

ENHANCING COMMUNITIES THROUGH
DEVELOPMENT OF HEAD START
COMMUNITY VOLUNTARISM

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

Background

Head Start, a federally funded family antipoverty program, has provided opportunities for over fifteen million children and their families nationwide over the last thirty years. It is a comprehensive child development program for economically disadvantaged children and their families, with the primary goals of improving the health and social competence of preschool-age children, while promoting self-sufficiency for parents. For Head Start to continue, programs must soon analyze the ways in which this self-sufficiency for parents must be enhanced.

The Problem

There is increasing difficulty for many federally funded Head Start programs to meet the regulation for matching local community support. According to the regulations, for every federal dollar of support, the local Head Start Program has to acquire a matching amount of community support equal to 25% of that dollar. This local community matching can be in the form of volunteer time by parents or other individuals of the community, donated goods, or in documentation of donated space for classrooms and operational areas. Accomplishment of this regulation has been a difficult task, at best.

Over the last few years, as Head Start continues to expand and develop, federal funding has increased to approximately four billion dollars nationwide. The local community in-kind must increase in relation to the federal funding. Two specific factors add to the complexity of the mandated community support:

Operational Space

In past years, Head Start was located almost entirely in donated space: churches, schools, community buildings, or about anywhere that could be renovated to meet daycare licensing standards, and those standards mandated by the Head Start Performance Standards. Recent legislation has made it possible for Head Start Programs to actually purchase facilities.

Though funding for the purchase of facilities is limited, more and more Head Start Programs are now purchasing facilities. How does this affect the local matching in-kind that was once obtained by the utilization of donated space by Head Start? When a facility is purchased with federal dollars by a Head Start grantee, the space then belongs to that grantee. Thus, the purchased facility can no longer be included as a portion of the in-kind match that was previously counted toward a great amount of the community support required by the regulation. The Head Start grantee is still required to obtain the local community matching support of twenty-five percent of the amount allocated by their federal grant. Thus, there is an increased demand for local in-kind contribution to meet the federal dollars.

Parent Volunteers

Under the legislation of welfare reform, more parents of Head Start children are no longer available to volunteer during the traditional hours of operation of the Head

Start classroom. In 1996, almost 55% of mothers in our nation worked outside the home, and almost 30% of the children under 18-years-of age lived with only a mother in the household (Children's Defense Fund, 1997). As the "Welfare to Work" initiative has progressed, more single moms will be in the work force (Wijnberg & Weinger, 1998). By July of 1998, sixty-five percent of mothers with children under the age of six are now in the American labor force. Of the mothers with infants under a year old, half are now in the labor force (Children's Defense Fund, 1998). With so many mothers now in the work force, how is that going to impact involving parents in Head Start? How will it affect the local inkind match? Head Start can no longer expect many parents to be available to volunteer during the traditional hours of classroom operation.

Though the development of self-sufficiency is the most important factor, the issue of meeting the mandated local community share is a very real concern for local programs. For local Head Start Programs to maintain the community support necessary for continued federal funding, under the current legislation, we must reach beyond the traditional ways of operation and explore creative initiatives.

Purpose of the Study

Last year, in a large Head Start Program in the southwestern area of the United States, the author began just such an initiative, called the "Enhancing Communities Project" (see appendix A). It began as an agency-wide initiative, in all of the Head Start centers of the six-county regional Head Start program.

Through an in-service training session conducted for staff, (see appendix B), the author laid an important foundation for further development of the project. At this staff training session, the author emphasized the importance of the initiative, ways to

implement the project into each center, and how to complete forms needed for documentation of the projects. It was presented as a two-pronged project of volunteerism. The first area dealt with volunteer opportunities for parents in a group setting with other Head Start parents. Secondly, there were opportunities for involvement of individuals within other community volunteer organizations outside of the actual Head Start program.

