same way. I didn't talk to any of my neighbors because I was scared of them…. If you talk to the wrong person, the next thing you know, you are getting involved in stuff you don't want to be involved [in]…. You don't know who they are. And it's really easy to fall into that…. You are thinking you are helping somebody and they end up being bad news and you shouldn't be messing with them…. But slowly I think we can knock down that barrier…getting them out into forums and having community events…they see each other more and they say, 'I know you, you live at Bridgeport, too,' or, 'You just live two houses down from me.' So start from there, start from ground level and work up to the trust thing. It is a

> process and takes time, and I know that I just have to be patient and don't push them to hard. Just let them go at their own pace. I know people will start working together. I mean, our council is a group of twelve people with different backgrounds and they end up working together great. (Bruce)

The problem is pervasive. Throughout the community residents are wary of their neighbors. Yet Bruce has confidence that, as resident coordinator, he can overcome the mistrust and bring people together.

> People not trusting each other, people don't know their neighbors, people don't know who may live next door to them, that is everywhere in the houses, at [the apartments]. That is something, a barrier I am trying to knock down, and get people to just say 'hi,' be a good neighbor, say 'hi.' You don't have to be best friends with them, but at least know who is living next to you. Because if you know somebody, it is easier to work with them to make the entire community better as opposed to a bunch of strangers [coming] together saying, 'We are going to fix this.' [You are] not strangers. That is Bob over there, he owns a store and he is my neighbor, and this is Jill over here and she is a seamstress and she has kids. That is what community is. And that is what I am working toward; slowly it is coming along. My goal is for people to come out together and just get to know each other, and if we get to know each other, then we are going to work on this community and make it better for everyone in the end. It is not just, you know, one or two people doing it, it is everybody doing it. (Bruce)

Disinvestment and disenfranchisement frame engagements in the Eleanor Evans community; residents do not trust each other but are even more suspicious of outsiders. Changes in leadership, leadership style, family engagement philosophy, and policy adherence are difficult in the most resourced schools and communities in Pleasant but can be particularly devastating to participation in communities of poverty. Nearly every participant related that losing the principal after nine years was a major stumbling block to community engagement. In order to make the transition smoother, Pleasant District decided to have Rhonda shadow Claudia during the last eight weeks of the semester before Claudia retired. This period of time coincided with my principal internship, which allowed me to observe and engage in interactions with both the incoming and retiring principals. Claudia realized early on that Rhonda was likely to do things

differently. She hoped to share with her the programs and pieces of the community school that she felt were most important to keep when Rhonda moved into the position. Claudia kept dozens of plates spinning to make all of the programs work and relied heavily upon relationships she developed over time with teachers, the community school coordinator, and community partners like PUMC to make it all happen. Rhonda was moving into the position of principal but did not have the network of relationships yet to guide and support her work.

Based on participant accounts, when Rhonda returned as principal in August of 2012, she cut programs, changed policies, and reduced access to her office. Jewel, a parent in the community, shared her frustration with Rhonda and her treatment of residents after security policy changes were validated by the Newtown, CT, school shootings in December of 2012.

> With the Newtown, CT, situation, you can understand [the reasons for the policy change], but not when you are the newcomer. We have been here. Don't treat us like we are outsiders; you are the new one. We have had freedom for years, and now you come and change all of the rules. It is a little off-putting. (Jewel)

Olivia shared that she felt participation had decreased as families were exerting the only control over the situation available to them by resisting participation. Most community school employees shared attendance to community dinners, giveaway events, community fairs, holiday celebrations, and morning assemblies was noticeably lower. Fewer parents were also coming into the school for informal meetings with teachers under Rhonda's administration (Olivia). Olivia also mentioned that under Claudia's leadership parents often gathered at the school, as it was a safe place to socialize and "hang out." These parents would participate in the daily morning assembly. They also

returned before school let out to visit and share what was going on in the neighborhood (Olivia). Claudia valued the information gleaned through these informal conversations with parents, and school leadership used it to be proactive. When parents shared that a shooting in the apartments one night sent a child to the hospital, Claudia would bring her leadership team together to address potential repercussions and check on the child and family. Olivia, Evelynn, and Shelley agreed that it was nice to have some residents who trusted school people enough to share circumstances in the neighborhood that impact the children in Eleanor Evans classrooms. As access to the school was decreased under Rhonda's leadership, access to information about neighborhood circumstances was frustrated. Jen, a parent in the neighborhood who leads an afterschool sports program, became one of a few voices able to share neighborhood incidents and concerns with the counselor and social workers.

Success Means Leaving the Community

Another barrier to engagement created through disenfranchisement and disinvestment in the Eleanor Evans community is the perception that success occurs for those who get out. Very few community members view staying in the community as success, with few employment opportunities, poor transportation, and absence of affordable, healthy food. Most families celebrate moving out of the neighborhood, even though they frequently choose to have their children continue to attend Eleanor Evans School. For some, the struggle of finding reliable transportation to bring children to and from Eleanor Evans becomes a big enough problem to warrant moving back. Olivia confided that a parent leaving the community only to come back is the norm.

This cross-purpose between the institutions of education and public housing is another consequence of disinvestment and disenfranchisement that frustrates authentic participation at both the local and societal levels. Affordable low-income housing is designed to be temporary, intended to help people "get back on their feet" and move forward in their lives (Natalie). However slow the process, the end goal for most is to get out of it. Jen reported living in the neighborhood's apartment complexes for a total of eighteen years before finding a rent house in North Pleasant, another low-income community. Yet she is committed to bringing her children back for school.

As schools are more effective when students attend regularly, accountability measures around student achievement have been linked to attendance data for school throughout the state. Eleanor Evans staff has worked very hard in the last several years to increase enrollment and support students and families to be successful. Today, attendance is fairly stable, although the population served is highly mobile. As the community housing structure and the school have opposing missions, residents are caught in the middle. To be successful, they are told they must leave the subsidized-housing complex and buy or rent a house, yet their students are thriving in a school that is working to meet the substantial needs of a community living in poverty.

Experiences of residents caught in the crosshairs of cross-purpose offer insights. In the spring of 2013, Jen was driving her children across town to schools in West Pleasant. Each morning she left her home, fifteen miles from Eleanor Evans community school, at 6:30 a.m. to bring her children to the high school and elementary and then returned home to take care of her mother. Each day after lunch, she returned to the west-side to coach basketball, returning home again to have dinner with her family after

6:00 p.m. With only the meager pay provided by the afterschool program, Jen could barely afford fuel and could not afford maintenance for her inefficient car that was more than fifteen years old. She was proud to own a car and often served as taxi for friends and relatives in the community, taking them to the grocery store and the doctor regularly.

During one of my last days at the school, just before the three-week spring intersession, she arrived late for basketball practice. She had been hit, and the other driver who was at fault did not have insurance. Her car waited for her in a parking lot just over the bridge; she had walked to the school. She went on to basketball practice, and I did not see Jen again. Unable to reach her, as her cell number was no longer in service, I was left wondering: *Was she able to fix her car? Did she come back to the neighborhood?* My heart breaks to think that she had to move back, but only because I know she perceives that as defeat.

The consequences of disinvestment and disenfranchisement are far-reaching and difficult to overcome. Hari shared that parents feel "they don't have the clout to do anything" that makes engagement really difficult. A great deal of time must be invested in relationship-building, supporting community members to reflect on their lives and set personally meaningful goals, and walk with them as they work to meet those goals before schools or community groups can ask them to collaborate on other agendas (Hari). Once those relationships of mutual trust are built, they are easily damaged. Hari shares concerns that outside entities seeking stakeholder and community buy-in and participation, such as Pleasant Neighborhoods, wish to leverage the relationships that residents, community school personnel, and some community partners had built over a

long period of time invested in the community. She expressed her concerns regarding the nature of the community development efforts under Pleasant Neighborhoods direction.

> I have said [to Pleasant Neighborhood leadership], 'Please don't break our families' hearts again.' I don't know if I said it like that…. I said, 'If you want me to participate in delivering some help with family engagement, I want to know that you truly want their involvement. Because if they go and it is not successful, you will kill my ability to work with my families. They won't trust me anymore.' I have said the same things to Bruce, and he knows and he says he is trying. He sees it himself…. He is not going to quit because he feels he can make inroads. I think all of us do [feel we can make inroads] that stick it out…. You figure you are going to make some difference. (Hari)

Demystifying Participation

Mystification of the mechanisms and structures that maintain and perpetuate disinvestment and disenfranchisement is driven by multiple motivations in the West Pleasant community of Eleanor Evans. Policies and procedures within the school and district act to reduce opportunities for families to make decisions that impact their students. Claudia's philosophy regarding district policy was to "ask forgiveness and not permission"; she made decisions that were guided by law and policy but admits that, at times, she bent the rules pretty far.

Several policies handed down from the district require sophisticated knowledge of the organization and education law to be interpreted and understood. The district's policy handbook, which is distributed to parents at the beginning of each school year, relies heavily on educational, legal, and institutional jargon that effectively obfuscates the meaning of rules and procedures, making it impossible for Eleanor Evans parents to understand policy and advocate for their children (Olivia, Evelynn, Hari, Shelley, Gwen, Caroline, and Penelope). Under Claudia's leadership, policy changes were discussed in depth with faculty, students, and parents. She held focus groups, grade-

level meetings, and spoke with parents informally and one-on-one to communicate the intent behind policy changes and in order to collaborate to determine what it would look like at Eleanor Evans.

Policies and Procedures: Tools of Mystification

During the nine years Claudia was at the school, strategies and practices for assisting students and families to be in compliance with policy were developed through partnership over time within the community context. As a leader in a high-poverty school, she was aware that particular policies might be difficult to enact within a community with few resources and made the adjustments necessary to reduce obstacles that made policies difficult to observe (Lupton, 2005). For example, when the school district implemented a dress code policy, Claudia knew this would burden families. She sought financial help with the expense of uniforms. PUMC Sunday school classes began to contribute to a fund to provide three uniforms for each child in the school. At the beginning of each school year, each child received new uniforms and socks. Uniforms that were too small could be traded in for different-sized shirts, pants, and skirts. Many families purchased additional uniforms for their children; however, most expressed they depended on the generosity of donors to help provide uniforms.

When Ronda became principal, she reevaluated the uniform program and decided to give each child only one uniform shirt. Additionally, the dress code policy would be strictly observed under Rhonda's leadership. Teachers and school staff reported that students were being suspended and sent home for violating the dress code policy (Evelynn, Gwen, Olivia, Penelope, Shelley). Jewel shares her perspective

regarding this policy change and how it impacted her daughter's experiences with school.