The initiative has much potential for development into a model project for other Head Start programs to replicate, but first must be analyzed. By the further development of the Enhancing Communities Project, it may provide a solution to the dilemma of Head Start programs maintaining the required community support to meet federal guidelines.

The Research

This is an evaluative study that utilizes data in a formative and summative way. The question is how can we evaluate the readiness of the Head Start program to provide data for an evaluation study that will allow for further development of the "Enhancing Communities Project?" The data obtained from this study were utilized in a formative and summative way to assist the Head Start program in addressing the need of meeting the federal match for continued and increasing funding.

Significance of the Study

The information gained through this study would lead to program change. It would assist in developing procedures to implement throughout the agency, for a more refined system of parent involvement, and also to maintain the level of federal support.

Considering the diversity of this large southwestern Head Start program, it would also develop a model for other Head Start programs to replicate in the area of Family and

Community Partnerships. By developing this project, it could result as a positive impact for programs in maintaining the necessary local community matching for the federal funding. It would also serve to assist parents to become more involved in their local communities, thus developing those communities.

Definitions of Terms

Agency: the local grantee of a Head Start program. This may include a geographic area with multiple counties of service, an Indian Tribe, or even a single county, or city.

Area Supervisor: the administrative staff person directly responsible for assisting the teaching staff with the day-to-day operation of Head Start. Each Area Supervisor directly supervises a number of sites in a specified area of the program's service area, covering six counties.

Classroom Staff: teachers in a Head Start classroom. There are at least two teachers in each classroom. In addition, according to need, there may be an additional teacher to assist with children with disabilities (for integration into the regular classroom). There may also be an additional person employed to assist with food service (support staff).

Center Committee: the representative parent group of a Head Start Center.

Component: the detailed regulations for operating Head Start as subdivided into the following areas of expertise (U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1998):

Subpart A: General purpose and scope of Head Start.

Subpart B: Early Childhood Developmental and Health Services: includes services for children in the following areas: health, dental health, physical developmental, mental health, education, health and safety, and nutrition.

Subpart C: Family and Community Partnerships: includes all aspects of the involvement of parents in Head Start and in their local community.

Subpart D: Program Design and Management: includes Program Governance, Management Systems and Procedures, Human Resources Management, Facilities, Materials, and Equipment.

Component Plan: written description of the implementation of Head Start regulations into local Head Start classrooms.

Component Specialist: an administrative staff person responsible for oversight of a component area of program operation, to maintain compliance with the federally mandated regulations.

Family and Community Partnership Plan: the component plan of operations for agency compliance with the federal performance standards, concerning involvement of parents in local communities.

Federal Funding: money allocated to a grantee by the federal government for the operation of specific programs.

Grantee: the entity awarded a grant. In the case of Head Start programs, the grantee is the company that was awarded the grant for the purpose of operating the Head Start program in a specific geographical area. Nationally, Head Start is managed by grantees that are private non-profit corporations, Public Schools, churches, city governments, and so forth.

Group Projects: community enhancement projects done at the center level, where several parents from a center come together.

In-kind Contributions: donations of something other than money (as in goods, services, or commodities).

Individual Projects: projects that involve a Head Start parent in other available community volunteer efforts with another organization outside of Head Start.

Lead Teacher: the teacher in charge of a particular classroom.

Operation Christmas: a project developed in the local community, to keep dignity in the provision of goods and food for the Christmas season to economically challenged families. For able-bodied individuals to receive assistance from the Christmas Store, they must donate time into the set up and operation of the store through volunteerism.

Operation Christmas Store: the location of a culmination of donated goods and food, developed into a store atmosphere by the clients of Operation Christmas.

Parent: the person who enrolled a child in Head Start.

Voluntarism: the principle of volunteering.

Volunteerism: the act or practice of doing volunteer work.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an in-depth review of the current literature supporting the relevance of a study to improve upon a current initiative, "Enhancing Communities". Though this initiative was begun in 1998, in this large Head Start program the project has not developed to its full potential. By considering the issues which surround the Enhancing Communities Project, and then integrating knowledge gained from the literature review, the author would hope to strengthen the existing project. This study is one that truly is an example of integrating theory into practice.

Demographic Issues

As we approach the Twenty-first Century, much discussion centers on social reform. Government, schools, health care, welfare, and various social services are all being considered in a new light. We hear more and more about safety in our neighborhoods: in the streets, schools, and homes. In 1994, there were 2,661 children under 18 years of age which were victims of homicide, and 1.6 million 12- to- 17-year-olds reported that they had been victims of other violent crimes. (Children's Defenses Fund, 1997.) Funding for public assistance is diminished. "Welfare to Work" is greatly impacting families, as more and more parents seek employment outside the home.

There were only 6% of the welfare mothers in 1992 that said that they worked even part-time, and were dependent on public assistance. Due to unreported incomes of many, researchers say that the actual level that worked during some time they were on the welfare roll was closer to 50%. At this same time during 1992, it was estimated that 85% of the single mothers were not on welfare (Harris, 1997). According to the 1996 statistics, almost 55% of the single mothers worked outside the home. By July of 1998, the number of mothers of children under age six working outside the home has risen to 65% (Children's Defense Fund, 1998.) This shows a definite increase in the numbers since "Welfare to Work" has progressed. The trend will only continue to increase.

In the United States during 1996, it was estimated that almost 30% of our children under 18-years-of-age lived with only a mother in their household. (Children's Defense Fund, 1997.) The estimate of working mothers of children ages six to thirteen had grown to 78% by 1998. It is also estimated that one out of every two children will live in a single-parent home at some time during their childhood. (Children's Defense Fund, 1998). Where does that leave our children and our communities? How can we support our country's most vulnerable citizens?

To make the communities once more "good for families" we must get citizens more involved in their communities. As Hillary Clinton reminded us with the old African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," (Clinton, 1996). If a parent lacks pride and belonging to their "village", how much support do they feel from it? Through an organized initiative in our Head Start Centers, at the local level, we can make a difference for the children, families, and communities we serve. To accomplish this current efforts of volunteerism in the United States must be considered.

Issues of Volunteerism

Background

Before delving into the issues surrounding volunteerism in the United States today, consider first some earlier findings of the research on volunteerism. Why do people become involved in volunteer initiatives? Who becomes involved, and why do they choose to get involved? What are the outcomes of volunteerism? By attempting to answer at least these questions, the stage will be set for further development of the “Enhancing Communities Project”.

Civic virtue is the involvement of citizens in sociopolitical decisions with respect and concern for the freedom and autonomy of other citizens. The success of a democracy is that its citizens contribute something to their communities in a responsible way. Civic virtue is the way citizens display fairness, loyalty, truthfulness, and some benevolence toward other citizens (Audi, 1998). This is displayed in the various volunteer initiatives in local communities in the way of proactive social participation, or altruism.

Social participation decreases as people put their own interests ahead of those of individuals of their community. As the individual begins to distance themselves, they begin to feel disconnected from others, thus feeling isolated (Wilson & Musick, 1998). When self-interest is too strong, an individual becomes selfish. On the other hand, when altruism is too strong, an individual demonstrates extreme self-denial. For a person to develop to the full potential, there must be a balance of concern for the self and concern of others (Hurka, 1997).

Citizenship is demonstrated in two distinctly different ways: active citizenship and passive citizenship. Examples of “active citizenship” includes, but is not limited to being active, taking responsibility, voting with adequate information, writing to public officials, joining organizations, volunteering in actual initiatives, being active in community affairs, working to better the local community or the nation, being interested in school affairs, helping people, trying to change unjust laws and policies, or being an advocate for a cause. “Passive citizenship” includes such things as obeying the laws, loyalty and respect to the country and its symbols, ambition, paying taxes, minding your own business, getting along with others, setting a good example, and concern for others.