> [It] was a weird change, I didn't understand that. We don't get explanations; we just get told what the new things are…. For me coming back, and I was pregnant when I came back to the community, she had uniforms but a different color from New York [school]. So we came back to [the new policy], and then when she didn't have her pants on they called me to bring her pants. Well, I can't make it. [They say] she has to go home. How does she have to go home if I am not home? It's not common sense. She is going to have to stay there without her uniform on because I am not home. I am not leaving work to come bring her some pants, because she doesn't have any uniform pants, they were not provided…. And the uniform rules…if you don't wear a uniform or you don't have a uniform, how can the consequence be the same? We did not have any [uniform]; it was ridiculous. Then my daughter is waking up in a little panic about pants being long enough because she doesn't have the right color of socks on. What are you talking about? 'They are going to send me home if they can see my pink socks.' Let them send you home for some socks. I will go up there and have a complete meltdown. Over some socks? That is not part of the uniform! It has to be white socks? 'Tell this woman to go buy you ten pair of white socks.' You are going to wear your pink socks, and if she should see a glimmer of pink and call me, let her call me, let her call me, over some socks. And I understand uniforms, I do understand, you go to work, you have to wear a uniform, business attire, or an official uniform, but come on, your socks? Seriously, and she, my daughter, really wakes up and is like, 'Mommy, I can't find any white socks.' What is wrong with you? 'I can't go to school.' Why can't you go? 'Cuz I don't have any white socks.' If you don't put these pink socks on your feet and get out of my house…. She has gotten my daughter a little crazy with that. I think it is ridiculous. The first time you come out of uniform, you get sent home, the second time, you get suspended. At some point, if you don't have a uniform, maybe three times you get suspended, suspend my child for no uniform, I dare you! I dare you! You are not providing the uniforms, and not every place does, that was a blessing that we did get that. I know probably nowhere else does [the school give uniforms]. [It] was a blessing, but you get used to it, you get spoiled, we did get spoiled. But then if you are working off of one or two uniforms, they have to be washed every other day and hung up, because we don't have dryers. We only have washers, if we have that. She [Rhonda] is trying to hold them to a higher standard, and I understand that if you don't hold them to that then they won't excel. I get that, but it's the transition…[it] has to be smoother. You can't come in and just put up a wall. And on this wall you have fifty million rules and regulations that were not in place before. And yes, Ms. [Smith had a] more lax environment, but that's what worked. (Jewel)

As Jewel relayed her frustration about the uniform policy to me, I reflected on my own understanding of dress codes. My own children have worn uniforms for school and other organizations. The uniforms are meant to reduce distraction, focus students on the work they are doing, and prevent children who cannot afford the fashion trends from being ridiculed. These purposes for uniforms were not revealed in my conversation with Jewel; she did recognize that uniforms are part of adult life but did not have key information about the purpose for implementing a dress code policy.

Of greater concern was a blatant violation of dress code policy implementation as outlined by Pleasant Public Schools. The clothing assistance clause of the policy states, "No child will be denied an education due to a bona fide financial inability to obtain clothing that complies with the school dress code." Further, the policy provides for families to receive assistance to obtain clothing that complies with the school dress code, which, for Eleanor Evans, includes a collared shirt, khaki or black slacks, and white socks (Pleasant Public Schools Dress Code). Jewel had no knowledge of the clothing assistance available via this policy.

Is the point of the dress code policy to create anxiety for elementary children who do not have the proper attire? Is the point of the dress code to shame parents who cannot afford the uniforms? These are the effects of the current implementation of the policy. Furthermore, intense focus on supervising a procedural behavior like wearing a uniform distracts school personnel from a long-term consequence; alienation of the parent and child.

Demystification of Neighborhood Development Practices

Dress codes are not the only opaque policies functioning to mystify the process of "schooling" for families in the Eleanor Evans community, but this example illustrates well the experiences of parents colliding with policy in ways that frustrate authentic participation. Transparency of intention is also warranted to elucidate the work being done in the name of community development for the neighborhood. Participants expressed concerns that the work by Pleasant Neighborhoods to seek input from the community may not include the representative perspectives that mirror the community's composition.

Between the fall of 2011 and the spring of 2012, a total of eight forums took place in the Eleanor Evans community to develop a transformation plan that would include changes to the neighborhood. The city planning office, in conjunction with the Choice and Promise Neighborhoods planning grants awarded to Pleasant Neighborhoods Revitalization Initiative in 2011 made this work possible. The transformation plan addressed housing, transportation, infrastructure, crime prevention and environmental design, health and wellness, and economic development. A look at Pleasant Neighborhoods origins provides insights into the work currently happening in the Eleanor Evans community.

Pleasant Neighborhoods grew out of a local nonprofit umbrella organization, Pleasant County Development, whose start was as a state funded agency, Pleasant Families. This state agency provided support to low-income communities in the city beginning in 1973. Over time, services were expanded

to become a "comprehensive antipoverty agency," and Pleasant Families began receiving funds from the United Way in 1997, but was later decommissioned by its parent state agency (Pleasant County Development History website). Soon after, a "broad coalition of people and groups united" to establish a new nonprofit organization, Pleasant County Development, which became affiliated with the state in place of the state-funded Pleasant Families agency (Pleasant County Development History website). Within the next several years, Pleasant County Development changed its mission from a "comprehensive antipoverty agency" to supporting low-income children through an "integrated service delivery" model working with various partners (Pleasant County Development History website).

In 2010, Pleasant County Development adopted ten core values to guide their work with families. These core values include among others, honesty, transparency, positive intent, diversity, and empowerment (Pleasant County Development, core values website). The Choice and Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grants that supported the development of the transformation plan were awarded to Pleasant County Development later in 2011. The division of the organization that was engaged in the work in Deer Park and Eleanor Evans became Pleasant Neighborhoods. It should be noted that generous donations from a few wealthy businessmen and women have provided a bulk of the funding that makes the Pleasant Neighborhood work possible at this time. Representatives of these donors serve on advisory committees and boards for both Pleasant Neighborhoods and the Pleasant Community Schools Initiatie in

addition to dozens of others innovative initiatives throughout the city. Large donations to Pleasant County Development were also responsible for a number of other educational innovations benefitting children living in poverty in the area.

In an interview with the project director, Kevin, he shared that a private donor supporting the bulk of Pleasant Neighborhood's work was committed to seeing the initiative through, even in the absence of implementation grant funds from Choice or Promise Neighborhoods. Applications for planning grants to benefit the Eleanor Evans community began as Pleasant Neighborhoods was engaged in a revitalization effort in Deer Park that had already completed its planning phase. During the grant application writing, data was collected from afar; little contact with the community to be transformed was sought to determine specific needs of residents. Pleasant Neighborhood personnel shared that grant writers were modeling the efforts described for the Eleanor Evans community after the Deer Park model currently underway (Kevin, Bruce, Kris).

The community forums conducting to create the transformation plan were a necessary first step to begin the work to have federal support and validation in the form of Choice and Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grants. These forums are outlined in the grant application as the mode for meeting deliverables for this phase of the initiative, yet only a handful of people living and working in the community were privy to the revitalization plans. Once the forums began, residents and those deeply invested in the community

were concerned about the motives of this enormous project. Given the history of West Pleasant, skepticism seems an appropriate response. Hari shared,

> The planners had sessions at different places…some at the church near the medical school… It is kind of an old-person church…not necessarily a church that represents the family housing folks. I suggested they hold some meetings at the West Pleasant Freewill Baptist Church because that group mostly lives in the apartments and is a church that is engaged in the community and welcomes the whole community…. I went to the forum at the older church; there were quite a few of the middle class white folks there, and they were angry and afraid of what this was going to be…[concerned] it would make [the community] higher poverty and less the community that they wanted to live in…. There is this feeling, these folks are outsiders and they are coming in and are going to change our [residents'] lives, and they don't want to be changed…. This [older] church was primarily middle class white people…who have the West Pleasant identity: 'We built Pleasant'…. They were the old West Pleasant constituents; they had lived through the other urban renewal. (Hari)

Given the community's history with urban renewal, it seems reasonable that they would be wary of outsiders who would like to change the neighborhood. This is especially true when it is the city of Pleasant coming into West Pleasant to sell a plan for improvement that resembles previous initiatives that landed many area residents in poverty (Hari).

Potential displacement is another real concern of Eleanor Evans residents. In the past, when communities have been revitalized by becoming "mixed-income" areas, the poor have suffered. A decade ago, a similar initiative by a local housing nonprofit, Pleasant Housing, aimed to transform a low-income community north of the city by diversifying the area and bringing in market-value townhomes, apartments, and houses. Hari recalls,

> They have to do it [move people out] in phases. We went through that with Pleasant Housing when they did [Countryside Estates] north of town. It was [a] low-income housing complex that was a blight, so they partnered with another management company. They got all this money and they tore it down. And when they tore it down, they had to move all of their people out and to different

> areas while they rebuilt. It was a major, major thing, to relocate all of those folks and then they built houses, apartments, townhouses, all kinds. (Hari)

Hari was also concerned that the "revitalization" of communities had become equated with making poor people "disappear," or at least reshuffled to such a degree that they might seem invisible.

> They want to reclaim the character and history of the area, and I think that is wonderful. It is not that I don't like this, but it is selfish and political. It is not unselfish, we are not thinking about the folks here. We are trying to figure out how to make them disappear so that it can become what the developers want it to be. (Hari)

As I met with Kevin, director of Pleasant Neighborhoods, he was quite forthright in sharing his vision of revitalization, which included stabilizing the local economy, enticing businesses to invest in the neighborhood, and encouraging gentrification.

> There are going to be some families that are clearly not solved for. Ultimately, it is a balancing act, because on one end you have to gentrify a neighborhood to stabilize it. That gentrification is naturally going to lead to some displacement. Displaced [people] will obviously go somewhere else, so you are not solving for that challenge. But the hope is that there is some balance, where you can create a neighborhood that is of choice…. Eleanor Evans is a perfect case in point; you can have a quality school and no better outcomes for a neighborhood. So if we are talking about true neighborhood turnaround, gentrification has to be a part of it. It just has to; it is an essential ingredient. The key problem is how…because it has to happen to stabilize, and it is a natural way of redistributing resources. (Kevin)

Lees, Slater, and Wyly (2008) offer gentrification has become an urban renewal tool, seemingly cleansed of its political and social roots in recent years. Gentrification is a term coined in 1964 by Ruth Glass who identified it as "a complex urban process" including "the rehabilitation of old housing stock, tenurial transformation from renting to owning, property price increases, and the displacement of working-class residents by the incoming middle classes." (Lees,

Slater, & Wyly, 2008, 5). Several cities across the country have sought urban renewal or revitalization plans in order to attract more resourced renters and investors to move back to urban centers by pairing renovated or rebuilt housing efforts with the development of entertainment districts (Davidson, 2008; Grogan & Proscio, 2000;Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2008).