Pro-social attitudes are linked to the individual’s perception of his own welfare and to the welfare of others (Husock, 1997). By developing citizenship through active participation in community volunteer initiatives, communities will strengthen to become supportive of its citizens.

Workplace and Volunteerism

There is a high relationship between the type of work an individual does and the willingness that person displays in becoming involved in volunteering in the community. Work that is highly repetitive and routine discourages autonomy and self-direction, and leads the individual away from social participation in community efforts. Varied, complex, and empowering work leads to participation of the individual in community life as a natural extension of the job, and actually motivates the worker toward more social participation (Wilson & Musick, 1998).

Better-educated individuals spend more of their free time in volunteering.

Occupational self-direction increases volunteering as a result of the civic skills acquired by the experience. Workers in jobs where creativity is not expected do not volunteer as much as those in jobs that require more creativity and self-direction. A job that requires specialized and routine tasks prohibits initiative and vision of the worker. When work is empowering, the worker is more active in community volunteer efforts. When ego is boosted and not deflated by work, people are more willing to give of themselves outside of work. The individual has the confidence that they have something to contribute. The higher the skill level of an employee, the more likely they are to consider social issues and problems in their local community by specific terms and consider active solutions to those problems. However, the unskilled worker thinks in more general terms, and usually lacks the ability to resolve the actual issues.

Employees of the public sector are much more likely to volunteer than private industry or the self-employed (Wilson & Musick, 1998). When an individual does not work outside of the home, they also tend not to become involved in volunteer work. (Wilson, 1997). In volunteer organizations, there is a definite trend that people of higher status belong to more formal volunteer organizations than those of lower status (Wilson & Musick, 1998)

As the quality of the working life declines, people tend to volunteer less. The workplace can set conditions for employees to participate in volunteer initiatives in their community by cultivating the resources and psychological predisposition of their employees.

As the workplace constrains the time available for volunteer work, it can also set conditions that make it feasible to volunteer. Many companies encourage employees to volunteer in various initiatives in their local community by offering them various incentives, such as time off from the workplace to volunteer. Some companies host campaigns to assist local initiatives (Wilson & Musick, 1998).

Examples of corporate volunteer initiatives are Southwest Airlines, McDonalds, Sears, Budweiser, Hilton, AT&T, and Johnson & Johnson, just to name a few. Southwest Airlines and McDonalds both sponsor a hospice house for critically ill children and their families in Tulsa. Staff of Southwest Airlines actually volunteer in the Ronald McDonald House. Hilton Corporation is involved in helping develop training materials for Early Head Start, and Johnson & Johnson is involved in providing the development of management skills for Head Start administrators in management institutes at UCLA in California. AT&T provides funding for training of childcare staff in centers where children of their employees are enrolled. Local businesses are involved in raising funding for the United Way each year. The list of corporate involvement is quite varied, and continues to grow. As the role of government involvement in the local communities is decreasing, the corporate sector is becoming more involved in efforts to assist local communities in solving social problems.

The power of community involvement in volunteerism is that it improves self-esteem of the involved individuals as it transforms communities (Hatch, 1998). The power of corporate volunteer initiatives is that it not only strengthens the individuals within their company, but also enhances the local community and provides good publicity for the company.

Developing Citizens

Current research indicates that community service programs for youths can actually boost later efforts of those individuals who became involved in volunteering while young (Schine, 1997). However, the socialization of appropriate citizenship attitudes impact the individual's perspective on volunteering even more. As people become comfortable with the routine of volunteering, they continue to volunteer throughout life, as it has become habitual. Individuals acquire the habit of volunteering when they are in social situations and social relationships where they develop and learn skills needed for the work they achieve in the volunteer initiative. Pro-social attitudes of "civic duty" require an individual to do things in their community (Husock, 1997).

National Volunteer Initiatives

The history of citizen involvement to face challenges in our American society is a long-standing tradition. Our nation has always relied on the dedication and the action of citizens. In 1964, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) was established. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Foster Grandparent Program, and the Senior Companion Program began in the 1960's. In 1970, the Youth Conservation Corps began summer environmental programs. The Points of Lights Foundation was created to foster volunteering in America during the Bush Administration. The Office of National Service in the White House was also established at this time.

In September of 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service. This act also combined VISTA and Americorps, for better integration of volunteer efforts in local communities. In 1994, the first class of Americorp Volunteers

began serving. It was a class of 20,000 volunteers. Americorps has continued to grow, and by September of 1998, there were more than 100,000 current and former members of Americorp. (Corporation for National Service, 1998).

Head Start and Community Involvement

For over thirty years, Head Start has operated a federally funded comprehensive child development program for low-income children and their families. This antipoverty program has provided opportunities for over 15 million children and their families nationwide to develop self-confidence and basic skills for future success. It is a national initiative, but implemented at the local level within the community. The real beauty of Head Start is that although it is a national program, with many federal requirements, it was developed to address the needs of the local communities.

State Profile of Head Start

In this southwestern state, in 1997, there were 21 regional Head Start programs: 17 of which are operated by Community Action Agencies, and 4 are operated by private, non-profit organizations. In addition, there are twelve American Indian Head Start Programs operated by Indian tribes. There are approximately 600 classrooms in 76 of the 77 counties of this state, serving over 13,000 children and their families. Of those families, 53% had annual incomes of \$9,000 or less, and 73% had annual incomes of less than \$12,000.

There were over 40,000 volunteers utilized in Head Start throughout the state last year. The Head Start utilized for this study is one of the 21 regional Head Start Programs in the state. It is funded to serve 1,036 children, ages 3 and 4, in the broad six county

area, centrally located in this southwestern state. It has also recently been funded for a new initiative, Early Head Start, to serve 204 infants and toddlers (and their parents).

Head Start in the New Millenium

There have been many changes in the Head Start Program since the author begun working in the programs almost twenty years ago. The one thing that has not changed is the importance of parents in the lives of their children. Without parent involvement, there is no Head Start. To make the greatest, longest lasting impact on the life of a child, we must impact the life of the parent as well.

As we approach the new millenium, Head Start Programs must review their approach to empowering parents. With the new emphasis on welfare reform, many more parents of Head Start children will enter the workforce, often in low-paying jobs, with untraditional hours. The availability of parents to volunteer in the traditional time of operation for most Head Start classrooms has decreased, and will continue to do so.

The major objective of Head Start has always been involving parents in the program. To make the greatest impact, there must be greater involvement of the parents, not just in Head Start, but also in their own community.

Of the families Head Start serves, 90% live at poverty level, or below. According to the federal guidelines for Head Start, a single parent, with two children is eligible for the program if their annual salary is \$13,650 or less. Many parents find it necessary to seek public assistance for survival of their family. These parents often lack education, possess low self-esteem, and have feelings of failure. The way people stare at

them and seem to evaluate everything they buy when they use the much-needed food stamps is not a comfortable feeling. They know what it is like to be hungry, or how they feel when they cannot afford the medicine when their child is sick. Never mind them getting sick! How do other citizens in their community look upon them? How does it feel always having to take, and believing that you have nothing to give in return?

We have all heard the stories of "Welfare Moms" who have more children so they can get more public assistance. The amount of money a mother in this state actually receives from AFDC and Food Stamps in 1996 was a maximum of \$307 per month. (Children's Defense Fund, 1997.) Contrary to the belief of many, not everyone that needs public assistance is comfortable with their situation.

To develop a sense of belonging, pride, and civic responsibility toward their local neighborhood, last year, the author initiated a project, "Enhancing Communities". The objective of the project is to provide opportunities for parents of Head Start children to become an integral part of their local community through voluntarism. Volunteering increases community ownership. The more you can involve Head Start parents in local volunteer initiatives, the more recognition and respect they will obtain. Consequently, this will result in greater support for the overall Head Start mission of helping families to develop basic skills and self-confidence for future success.