Terms like urban renewal, revitalization, and social mixing are common euphemisms for gentrification efforts which celebrate the creation of multi-income communities in places which are currently considered urban blight (Davidson, 2008). Developers and revitalizers are able to sell a gentrification agenda to residents as economic diversification, which brings in middle income residents to support the community by providing an increased tax base to support public school funding and municipal services (Kevin, Victoria, Rose, Davidson, 2008; Grogan & Proscio, 2000; Slater, 2006). Yet, findings in urban centers seeking to transform areas of poverty to multi-income communities have more often displaced the poor, failed to provide employment opportunities for low skilled workers, and seen little to no improvement in the quality of life for residents who are able to weather the gentrification effort (Davidson, 2008; Grogan & Proscio, 2000; Slater, 2006).

In fact, Slater's (2006) findings support critical examination of gentrification research charging that gentrification is not the solution for urban decay but rather another problem. Thus, revitalization is a tool of neoliberal agendas focusing attention toward making communities competitive in a global economy, in order to make poor people disappear from an economically

valuable urban neighborhood, rather than "eliminate[ing] poverty itself" (Lipman, 2010, 2012; Anyon, 1997, 164). And although Pleasant Neighborhoods intentions to gentrify the community are never stated directly to residents, the "gentrification is natural" perspective has been detected by many living and working in the Eleanor Evans community.

The revitalization effort involves meetings with residents and also meetings with internal philanthropic donors who serve on leadership councils. Leadership perceives these engagements as emancipatory for residents, a chance to have their voices heard. Residents are not always appreciative of the efforts to engage them in the process of planning the community's future. At times leadership members vilify or dismiss the feelings and actions of the residents in the community. When adult residents are angry and hotheaded in engagements the leadership team perceives them as irrational or "alien" in their responses. The anger and aggression perceived by area developers, is likely due to the fact that residents are concerned that the revitalization will bringing gentrification and they view gentrification as a threat. Hari provides insights.

> When I have been at these meetings, I have said, "Wait a minute, our folks are angry and our folks are like this because they have experienced being treated differently." They are treated badly and they react badly, so you come and try to treat them nice and they react badly. But it is because they have a different experience. A different experience than middle class people and rich people have. That made everybody really mad at me…. It was like it was incomprehensible. There was a woman there, who is a black woman, a social worker working very hard to bring her folks up, and she was one who took the biggest issue with what I said. (Hari)

Local business owners seeking to move into the community are excited about the opportunity to grow and expand but are also wary of Pleasant Neighborhood's grand plans. With minimal opportunities to be a part of the

plan, many are left wondering: *How far will the organizing, planning, and implementing by external entities go? Will business owners who live in the area and serve on the community Chamber of Commerce be able to realize their dreams for the community?* Rose and Hari attend meetings of the Chamber Board and are excited about the prospects of a flourishing business district that benefits West Pleasant residents. Rose offers her hopes for the community.

> I am seeing a lot of momentum with the West Pleasant Chamber. New office, new executive director, new energy, new farmers' market, database of businesses, marketing…. There is a lot happening there that I have got my hands right in the middle of, and there is a lot of passion there. They are people who have lived here forever, and they have their Hatfields and McCoys, but they are committed. I kinda thought before it was just a bunch of people who wanted to hang out and bitch or whatever. And say we really can't get anything done, but there is starting to be structure. (Rose)

Hari is more skeptical of the end result. It is clear she is questioning the intentions of those who would be the revitalizers of the business district in the Eleanor Evans community.

> The other day at the Chamber board meeting we were talking about our farmers' market…. I am on the little committee that is trying to get it going. Most of the folks on that board are people who are in commerce, commercial folks who want to really change the main streets of this area and bring in commercial development. I think [that] is wonderful and we should work toward that. It is good for everybody, if we can include everybody in profiting… not just the few people [driving the revitalization initiative]. (Hari)

What is not transparent in this dance between residents, local business interests and developers working to revitalize the community are the intentions and motives underlying the work being done. Hari and others have shared their distrust of the outsiders initiating this plan and fear that residents will not be the beneficiaries of the efforts. I am left wondering, *Who benefits? Why does Pleasant Neighborhood*

leadership seek to transform the West Pleasant community of Eleanor Evans? Hari offers,

> The institutions and initiatives have ideas of how to make this like a middle class area. What they are trying to do is to get that validated by the people here in poverty. And so they are going to ask for help, but when they 'vet' that help, they will choose all of the things that fit their vision and not choose the things that don't. (Hari)

The manipulation of the resident input solicited via the community forums was a concern I also felt after attending one. After participating in the work groups, we were told that our ideas would be scrutinized by two levels of leadership to determine which were feasible and effective in meeting the goals of the transformation plan. My feelings of discomfort caused me to seek out Pleasant Neighborhood personnel to learn more about their work. I must admit that Bruce and Kris, who work and serve the community directly, are genuine and invested people who have developed relationships with the community and have engaged families and community partners with integrity. Yet when I met with Kevin, director of the Eleanor Evans initiative, I felt concerned the plan has an agenda that is more closely tied to an opaque outcome that underlies the substantial investments in the communities being transformed.

To this point, Pleasant Neighborhoods has received federally funded planning grants from both Choice and Promise Neighborhoods totally $750,000. Kevin at Pleasant Neighborhoods shared this is a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of money local donors are pumping into the revitalization effort. At this time, a handful of donors have provided the bulk of the funds necessary to get the wheels turning on this project.

For instance, Pleasant County Development purchased one of the three low-income housing complexes in the Eleanor Evans community. This complex is now

slated to be relocated to City of Pleasant land nearby as multi-income units that will then provide housing for approximately half of the current residents. Finally, the land reclaimed by tearing down the apartments and owned by Pleasant County Development will be developed commercially. According to Pleasant Neighborhood personnel, each building within the multi-building complex will be relocated in phases, and residents are already being supported to improve their credit and follow apartment policies and procedures in order to have a competitive application for consideration in the new building (Kevin, Bruce, Kris, Natalie). Pleasant County Development works closely with Pleasant Neighborhoods to plug in services and programs that are part of the existing Pleasant County Development umbrella of providers to meet residents' needs.

Pleasant County Development thus asks as a nonprofit super umbrella, accessing a wide variety of service providers contracted with the nonprofit to address a plethora of social service needs. In this way Pleasant County Development has become part of the "shadow" state functioning within the city of Pleasant and with designs on broader markets (Wolch, 1989). The entity's super-network has evolved over fifteen years. As city and state agencies become overburdened by increasing needs and demands on a skeleton crew in the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, and others, it has become increasingly common practice to outsource program development, administration, and evaluation.

The shift to public-private partnerships to meet social service and educational needs began in the 1970s. As economic crisis and budget cuts over the last ten years have diminished government agencies' abilities to meet demands, privatized social agents, often created through philanthropic donations, have been ready to take a larger

role shaping policy and the institutions they supplant (Lipman,2012) These private agents function as the "shadow state," collecting funds to administer and oversee services for which the state and local government has little oversight (Lipman, 2012; Mitchell, 2001; Wolch, 1989).

"Shadow state" organizations are situated between the state and society in a relationship that is difficult to define (Mitchell, 2001). Wolch (1989) describes the "shadow state as a para-state apparatus with collective service responsibilities previously shouldered by the public sector, administered outside traditional democratic politics, but yet controlled in both formal and informal ways by the state" (201). A product of neoliberal deregulation, "shadow state" organizations operate in a grey area, which frustrates oversight and regulation by state agencies (Lipman,2012; Mitchell, 2001; Wolch, 1989).

Funding for the work done by shadow state agencies is often provided by wealthy donors, many of whom are entrepreneurs who have accumulated wealth as a result of other neoliberal practices such as union busting, deregulation, and tax relief. These billionaire investors form foundations that provide support for innovative experiments in low-income housing, education, and health care reform, which has been described as venture philanthropy (Lipman, 2012; Saltman, 2010). These donations are seen by capitalist as investments and innovative experiments in poor communities as minimally risky with benefits in the form of social policy that favors choice and free market options like charter schools (Lipman, 2012). Thus, a "venture philanthropy" experiment, Pleasant County Development invests in innovations that have the potential to produce profits and/or effects that can be scaled up and sold to others as a model that works. Effectiveness indicators from business drive agendas, programs, and

interventions which are selected based on research evidence of their efficiency rather than fit within the community or school context (Lipman, 2012).

Thus, a final consequence of the Pleasant Neighborhoods work has been the removal of community-embedded resident advocates who sought to uncover motivations and intentions that may prove detrimental to low-income families. With the transition in leadership at several levels in Pleasant Public Schools, Pleasant Neighborhoods has taken advantage of these events to make a case for a position of "no confidence" in the school district and current interventions in place, such as the Pleasant Community Schools Initiative. Using the school accountability frenzy that has risen to new heights under the current state superintendent's agenda, Pleasant Neighborhoods criticized the work done in the poorest schools in the district. Schools like Eleanor Evans and Deer Park are now the targets that Pleasant County Development and Pleasant Neighborhoods seek to transform into high-performing schools and communities.

Efforts to isolate the effects of the Pleasant Neighborhoods initiative have prompted the school district to succumb to Pleasant Neighborhood's demands. The district now employs a superintendent dedicated to the six schools that form the educational pipeline for the Deer Park and Eleanor Evans communities. When asked if this initiative threatens public schooling in Pleasant, Kevin admitted they are asking the district to do more.

> Our proposal is substantial; having dollars to bring to the table plays a huge role. One of the first things we said to [Pleasant Public Schools] is that we are not investing in any school where you have not demonstrated that we have solid leadership at those schools. We have six schools that we are targeting. Demonstrate to us that you have the right leadership there…. So already there are two [leaders] that we have highlighted that probably won't be here next year.