It has been said that service is the rent we pay for being, and is the very purpose of life (Edelman, 1996). Volunteering is not just something you do in your spare time, but an effort to actively improve the quality of your environment. In 1995, approximately 93 million Americans, or about half of the adult population, volunteered. The hours spent each year by volunteers on different projects would take over 9 million

full time employees to equal. Through “*Enhancing Communities*” opportunities would be provided to benefit both the individuals involved and the communities. As local citizens begin to take ownership of their community and become a respected contributing member of society, they will also increase their knowledge base, develop a sense of belonging, and enhance their self-esteem. They will become better known in the community, and thus decrease their isolation.

The mission statement for the Corporation for National Service states that it is:

“to provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and background to engage in service that addresses the nation’s educational, public safety, environmental, and other human needs to achieve direct and demonstrable results.”

The “Enhancing Communities Project” is a way to assist parents in Head Start to become a more viable part of their local community, thus helping to realize this national mission.

The involvement of parents in Head Start has always been the rule, and not the exception, and has always been a part of the federal rules and regulations for Head Start. This year revised standards have been implemented. The following are the new regulations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the operation of Head Start. All Head Start programs are to be in compliance by observing the following standards:

Performance Standard 11304.40(b)(1)(iii), as a portion of the section of Family Partnerships: Opportunities must be provided for continuing education and employment training and other employment services through formal and informal networks in the community (Health and Human Services,1998.)

According to the guidance for this standard, staff should encourage and assist parents to volunteer both within the Head Start program and outside of Head Start in their local community.

In the area of community advocacy, Performance Standard 11304.40(g)(1) & (2): grantee agencies must

(i) Support and encourage parents to influence the character and goals of community service in order to make them more responsive to their interests and needs;

(ii) Establish procedures to provide families with comprehensive information about community resources.

In the guidance for this subpart, it states that staff “should support and encourage parents to influence the character and goals of community services in order to make them more responsive to their needs and interests”(Head Start Performance Standards, January 1, 1998, pg.112). It continues with a variety of ways for parents to influence community services. “Staff and parents are encouraged to work together in a creative manner to identify ways that parents can play a role in supporting improvement of community services”(Head Start Performance Standards, 1998, pg. 112). The guidance specifically states that parents should be encouraged to join or start various community committees that have well-defined goals, such as improving neighborhood safety. It also states that parents should be encouraged to, “Take individual action to improve the community.” (Head Start Performance Standards, January 1, 1998, pg. 112)

(2.) Parents must be provided regular opportunities to work together, and with other community members, on activities that they have helped develop and in which they have expressed an interest.

The interpretation for this standard includes, but is not limited to, the various policy and advisory groups that are a meaningful part of Head Start. It also includes

assisting parents with becoming involved in the political processes, beginning with encouraging voter registration and voting. Helping parents to realize their citizen responsibilities is important to the success of the individuals and to the community.

Though these standards are somewhat addressed in the current Family and Community Partnership Plan of the agency (appendix C), much can be done to enhance the program. Through “Enhancing Communities” all of these Head Start Performance Standards will be addressed in a way that would do much for the individuals, communities, and the Head Start involved in the project. Though this project has begun in this southwestern Head Start program, there is still much to be done for the objectives of the project to be realized.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this evaluative study is to analyze and further a project that was initiated in school year 97-98 in a Head Start program. The initiative has real potential for many positive outcomes for local communities, for Head Start parents, and also for the local Head Start Program, but has not developed to its' full potential. Through coordination of local volunteerism opportunities for Head Start parents in the community and not merely in the Head Start classroom, parents will be encouraged to become vested citizens of their community.