> Second step was over the course of three years, how do we ensure that every teacher at these three schools are a 3 and above on your teacher evaluation [scale] of 1-5? We are not saying you have to remove those teachers, but how do you get them there? So part of the proposal is a very robust package for teacher-leader effectiveness. (Kevin)

As Pleasant County Development and Pleasant Neighborhoods use their substantial budget and network of influence to transform not only low-income communities but also poor-performing schools, they move their agenda into a new frontier: public education. If Pleasant Neighborhoods can move the needle on test scores, attendance, and participation to impact the school's overall performance indicators in a positive direction, they also have a substantial budget to market that success widely. The connected network of this venture philanthropic entity is positioned to bolster the accomplishments of the initiative and amplify that message of success throughout the country (Lipman, 2012). And, as expected, success brings credit for these changes to the work of venture philanthropists rather than residents and partners living and working in the community itself. Pleasant Neighborhoods will have a model for others to emulate. Globalization of the model is paramount for scaling-up efforts, thus local contribution and necessity is minimized.

Likely, the most deleterious effects of the Pleasant Neighborhoods revitalization initiative on community engagement is the destruction of relationships that hold a community together in the absence of an overarching revitalization agenda. Community school personnel, teachers, leaders, and other advocates have left the school and community in the last two years. Claudia's leadership provided support for a culture of kindness and caring to mediate interactions within the school. Rhonda alienated the community and closed the doors on the "hub of the community" as her lack of experience working in an elementary community school and her focus on

bringing all practices into compliance with district policy, pushed the community out of the school. Pressure to focus on efficiency and data to drive every decision pushed Hari to the breaking point as she sought to identify needs of families and students that exist outside of the school agenda focus. Her supervisor at PCSI, likely pressured by the same network of influence to disengage in both Eleanor Evans and Deer Park communities, did not advocate for her. Hari and her colleague at Deer Park who served as community school coordinators were both fired in May of 2012.

Reflecting upon my research that brings the 2012-2013 school year to a close in the Eleanor Evans community, I contemplate the events that have displaced the Pleasant Community Schools Initiative that first attracted me to the school as a study site. For me, it is clear that the work being done by Pleasant Neighborhoods and Pleasant County Development has been on the backs of "insiders" who have built relational trust with residents in the Eleanor Evans Community. Hiring a success story, such as Bruce, from the community to expedite access to residents whose input is required as a component of the Choice and Promise Neighborhood planning processes was strategic genius. As so many admitted that the nature of the community made relationship development a time-intensive task. Those with the relationships were sought as allies as long as their agendas did not frustrate or slow the work sought to be done by Pleasant Neighborhoods. Yet, as Hari pointed out, their efforts will not move far if they do not have "feet on the ground" to continue to support and implement the work. What is also becoming clear is that the Pleasant Neighborhoods Initiative is employing a set of strategies at the local level that frustrate authentic participation for community residents under the guise of community development. Further, these strategies applied at a

societal level buttress a neoliberal worldview and act to dismantle conditions for authentic participation at the societal level.

A functionalist perspective of poverty further paralyzes opportunities for residents, as those who seek to engage them employ a deficit view of their lifestyle and circumstances (Raffo et al.,2010). Clearly, even well-intentioned service providers view poverty as something to be addressed at the level of the individual, investing time and energy to apply intervention strategies, which can help "break the cycle of poverty." Poverty was characterized by several as due to choices families were making, and children became the targets of interventions that could help them realize their global competitiveness (Raffo et al., 2010; Rehmann, 2011). Yet few engagements experienced or described adopted a socially critical perspective of poverty by challenging policies and "taken-for-granted practices and discourse" that "can limit individuals' life chances" (Raffo et al., 2010, p. 42).

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications

The journey I began in 2011 to explore the nature of community engagement within the Eleanor Evans Community School has been surreal. As a native of Pleasant and former student and teacher within the school district, I was familiar with some of the history of the area and perceptions of certain schools as "failing." As the child of a single mother with only some college education, I could have easily ended up in one of the "failing" school communities in the 1970s and 1980s. However, my grandmother provided support to help my mother to find a house in a "good neighborhood" and secure a mortgage. My mother struggled to pay bills and put food on the table. Often we walked to school, the grocery store, and church so that she would have enough money for gas to get to work in her car, also a donation from my grandmother. I have always considered myself to be "lucky." I had access to a great education, attending elementary and secondary school with children from an affluent neighboring community. My peers were expected to attend college and participated in a number of service organizations and "college prep" activities, many were provided through the school. I participated too. I held my own in "honors" courses, graduated in the top 5 percent of my class, and continued on to college like my peers. I was seldom reminded of my working class origins in academic settings.

I often wonder what my experience might have been like if my grandmother was not in the picture. She was the life preserver we relied on to keep us afloat when my parents divorced. She made it possible for me to be "lucky." Without her, we could have easily ended up in the subsidized housing built in the Eleanor Evans Community as I entered grade school. I could have been one of the West Pleasant students who

lacked the support to complete high school and attend college. I could be there now, living in substandard housing, barely making ends meet, and hungry for healthy food, a good-paying job, reliable transportation, and health care. I think it is this parallel, between what my life is today and where I might have been without support to overcome circumstantial poverty, that fuels my passion to critically examine the intentions of engagements and actions taking place in the Eleanor Evans community.

The Journey in Retrospect

As I began my experiences in Eleanor Evans Community School, I was intrigued by the abundant supports to help children and families thrive in an "unsafe" neighborhood. I sought to learn how school personnel and partners defined success for students attending the school; my presence was as observer, "outsider." Principal internship brought me into the "school lives" of parents, families, students, teachers, partners, and administrators. I worked at their sides, planning, implementing, and supervising the processes of "schooling" while also building relationships of trust and mutual respect. I found myself, in some small measure, a part of the community school. At this time, "community schooling" was in full swing at Eleanor Evans. Hari had twenty-six different partners providing support and services to develop and sustain "conditions for learning." Claudia, recently honored for her excellence as a leader by her peers, was being sought out to share her knowledge with school districts throughout the state and nation when she decided to retire.

The transition in leadership from Claudia to Rhonda marked a definite shift in philosophy and practices that were aligned with the equity strategies of community schooling. As a result, several school personnel left Eleanor Evans that year, and

parents complained that they felt unwelcome. At the same time, Pleasant Neighborhoods were primed and ready to execute a neighborhood revitalization initiative that promises to support the educational pipeline, provide better housing, attract jobs and economic development, and improve the health and well-being of the community.

It is my perspective that Pleasant Neighborhoods planned to uproot community school practices as a component of their strategic plan. Eliminating the community school initiative would allow Pleasant Neighborhoods to control as many variables as possible in this innovative experiment of community development, while also taking advantage of a chink in the armor as leaders changed position. Within the Deer Park community, the same change in leadership opportunity was a major entry point for "progress" in the revitalization work. By the end of Rhonda's first year, the community school work was dismantled.

Now setting their sights on reforming K-12 education, leadership from Pleasant Neighborhoods have argued for control of the processes and practice of the public schools within their community experiments. They have leveraged the early childhood data collected and used to validate their own programs to indict the public school district with failing to provide adequate yearly progress support for their students who enter the public schools. It should be mentioned that the early childhood programs of reference operate as venture philanthropy beneficiaries, with selective admission requirements, maximum class sizes with master teachers and certified assistants, and a surplus of appropriate resources. The public school system does not have the budget or resources to provide the low student-to-teacher ratio in four-year-old programs; to

compensate master's-level teachers; or outfit early childhood classrooms with state-of-the-art design, equipment, and supplies.

With the current education and neighborhood revitalization initiative underway, I am concerned for families who will be displaced when multi-income housing "rescues" the community from economic crisis. I also mourn the demise of the community school model that brought many partnerships and opportunities to families and children. And I am left wondering, *How have community engagements prepared residents to sustain the programs and practices that have met their needs? Childrens'needs? As the school transitions under the pressure of Pleasant Neighborhoods to produce students who excel, how will parents be engaged in that process?*

Community Engagement Success

I am drawn to explore a final interview question that I asked during the 2012-2013 school year, while the community school model was still in place: What do you envision as successful community engagement for Eleanor Evans families? A few participants described opportunities for residents, community partners, and school personnel to come together for informal learning to address the needs of the community. Robert, Caroline, and Bliss described the creation of a community center that housed resources like a library, health and fitness activities, classes for children and adults to explore hobbies, continue their education, or teach others. Hari wished to create opportunities for a variety of people to come together in frank conversations that had the potential to transform all people engaged. These visions for community

engagement may be able to move residents to find common ground and develop a vision for their community to make changes which improve their lives better.

However, a majority of the visions described by participants were inextricably tied to a functionalist view of poverty that offered few opportunities to critically examine mechanisms that maintain the status quo. For example, Bruce described success as residents "taking accountability in the community" and developing "a sense of ownership." He equated civic action to calling the city departments to tell them about a pothole. While this is showing investment in the community, it does not address broader societal issues that perpetuate poverty conditions. Many participants envisioned engagements that validated the resources and services they were currently providing to families and children, describing successful engagement as increasing numbers of attendees or requests for resources (Shelley, Claudia, Pia, Jared, Dana, Natalie, Victoria, Bruce, Kris, Rose, Evelynn, Olivia, Jessica, Matthew, Jen, Jewel). Rhonda and Carrie both envision parents accessing mentors and parenting classes to support their academic success for their children and goal attainment for themselves.

Scaling up was mentioned as the vision for community engagement success by the Bounty, Pleasant Public School personnel, and Pleasant Neighborhoods. Bruce, Kris, Daphne, and Kevin all mentioned growing the work they were doing to engage more families and communities throughout the city of Pleasant as an outcome they were seeking, while Matthew viewed growth as occurring by attracting more residents and growing leadership from within. The Bounty was the only organization in the community I encountered that sought to turn the reins completely over to community members from the outset. Pleasant Neighborhoods also intends to leave control of the

community with Eleanor Evans residents eventually, although the composition of community will be dramatically changed by that time. Bruce shared that he sees residents "taking over their community" and "making decisions about what happens" "eventually" and saw his job continuing in another neighborhood as the revitalization model is applied throughout the city to address poor communities.

What is the Nature of Community Engagement?

As I began this journey, I was not certain what ethnographic research question I would ask, only that I wished to experience a community school context for the exploration. During principal internship, I arrived upon my research question: *What is the nature of community engagement and who participates in an urban elementary community school?* The engagements I was able to experience and learn about carried three ends-in-view for engagement: community service, student enrichment, and community development. In the end, these engagements have been an education, as the views of residents and the value of their participation in decision-making became evident.

Participation to What End?

Community service engagements provided little to no opportunity for residents to be involved in decision-making; rather they are ritualized events that place residents as the recipient of service. Planning and decisions made to determine needs or services provided were decided by a few who delegate the action plan to others who "serve" their role to make the event happen. Little adjustment is made to the original plan, and when changes are made, residents are seldom asked to provide input or feedback. These engagements engrain a deficit perspective of low-income families and provide

church congregation with someone to serve. Those who "serve" have been accused of "hit-n-run volunteerism" as they swoop in for the evening or day to do a service and then retire to their comfortable lives to reflect on their good deeds. From the residents' perspective, these events are an opportunity to "take advantage" of the wealthy by getting freebies and serve to legitimize community views that "giving back" is for the weak.

Community engagements with student enrichment ends-in-view provide limited opportunity for residents to engage in decision-making. Only the work by the Pleasant Community Schools Initiative site team and the Garden Time Program provided ongoing opportunities for families and community members to help shape events, activities, and programs through the integration of community issues (Schutz, 2006). Yet neither example placed residents in the position of leader in planning and decision-making. The work done in collaboration with parents and families is still facilitated by those who live outside of the community and is funded by external entities. Without ongoing financial support, residents are dependent upon community partners if the programs are to continue. As a result, residents are sometimes hesitant to engage. Programs change frequently as funding or volunteer commitment changes, and the fleeting nature of most programs discourages deep investment and authentic participation by the broader community.

Community engagement opportunities around community development ends-in-view comprised the majority of opportunities to contribute to decision-making regarding the needs and services the community desires and changes to the neighborhood that will impact residents' lives. Yet many of these engagements are

mediated by outsiders who leverage the relationships of those who have invested time and energy to develop relational trust and mutual respect with residents. Residents' ideas are also vetted to determine if they are feasible and appropriate to address the components of the revitalization by two levels of leadership who do not represent the residents experientially or demographically. It is also difficult to determine the fidelity of this work, as residents are highly mobile, and composition of the forum groups and resident council fluctuate month to month.

Pleasant Neighborhoods has employed a community success story to serve as their liaison and has been able to increase participation in decision-making and planning through Bruce. Other Pleasant Neighborhood employees have limited contact with the community and seem to engage in a great deal of top-down planning, marketing, and action around their revitalization agenda. Residents see promise for the community development initiative, although a few share they are unsure of the intentions and motivations of the work. Additionally, engagements by Pleasant Neighborhoods include incentives for participation, which seems to increase neighborhood participation numbers. The Bounty has also sought to develop the community but has begun that effort from inside of the community by seeding a church that is slowly growing with community membership. Those participants who are members of the church highlight it as a great example of engagement success for the neighborhood.

Perspectives on Poverty and Participation

It can be said that all community engagements experienced, enquired about, and examined were born from a functionalist view of poverty. This perspective privileges educational intervention as a primary driver to "break the cycle of poverty" that has it

grips on "deserving" poor children (Rehmann, 2011). A majority of the initiatives in the community target children as the point for interrupting the poverty cycle and provide additional supports to advance this objective. Tutors, mentors, attendance and behavior rewards, provision of enrichment activities, and incentives are leveled at the educational pipeline, as if these efforts can rescue children from the evil influences of poor homes and communities. The success of these interventions are then celebrated as percentile gains by individual students on standardized tests, thus obfuscating the effects of any other factor, environmental or relational in the student's life. So as we seek to develop a community, we fracture our united work and identity to focus on individual competitiveness that is envisioned by those at the top.

The challenge is to move engagements from a functionalist view of poverty to a socially critical perspective. The work done by community school personnel has provided substantial support for children to have enhanced learning opportunities and access to support for academic achievement, yet it fails to challenge policies, procedures, and structures that maintain the status quo and fail to engage residents in action to "break the cycle of poverty." These references to "breaking the cycle" are employed by a handful of community partners in the school, including Pleasant Neighborhoods, which hints at the repeating nature of the circumstance but doesn't dig any deeper.

A socially critical perspective of poverty creates a space for those living in these circumstances to demystify the processes that frustrate their ability to leave subsidized housing, access healthy food and reliable transportation, and find jobs that pay a living wage in their community. Support to deconstruct institutions that govern education and

housing in order to understand their role in "normalizing" exclusion and failure for some communities would more appreciably "break the poverty cycle", as policies governing these institutions are developed with specific economic and social agenda that favor those already in power (Maguire, 2006; Raffo et al., 2010, p. 43). Further, those living in poverty must lead from the core to counter neoliberalist ideologies that support venture philanthropists to exploit low-income communities for further gain in the name of revitalization and community development (Baptist & Theoharis, 2011; Lipman, 2010, 2012; Raffo et al., 2010).

Leading to End Poverty

Daphne, Community School Director for Pleasant Public Schools, led a community school for fourteen years before moving into the director position to support other principals leading community schools. She came to teaching as the mother of a special needs child and sought to educate herself in order to be his advocate. This perspective as a parent first has informed her philosophy of leadership. In an interview she shared that being in the central office of the district removes her from the community school context, and, as she engages other administrators who have left school sites, she finds it difficult to translate the experience leading in the community school for them.

> The community school work is complex and requires people to think in different ways. It is difficult in a hierarchical system like the school district and administration building to transfer the passion and intent of the work. People say the right words but don't embody the intention and passion of the community school work. My work [has become about] lighting a fire…. (Daphne)

Her efforts to "transfer" her passion, she admits, are failing. As I reflect on her thoughts and my own experiences, it seems that the passion that sustains community

school work grows within the organization and leader from the experiences of that work in context. Transferring that passion without benefit of the experience which develops that passion is an education that lacks relevance for the receiver, having not felt the joys and the pain of the effort for themselves.

As we talked about her work supporting community school leaders under her charge, she described the approach to leading she seeks. She shared that a professor in her leadership education had described two types of leading, one in which the leader is in a boat travelling on the water while followers swim alongside; the other is a leader who swims with everyone else. Daphne states, "I need swimmers. I don't need the great boat riders that lead people across the water; I want them in the water making stroke by stroke with the families and the students." Her statement caused me to wonder, *Are we training leaders to accomplish their work in school by crossing the difficult spots in boats, so they can continue to look good, don't get messy, stay professional? Or do leadership preparation programs challenge leaders to get in the water with their teachers, students, parents, and partners to gain from the experience, wisdom, relationship, trust, and mutual respect as obstacles are addressed together?*

From my perspective, developing a community is not an administrative task; it is an engagement, everyone in the water together, building it together! It happens within the context of the community and cannot be mandated or directed. It must be lived and shared with those with whom you endeavor to build it! Daphne proposed that her leadership philosophy necessitates changes to policy and procedure at the central office to create conditions that nurture authentic participation within schools. Acknowledging work we need to do with leaders cannot be mandated; rather, we need to "support

leaders to adopt a philosophy for leading which embraces the nature of the work through conversations and discussions" (Daphne).

Baptist and Theoharis (2011) assert that leading from inside communities of poverty is the only direction that can dismantle the policies, practices, ideologies, and values that act to maintain communities of poverty. Thus, leaders are developed internally with the understanding that they are leading a social movement to end poverty. Grounded by the work done by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his Poor People's Campaign in 1967-1968, the Poverty Initiative seeks to "reignite" passion to "lift the load of poverty" (Baptist & Theoharis, 2010, p. 161). The endeavor is centered on educating rather than mobilizing, as the effort must be long-lived, difficult, and intellectually strenuous. This effort must begin with the community determining what obstacles they face, the resources necessary to begin the work of dismantling those obstacles, and a focused and coherent effort to create an educated, well-connected leadership core (Baptist & Theoharis, 2010). These leaders will swim in the water with their community, bringing all members along together, as it is in the swim—or the "struggle"—that the education that unites the group and focuses their work occurs (Baptist & Theoharis, 2010). Leaders grown from the community are charged to develop other leaders who are "connected, clear, competent, and committed" (Baptist & Theoharis, 2010, p. 162). Commitment rather than compensation must be the driving motivation for these core leaders.

The pedagogy that underlies this embodiment of school as social action is constructivist, acknowledging that all actors come to engagements with prior knowledge, misunderstandings, and beliefs that impact learning (Baptist & Theoharis,

2011). Raising consciousness through daily actions is a primary means to demystifying policies and practices. For example, engaging in a planned act of civil disobedience requires actors to think through the potential consequences, such as arrest for standing up against injustice (Baptist & Theoharis, 2011).

Strategies employed to educate as part of the movement include engaging in "collective-study" and "self-study" through small group learning and one-on-one conversations that help to break down barriers and distrust (Baptist & Theoharis, 2011, p. 164). Social action leaders also "teach in dialogue" rather than lecture, participate in immersion experiences, and construct "personal maps or poverty narratives" to uncover mechanisms that sustain poverty conditions within a community or context (Baptist & Theoharis, 2011, p. 167-168).

Until we Meet Again, Residents of West Pleasant

As I bring this inquiry to a close, I must admit that I have felt moments of hope as I have seen potential for engagements to support authentic participation, but I have also often felt disappointment. Throughout my journey, I have asked participants to review interview transcripts or the construction of events I describe from my experiences and am always pleased when they identify with my depictions. Yet I have this aching feeling that I am letting them down. Since Claudia's retirement, there is a steady buzz of discontent that waxes and wanes as I visited the school. Most held their chins up and waited for things to get better. Increasingly, they have looked to me to tell them how to make it better. I have found it difficult to refrain from feeling that it is my job to "make it better." The desperation that oozes off of those who remain in the

school makes me want to cringe, as I know their next words will be: "What should we do?"

And although it is tempting, I know that I cannot offer a recipe that will be their success. They must do as Daphne suggests and "swim" through it together. They must use the struggle as an education paired with action. What I can offer is a summary of suggestions provided by those currently "swimming."

1) Go into the community. Two-thirds of participants (parents, teachers, administrators, and partners) asserted that meeting families and students in the community, in community places helped to alleviate tensions due to unequal power positions of principals, teachers, students, and parents in schools.
2) Listen. Parents living in communities of poverty care about their children and want to be involved in planning and making decisions about their children. Ask for their ideas, ask for their feedback, and listen.
3) Don't hide behind policy and procedure to negotiate your engagements. Demystify intentions and motivations for rules, policy, engagements, and decisions. Be transparent. Families living in poverty may have difficulty trusting you, so be as transparent as you can. Deconstruct and challenge policy that disadvantages families in your community
4) Grow leadership from within the community. To make lasting changes, it must come from within the community. Share what and who you know. Grow capacity within your community to continue the work in your absence.