The existing parent volunteer records of last year and the current year were analyzed, exploring the impact of the "Enhancing Communities Project" upon parent voluntarism to further program development. The intent was to further refine the project for future success within our Head Start. The research was carried out through the utilization of existing program records. The study did not involve human subjects in this project. The information was extracted from agency reports submitted by staff at each of the Head Start sites included.

In accordance with the federal regulations for Head Start, confidentiality of all Head Start parents will be maintained at all times. At no time may the privacy of an individual be jeopardized. All records were entered into software that is designed to

maintain agency-wide records. On the software, each center of this six-county area has a designated code number. A designated number is also assigned on the software for reference to specific parents in each of the Head Start classroom.

This culmination of agency records is utilized to evaluate the "Enhancing Communities Project." The records serve as social indicators to chart the change in community involvement for those involved in this Head Start study. The results of this study formulate into action steps to assist the agency in maintaining a secure in-kind base for funding.

Selection of Subjects:

Those to be involved in this study were predetermined by the mere location and membership of the individuals as Head Start parents from school year '97-98' and school year '98-99', in centers located within the geographical area of one county. Therefore, the location and the year of Head Start involvement predetermined those involved in this study.

The geographic area selected for this study was chosen due to the diversity of the centers within that particular county. One site is located in an area with an urban outlook, with five classrooms located in one center. The other centers would classify as rural. Of these classrooms, one is located in a church, the multi-classroom center and two single classrooms are located within public school facilities, while another is located in an apartment complex that is subsidized housing. Yet another of the classrooms is located in a facility belonging to a private citizen. The major portion of this county is rural, but there is a large state university located within the urban area.

Ethnicity is greatly impacted by the student population of this more urban university area, with families being from many countries and cultures. The population of the rural area is primarily Caucasian and Native American, with a smaller proportion of African American in some communities. This county is a good representative sample of our agencies' overall demographics. The ethnicity of this Head Start program is 17% African American, 10% Native American, 3% Asian, 3% Hispanic, and 67% Caucasian.

Design of the Study:

This study is an evaluative one that utilizes data in a formative and summative way, with the purpose of analyzing the readiness of a large Head Start program. The question is how the Enhancing Communities Initiative can be implemented to acquire the in-kind match for federal funding. For the project to be more beneficial, voluntarism at both the individual and the group level for Head Start parents of the targeted area must be analyzed. From agency records of last school year and from those hours reported through the month of February of 1999, the number of volunteer hours for each center is compared. (See chart on page 31). The group "Community Enhancement Projects", were reviewed and the results summarized. Procedures for obtaining the statistics of total number of completed projects, number of hours each group volunteered, the number of different agencies involved, and the number of Head Start parents involved in such projects must be explored and further developed.

This information was taken from both of the forms for voluntarism: the Head Start volunteer timesheet (appendix D), and from the form for "Community Enhancement" projects (appendix E). According to agency policy, the teacher at each site submitted the completed forms, along with other required information, to the central

office at the first of every month. The information is then entered into the computer and tabulated, to then be compared, and utilized for further develop the project.

Developmental Procedures

Since this project is an actual agency initiative, impacting operations of this large southwestern Head Start program, certain steps of preparation could not be ignored. Logically, in the involvement of the administration of Head Start, from the top down, much groundwork was needed:

A short summary of the project was developed (appendix A). This summary was distributed to the Head Start administrative staff, the mayors of cities of those areas of project development, and also the County Commissioners of these areas. Since this project involves many people and organizations in the local communities, the author felt that to be successful, communities as well as staff must be informed of the initiative.

In addition, the author met with the new Head Start Operations Director, and also the two Component Specialists of Family and Community Partnerships. At these meetings the project was discussed in length, considering the program of last year, as well as the current operation, and the need for refining the project.

The project was also discussed fully with the Area Supervisors for the targeted area. They, in turn, discussed the project with the classroom staff. The classroom teaching staff then discussed the project with the parent group in each of the sites involved in the pilot project.