As community-based initiatives and reform gain momentum to address the needs of poor, urban communities, it seems worth mentioning that all schools ought to be mindful of the needs of the local context. Today, scaling up success is celebrated as the primary goal of educational and social interventions; yet tailoring content and processes to address relevant local issues seems a more realistic focus for divining success. Community schooling, is an equity strategy with the potential to address the needs of children living in poverty. By supporting the development of partnerships which bridge structural holes between education, health services, nutrition, extended learning and more within the school, children are better prepared and able to learn. However, the processes and structures which maintain poverty circumstances are not acknowledged or addressed. It is my position that the abolition of poverty is the only action which will appreciably alter the lives of poor children and families and that movement will need to begin from within these communities. This movement is education and requires leaders who are committed to equity and social justice to be grown to lead (Baptist & Theoharis, 2011).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Documents Reviewed

Table A.1. Composition of Field Notes

Field Notes List
1. Researcher's field notes and reflections during and after visits to Eleanor Evans, community partners, and interested parties (Spring 2011 – Spring 2013)
2. Researcher's Principal Internship Portfolio (Spring 2012)
3. Notes from observation of and engagement in meetings and informal conversations with members of the school community and district (Spring 2011 – Spring 2014). Including artifacts such as agendas, flyers, and handouts.

Table A.2. Field Note Sample Entries

	2012 Field Notes Sample Entries
Principal Internship Reflective Journal	Today was my first day of internship. I did not realize it when I scheduled this date, but being the last Friday of the month, there was a Community Dinner this evening and I was able to attend. Also this morning was a special Rise and Shine, Principal's and Counselor's Honor Roll and Student of the Month took quite a while and brought and increased number of parents and students (on time) to the assembly. Ms. Smith gave me a comprehensive tour of the school, The Bounty (grocery), Garden Time, and "the baby school" today along with her other intern from ORU, after the tour was a barrage of visitors (faculty, parents, community members) in steady succession. Ms. Smith has an open door policy and it keeps her hopping. In the afternoon we met with Dr. Meyers to review the goals I have developed for the internship, only a couple of adjustments to make. I spoke with Hari Silver (Community Schools Coordinator) about the possibility of working with Ms. Morgan and a high school student to develop and support an after school video club for 6 weeks in February, I wish I could be here more regularly to help them with this venture. The day closed with the community dinner. The cafeteria is filled and Pleasant United Methodist Church (PUMC) members bring salad, dinner, water, and dessert to each person seated there. I understand that this is service on the part of PUMC, but it feels odd to have the community members waited on by the church members. Earlier in the day she communicated that the rationale for having this community dinner on the last Friday of the month as necessitated by a shortage of food in the homes because they are out of food stamps.
School Visit	In the Main Office there is new furniture. Joanie is the new administrative assistant and she has a new desk. There is a big calendar on north wall with 2 months displayed of activities displayed (academic activities mostly, 2 community events). The copy machine has been moved into the conference room rather than sitting out where everyone can access it. Less Cluttered. Peter's office is less cluttered, no kid chairs or stuffed animals. Office is quiet. No parents, children, or teachers coming in to visit with Dr. Peter's throughout the day. Peter's desk is pretty clean. As I walk out of the office and toward the main entrance I see several empty bulletin boards in hallway. Rhonda is not in hallways much – just "business" is what I observe. No extra chairs in the office for anyone to come in and sit in. Need appointment to get into the office. Things are very different.

Table A3. List of Participants and Their Relationship to Eleanor Evans Community

Pseudonym	Position	Organization	Time	Notes
Claudia Smith	Principal	Eleanor Evans	9 years	Retired in June 2012
Rhonda Peters	Principal	Eleanor Evans	1 year	Principal since August 2012
Daphne Lewis	Community Schools Director	Pleasant School District	2 years	Community School leader before moving to district level position.
Evelynn Jones	School Counselor	Eleanor Evans	8 years	Retiring in 2014
Olivia Dean	School Social Worker	Eleanor Evans	4 years	
Gwen Reed	**Teacher**	**Eleanor Evans**	**12 years**	**Former homeowner in Eleanor Evans area**
Caroline Allen	Teacher	Eleanor Evans	5 years	Grew up in West Pleasant
Penelope Morgan	Teacher	Eleanor Evans	6 years	Recruited to teach at Eleanor Evans by Claudia, left in 2013
Velma Alexander	Teacher	Eleanor Evans	8 years	
Margie Atwood	**Teacher Aid**	**Eleanor Evans**	**12 years**	**Former renter in Eleanor Evans area**
Bliss Jones	**Teacher Aid**	**Eleanor Evans**	**15 years**	**Homeowner living in the community**
Carrie Owens	Parent Facilitator	Eleanor Evans	1 year	West Pleasant native and current resident
Jared Jones	**Tutor**	**Eleanor Evans**	**15 years**	**Former student of the school; current community resident**
Hari Silver	Community Schools Coordinator at Eleanor Evans	Pleasant Community Schools	10 years	Resident Services coordinator for community apartments five years, before coming to the school, left in 2013
George Brown	Pleasant Community Schools Director	Pleasant Community Schools	10 months	Pleasant Community Schools Director

Pseudonym	Position	Organization	Years	Notes
Dana Danskin	Community Ministries	Pleasant United Methodist	20 years	Ongoing Community Outreach efforts at Eleanor Evans
Carter Franks	Co-Founder	The Bounty	4 years	Formed 501(c)(3) to support The Bounty, passed away 2012
Matthew Moore	Minister	The Promise	3 years	Director of the Bounty; Passed away in 2013
Hannah Birch	Founder	Garden Time	6 years	
Adele Simmons	Community Outreach Director	Garden Time	4 years	
Pia Samuels	Teacher	Garden Time	3 years	Eleanor Evans & Garden Time teacher
Benny Vanhook	Teacher	Garden Time	3 years	Former Garden Time teacher, left in 2012
Jessica Berry	Community Outreach Coordinator	Pleasant Medical School	7 years	
Shelley Burton	Social Worker	LifeTime	3 years	Came to the school as graduate student.
Lydia Parker	Volunteer	The Mission		Resident of West Pleasant
Kevin Arthur	Project Director	Pleasant Neighbor-hoods	5 years	Resident of Deer Park Community
Kris Paulson	Community Engagement Director	Pleasant Neighbor-hoods	3 years	
Bruce Howard	**Resident Engagement Coordinator**	**Pleasant Neighbor-hoods**	**14 years**	**Former Eleanor Evans Registrar/Resident of Community**
Curtis Lee	Early Childhood Director	Pleasant County Development		West Pleasant Resident
Natalie Nelson	Resident Service Coordinator	Pleasant Neighborhoods		
Victoria Puls	Resident Service Coordinator	Pleasant Housing		
Jen Johnson	**Parent & After School programs**	**Eleanor Evans**	**19 years**	**Former Resident of Eleanor Evans apartment complexes**

Pseudonym	Position	Organization	Years	Notes
Robert Keen	**Grand-parent & PTA member**	**Eleanor Evans**	**2 years**	**Grandparent of student, PTA member and community resident**
Rose Williams	**Parent and PTA President**	**Eleanor Evans**	**6 years**	**PTA president, community resident**
Jewel Taylor	**Parent**	**Eleanor Evans**	**7 years**	**Current apartment complex resident**

Bolded participants have lived or currently live in the Eleanor Evans community and shaded participants have lived or currently live in West Pleasant.

Table A.4 Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about the community school initiative in at Eugene Field. Below are a series of questions which may be presented to you orally. Additional follow-up questions may also be asked to provide clarification for responses to these questions.

1. Tell me about your experiences at Eugene Field Elementary School.
    a. What is your role in the school?
    b. How long have you been living/working in this community?

2. Tell me about the types of activities you participate in at Eugene Field or in the Eugene Field community. Tell me about opportunities community residents/families have to engage.

3. How are community members involved in decisions about the school?
    a. Which community members are involved in decisions?
    b. What kinds of decisions are community members invited to discuss?

4. What types of services/opportunities does the community school provide?

5. Are you aware of barriers or obstacles to community engagement? Please describe.

6. What do you envision as successful community engagement?

7. Is there any other information related to this school community that you would like to share?

Table A.5. Documents Studied

(List of Reviewed Eleanor Evans Documents from 2011-2014)
Published Memoir of "Claudia Smith" retired, Eleanor Evans school principal (2003-2011)
Eleanor Evans Teacher Handbook(2012)
Eleanor Evans webpage (home page/
Principal Internship Portfolio
Eleanor Evans School Improvement Plan (2010-2011)
National Center for Educational Statistics School Directory Information
Eleanor Evans PLC-Faculty/Staff Meeting Agendas (2.6.2012; 2.17.2012)
Teacher Advice to Parents survey data (Spring 2012)
First Grade Family Reading Night Flyer (2.4.2012)
Spring Intersession enrollment reminder flyer (2012)
School Activity Calendars (2.2012 & 3.2012)
District Calendars (2011-2012 & 2012-2013)
Principal's calendar for teachers (1.23.2012; 1.30.2012; 2.6.2012; 2.13.2012; 2.20.2012)
Eleanor Evans Mentoring informational packet and application for adults (Spring 2012)
PUMC Community Outreach flyers (Big Bucks Store donations; Community Dinner; Blood Drive)
Obituary of PUMC member who started the Big Bucks Store at Eleanor Evans
Eleanor Evans Positive Behavior Support pamphlet (Spring 2012)
Parent letter inviting student to participation in lunch to honor "Straight A's" (2.6.2012)
Proposal letter for "week of service" provided by Cascia Students (Spring 2012)
Community School Umbrella non-profit informational documents
Monthly Reports from site Community School Coordinator to Community School Umbrella non-profit director (2008-2013)
Eleanor Evans site Community School Coordinator Documents (Meeting agendas, Out of School Time activity flyers and calendars, emails)
Community School Site Team Meeting Agendas (2.6.2012 and 2.11.2013)
2012-2013 Eleanor Evans Site Team Plan – Community Schools Budget
Transformative Partnerships handout from Presentation at Community School Conference (7.2012)
Pleasant Food Security Council meeting agenda (1.28.2013)
Neighborhood Planning Academy Executive Summary (2010)
Good Samaritan Health Services informational flyer (3.2013)
Ponder Prosperity Flyer (Spring 2012)
The Bounty Church informational flyer (Fall 2012)
Mission Documents (Food bank selection options; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Food Resources for Fall 2012; Clothing Resources for Fall

2012; Housing and Financial Assistance for Fall 2012;
West Pleasant Outreach Flyer for GIVEAWAY event (Fall 2012)
Posters from apartment complex service coordinator – posted in her office.
West Pleasant Main Street Newsletters (2013-2014)
West Pleasant Main Street Website
Pleasant Small Area Plan
Pleasant World newspaper article regarding the west Pleasant area plan (9.29.2012)
NRI Project Website
NRI Project Newsletters (2012-2014)
NRI Flyer – Eleanor Evans Community Forum (2.2012)
NRI Flyer for Diplomas Now Community Gathering (2.28.2012)
NRI letter requesting survey responses (4.2012)
NRI Informational Flyer (Spring 2012)
NRI Flyer for Eleanor Evans Revitalization Planning Meeting (6.2012)
NRI Resident Council Meeting agenda (2.19.2013)
Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Agreement (FY 2010)
HUD Choice Neighborhoods Overview (website)
Pleasant Promise Neighborhoods Grant Narrative (2012)
Promise Neighborhood Memorandum of Understanding for Eleanor Evans Neighborhood (2011)
Promise Neighborhoods Eligibility Criteria – U.S. Department of Education webpage
Promise Neighborhoods Purpose and Program Description – U.S. Department of Education webpage
The Quality of Life Report – Pleasant City Council (December 2011)
Environmental Site Assessment City of Pleasant Public Works – West Pleasant Facility
Southwest Pleasant Historical Society Documents and Website
Pleasant Historical Society Documents and Website
State Historical Society Website

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B. Engagement Opportunities Described by Participants/Site Documents

	Eleanor Evans Community Engagement		
	ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	WHO? (makes decisions)	Brief Description of Engagement
Community Service End-in-View	Birthday Buddies	PUMC volunteers/ school personnel	Students are picked up from the school in the afternoon and are supervised by PUMC volunteers, parents are welcome to attend but their attendance is not required. (Quarterly).
	Day of Caring:	PIE volunteers, parents and families are also invited.	Partners in Education (PIEs) donate time and resources for a work day at the school. Beautification of the school and Garden. Usually a weekend event (once each year).
	Eleanor Evans Christmas Angels	PIEs	Community Partners adopt a class of students and give each child three presents at Christmas time (book, toy, and article of clothing) (annual event)
	PUMC Easter Egg Hunt and Party	PUMC/ School	PUMC volunteers host an egg hunt, pizza meal, and party for EE families at the school. (annual event)
	End of sport season celebration	PUMC/ School	PUMC hosts a party and meal at PUMC Youth Center for all athletes and their families; PUMC gives gifts to coaches for participating (fall & spring events)
	West Pleasant Outreach Giveaways	Three west side churches	Churches collect donations of household items. And gives them to Eleanor families in an event hosted at the school (periodic)
	Cedar Heights Monthly Dinners Bridgeport	Church volunteers	Last Tuesday of the month the church hosts a dinner for Bridgeport residents in the school cafeteria. (monthly)
	PUMC Community Night Dinner Out	PUMC volunteers	Last Friday of the month, PUMC Volunteers prepare and serve dinner to the community restaurant style. After dinner they have bingo with prizes of household products and hold a prayer session. (monthly)
	Ponder Prosperity	Families	Parent in the community holds weekly conversations about financial independence for residents in the school library. (6 weeks)

Community Service End-in-View

Eleanor Evans Community Engagement		
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	WHO? (makes decisions)	Brief Description of Engagement
Sunday is Funday	PUMC	PUMC hosts students at the school for food, crafts, games, and stories(fall and spring events)
Medical School Trick or Treat Party	Medical School	Students walk to Medical School to trick or treat, each department hands out treats. (annual event)
Main Street Baptist Church Community Party	Volunteers	Church members host a meal and activities at the school for students and families (periodic)
Clay Hill Carnival for students	Clay Hill students & school	Clay Hill is a nearby, private secondary school. Clay Hill students organize & hold a carnival for Eleanor Evans students. (one time event)
Clay Hill Student mentors	Clay Hill students &school	Clay Hill students serve during their intercession at the school as mentors and aids in after school programs and during the day tutor students and help teachers. (annual partnership)
Eleanor Evans Food Pantry	PIE/school staff	PIE hold food drives to stock the food pantry which can be accessed by families when they have need, it is housed at the school. (ongoing)
Clothes Closet	PUMC/ School	PUMC began providing donations for school uniforms in 2005, and provided 3 uniforms for each student under Claudia; under Rhonda only one uniform shirt is given (ongoing)
P/T Conference Attendance Prizes	PUMC/ School	PUMC volunteers collect donations for prizes and purchase prizes for students and parents which are given out when they attend P/T conferences, has increased participation to nearly 100% (twice each year)
Parent Volunteers	Eleanor Evans Parents & School	Parents are awarded points towards the purchase of items in the Parent Store for volunteering in the school (Rhonda). Under Claudia, if a parent asked for and received help but was also asked to volunteer in the school to repay. TANIF service requirement for some. (ongoing)

	Eleanor Evans Community Engagement		
	ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	WHO? (makes decisions)	Brief Description of Engagement
Community Service End-in-View	PUMC Garage Sale	PUMC/ School	PUMC members donated items that would be garage sale type merchandise, PUMC volunteers brought items to the school, set up in the gym and invited community in to choose from the merchandise/free/ and meal served. (annual event)
	Cooking Classes at the Bounty	Junior League/ the Bounty	Junior League members volunteered to teach families to cook healthy inexpensive meals. Provided meal and ingredients to cook for family. (twice each month)
	Big Bucks Store	PUMC/School/ /Teachers	PUMC collected/purchased items for the store (housed in a portable on school campus). Students can "shop" twice a month to buy merchandise with Big Bucks they earned through good attendance, participation, and behavior. (ongoing)
	Boy Scouts of America	Eagle Scouts/ School	Boy Scouts from around Pleasant working toward Eagle Rank were encouraged by Claudia to do their project at the school. (ongoing)
Student Enrichment End-in-View	PCSI site team	School staff/ PCSI CSC/ residents/partners	The team discusses opportunities & resources which can be coordinated to address student and family success. (quarterly/monthly)
	Family Literacy Nights	Staff/CSC	Librarian & CSC co-create literacy night curriculum for families; met in the school library (periodic)
	STAR Family Nights	Staff/CSC	All families come to the school to learn about expectations & connect with families. (2009)
	Mentors	PUMC/PIE/ school	Mentors from the community partners and PUMC meet with students during lunch (30 min/week) (ongoing)
	Neighborhood Walkabout	PCSI CSC/ School staff/ families/ Students	PCSI CSC created class lists by neighborhood and guardian and coordinated efforts to have teachers go out into the community to meet families. (2011)

Student Enrichment End-in-View

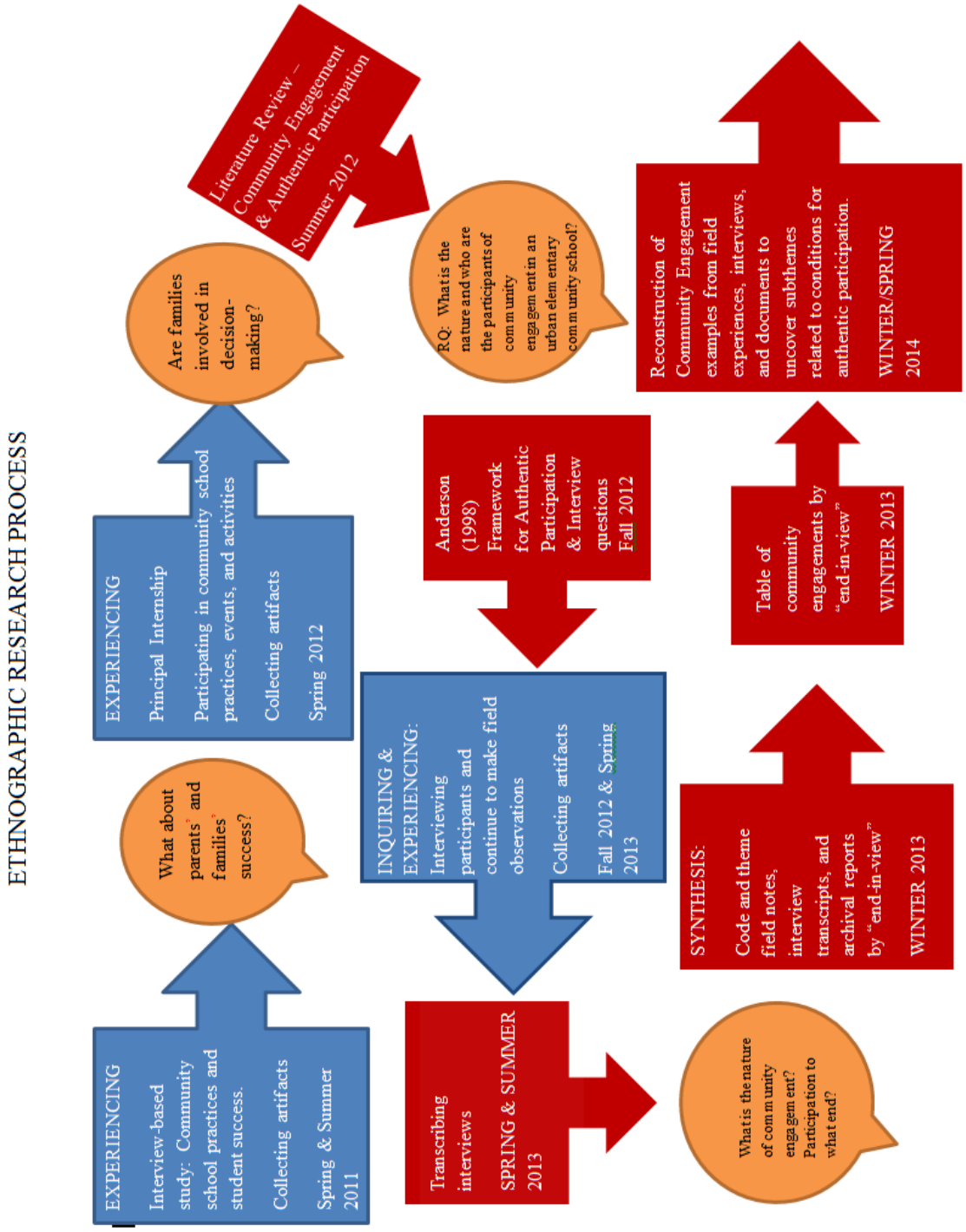
Eleanor Evans Community Engagement		
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	WHO? (makes decisions)	Brief Description of Engagement
PTA	Families/ Teachers	Parents participate in meetings to address needs in the school and provide parent support. (ongoing)
Parent Resource Room	School personnel/ Parents	Parents can access resources and gain access to the school. (ongoing)
Rise and Shine	School personnel	Morning assembly to begin the day with positive expectations, communicate information, & celebrate successes/talents. (daily/weekly)
Garden Time	Garden Time staff/ Families/ Students	Students participate in after school and summer programming and have access to gardens in out of school time. (ongoing)
PUMC and UpWard sports (OST)	School/ Volunteers	Students have the opportunity to participate in league athletics with support for participation paid by PCSI or donors (ongoing)
Access to school for meetings & intermural sports	OSU Medical Students, school	PCSI CSC made the gym, library, and classrooms available to community residents and partners for ongoing activities (ongoing)
Camp Fire (OST)	Camp Fire leaders/ CSC	PCSI paid CampFire leader to sponsor club activities in OST (ongoing)
Cub Scouts (OST)	Community volunteer/ students/ CSC	A parent & community volunteer each served as leader of a Cub scout Pack
Circle of Friends and Boys & 2 Men (OST)	Social worker/ volunteer/ CSC	Special clubs to address needs of 6th grade girls and boys were created in 2012-2013 school year.
Bounty Bible Blast (OST)	Bounty Church volunteer/ CSC	A LifeTime social worker volunteered to host a weekly bible club for students. (discontinued)
Bike Club (OST/ Intercession)	PUMC/CSC	PUMC volunteers sponsor week long Bike Club during intercessions, students earn a bike they lean to ride by participating daily. (ongoing)
Community Health Fair	Medical Students/ Families/ Students	Medical students collect donation items to distribute at the health fair & volunteer to man booths & conduct health screenings for the community. A hamburger/hot dog meal is provided to attendees; at the school (annually)

	Eleanor Evans Community Engagement		
Student Enrichment End-in-View	ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	WHO? (makes decisions)	Brief Description of Engagement
	RECESS Program (OST) (some in school support)	External partners/school/CSC/parents	Learning opportunities for PreK students; PCSI partnered with RECESS; transition from early childhood program, programming requested by parents (discontinued)
	Drumming (OST)	Volunteer	Drumming classes twice each week for 2nd through 6th grade students. (ongoing)
	Meet your Teacher Night	staff/school	Back to school night format, teachers and parents meet and learn more about each other. (annual event)
	Academic Bowl Team (OST)	Librarian	Students met and practiced each week (discontinued)
	Child Nutrition Summer Program	CSC/School	School is a summer child nutrition site & served breakfast & lunch to children in intercession activities & students living in the community. Children in a neighboring day care also ate at the school. (ongoing)
	Summer Camps	LifeTime, PCSI, GardenTime, Camp Fire	Students attended a variety of summer camps on scholarship or donated registrations during the summer months (ongoing)
	LifeTime	Counselors/ Students/ Familes	Onsite counseling services for students and families – year round (ongoing)
	Check and Connect Program	Juvenile Bureau counselor/ Families/ Students	Mentoring program to help families understand the importance of school attendance and develop strategies to improve attendance. (discontinued)
	Ukelele Club (OST)	volunteer	A 4th grade teacher was paid by PCSI to lead this group twice a week. (discontinued)
	Mini Medical School	Medical Students & Faculty/ Eleanor Evans school	Medical School hosts an afternoon field trip at their site to teach students about health and nutrition. (annual event)
	Science Fair	OSU Medical Students/EE students	OSU Medical students mentor 3rd graders to conduct and report on a science fair experiment which is judged by OSU faculty. (annual event)

	Eleanor Evans Community Engagement		
Community Development Ends-in-view	ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	WHO? (makes decisions)	Brief Description
	The Mission	Families/ resident volunteers	Food ministry providing meals, fellowship, & groceries. (ongoing)
	Pleasant County Development Early Childhood Center	Pleasant County Development & Families	Early childhood program next door to Eleanor Evans (ongoing)
	Pleasant Literacy Center	Volunteers and Families	Volunteers support adults to read using faith-based materials (ongoing)
	Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club	Salvation Army	Facility supports athletics, tutoring, mentoring, test prep, FASFA completion, & community meetings (ongoing)
	Pleasant Neighborhoods Forums/meetings	Pleasant Neighborhoods & Residents	Pleasant based Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (ongoing)
	City of Pleasant	City Planner/ PNRI, Residents	Small area plan (2012)
	Goodwill Industries	Goodwill/ Residents	Job coaching service, job search, resume support, copies (ongoing)
	Pleasant Housing	Service coordinators/ Pleasant Housing	Service Coordinators to provide resources and support to gain financial independence (ongoing)
	West Pleasant Freewill Baptist Church	Church/Families	Neighborhood church with programming for children and families, including sports (ongoing)
	Neighborhood Works event	PNRI/Residents	Community members celebrating their community; NRI group support (2012)
	Health and Dental Clinic	Health volunteers/ residents/ Bounty	Free, regular dental check-ups at the Bounty; and weekly health services for the community
	Alcoholics Anonymous	Volunteers	Meetings at the Bounty
	GED Classes	Bounty/Residents	At the Bounty
	The Bounty Church	Residents & seed members	Church is growing from resident membership
	The Bounty	PUMC/Bounty	Affordable groceries
	PhotoVoice Project	University/ Residents	Five residents were selected to tell the story of their lives in pictures
	Neighborhood Planning Academy	Faculty and Residents	Team of residents attended university summer academy to plan a neighborhood project; started strong, but did not have support to continue

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C: Ethnographic Research Journey



APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D: Institutional Review Board Approval and Informed Consent Documentation

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Initial Submission – Board Review – AP01

Date: November 20, 2012

Principal Investigator: Katheryn E. Shannon

IRB#: 1422
Study Title: Inside Community Schooling

IRB Meeting Date: 11/13/2012

IRB Approval Date: 11/20/2012
IRB Expiration Date: 10/31/2013

Collection/Use of PHI: No

The review and approval of this submission is based on the determination that the study will be conducted in a manner consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46.

To view the approved documents for this submission, open this study from the My Studies option, go to Submission History, go to Completed Submissions tab and then click the Details icon.

You will receive notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date noted above. You are responsible for submitting continuing review documents in a timely fashion in order to maintain continued IRB approval.

You are also responsible for:

- Ensuring this research is conducted as approved by the IRB.
- Obtaining consent using the currently approved, stamped consent form and retaining all original, signed consent forms, if applicable.
- Informing the IRB of any/all modifications prior to implementing those changes.
- Reporting any serious, unanticipated harms as per Policy 407 and/or any additional information that may change the risk, benefit, or desire for participants to continue in the study.
- Submitting a final closure report at the completion of the project.
- Keeping and maintaining accurate study records as your study is subject to quality improvement evaluation.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.

Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

University of Oklahoma
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Project Title: Inside Community Schooling
Principal Investigator: Katheryn Shannon
Department: Educational Administration and Curriculum Supervision

You are being asked to volunteer for this research study. This study is being conducted at Eugene Field Elementary School and Community. You were selected as a possible participant because of your membership in this community.

Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the day to day interactions of members of a community school in order to learn more about the culture of the school and its impact on the community it serves.

Number of Participants

About 50 people will take part in this study, 15-17 current and former students and 33-35 adult members of the school community including parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in 5-10 group or individual interviews with the principal investigator and review interview data for accuracy. Sample interview questions include:

- Tell me about the types of activities you have participated in at the school.
- How are community members involved in decisions about what happens at the school?
- What services/opportunities should the community school provide? Why?

Length of Participation

All interviews will be conducted at the school or a location convenient for you during the 2012-2013 school year. Initial interviews will last approximately one to one and a half hours, with follow-up and group interviews lasting no more than one hour. Each participant will be interviewed at least five and no more than 10 times between November 2012 – April 2013. These interviews may be held individually or in group settings. Transcribed interview data will be available for review within two weeks of the interview date for accuracy.

Risks of being in the study are

None

Benefits of being in the study are

None

Compensation

You will not be reimbursed for your time and participation in this study.

Confidentiality

In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers will have access to the records.

There are organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis. These organizations include the OU Institutional Review Board.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you withdraw or decline participation, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the study. If you decide to participate, you may decline to answer any question and may choose to withdraw at any time.

Waivers of Elements of Confidentiality

Your name will not be retained or linked with your responses unless you specifically agree to be identified. The data you provide will be retained in anonymous form unless you specifically agree for data retention or retention of contact information beyond the end of the study. Please check all of the options that you agree to:

I consent to being quoted directly. ___ Yes ___ No

I consent to having my name reported with quoted material. ___Yes ___ No

I consent to having the information I provided retained for potential use in future studies by this researcher. ___Yes ___ No

I consent to having my contact information retained after the study so that I can be contacted to participate in future studies. ___ Yes ___ No

Audio Recording of Study Activities

To assist with accurate recording of your responses during interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty. Please select one of the following options:

I consent to audio recording. ___ Yes ___ No

Future Communications
The researcher would like to contact you again to recruit you into this study or to gather additional information.

_____ I give my permission for the researcher to contact me in the future.

_____ I do not wish to be contacted by the researcher again.

Contacts and Questions
If you have concerns or complaints about the research, the researcher(s) conducting this study can be contacted at
Katheryn (Kate) Shannon at (405) 314-5652 or edukate@ou.edu or
Gregg Garn at (405) 325-1081 or garn@ou.edu

Contact the researcher(s) if you have questions, or if you have experienced a research-related injury.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than individuals on the research team or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

Statement of Consent
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Participant Signature	Print Name	Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent	Date

Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Continuing Review – Board Review – AP01

Date:	November 20, 2013	**IRB#:**	1422
Principal Investigator:	Katheryn E. Shannon, MA	**Approval Date:** **Expiration Date:**	11/19/2013 **10/31/2014**

Study Title: Inside Community Schooling

Based on the information submitted, your study is currently: Active, closed to enrollment. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) met on 11/19/2013, reviewed, and approved your continuing review application. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Promptly submit continuing review documents to the IRB upon notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date indicated above.
- Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.

You will receive notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date noted above. You are responsible for submitting continuing review documents in a timely fashion in order to maintain continued IRB approval.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board