During the course of discussion, it became apparent that the portion of the individual opportunities for community involvement outside of Head Start was not implemented in any way. It was necessary to develop another form to accommodate this

part of the project. The Area Supervisors have already implemented a new agency form, PIV 117A, (appendix D), to provide announcements of individual opportunities for voluntarism.

These forms were then posted in the “Parent Corner” of each classroom. They were then submitted monthly to the central office, along with all other monthly reports. The Family and Community Partnership Component Specialist, in coordination with the Area Supervisor, and the Lead Teacher of each classroom were responsible for the current information on form PIV 117A. To keep current information for parents posted, the staff must develop and periodically update a list of volunteer opportunities and events for each of the communities.

The information in this study was obtained from those forms that were utilized in the classrooms previously. Since this is an ongoing process for the entire school year, there are many enhancing Communities Projects ongoing and must given consideration. The evaluative study is meant to review current information, determine the necessary documentation and procedures to then assist in the further development of this initiative. Through this study, the author must then formulate action steps to further the process of meeting the required in-kind support.

Analysis of Data

The data were extracted from existing Head Start documentation from the Head Start Volunteer Timesheet (appendix D) and the form for Community Enhancement Projects (appendix E). The only data analyzed for this project was gathered from the classes in the target area of this agency.

Involvement of parents in the individual project level was explored as the number of hours of volunteer service and the frequency. The amount of rural volunteering was

compared to that in the urban area. Last year's records were compared with those of this year (see chart). The manner in which data were documented for group involvement of individual parents from Head Start in the community volunteer initiatives outside of the Head Start program had to be analyzed. For the group projects, the number of completed projects for each of the centers, the number of hours the group volunteered in the project, and the number of different agencies involved in the project were analyzed. The records of each center in the target area were compared from last year's projects to those of this year.

Assumptions

By analyzing the current project, it was assumed that there would be an increased amount of community involvement of the Head Start parents in their local communities as they become engaged in various volunteer activities. This should stimulate an increase of in-kind contribution for the Head Start program. It was also assumed that there would be more volunteer projects in urban areas than in rural ones. Another assumption was that women volunteer more often than do men.

Other assumptions are that with the increased participation of Head Start Parents in volunteer initiatives, there would be an increase of public awareness of the Head Start Program. Also there would be an enhancement of the local communities through citizen awareness and involvement.

By investigating the many assumptions made concerning this project, many issues of readiness of this Head Start program to implement fully a project of this magnitude have become apparent. The author hopes that through an explanation of the findings, the agency would then be able to make summative changes to formulate a plan of action to

not only further the Enhancing Communities Project, but also the operation of the agency of maintaining government requirements.

Until January of 1998, in-service training was conducted on a monthly basis. This afforded new staff the opportunity for continuous training in meeting and maintaining all performance standards and agency policies. Head Start is far too complicated a program to expect a new teacher, with or without a degree in Early Childhood Education, to be able to interpret and implement all areas of operations successfully without additional training and support. With the current policy of staff training being primarily a new staff orientation, there is not an opportunity to train new Head Start teaching staff effectively on the various requirements of Head Start. Consequently, this also makes it exceedingly difficult to assist teachers in realizing the importance of volunteerism of Head Start parents, and the role it plays in Head Start.

Documentation of existing records of Head Start parent volunteerism was almost nonexistent. Most of the records were inadequately completed. There was much confusion on the part of administrative staff as well as of the teachers.

Through analyzing data obtained from the volunteer records of the classrooms considered in this project, several issues are apparent. When comparing the volunteer hours for each classroom for the same six-month period during the last two years, in four of the six classrooms analyzed, the number of hours reported have actually decreased instead of showing gains (see chart). This decrease is attributed to a number of factors.

One factor is that since the time period utilized for the study occurs in the middle of the operational year, many projects have not yet been concluded for this school year. Some are scheduled during the warmer weather of spring.

More importantly is an issue of the lack of appropriate documentation of volunteer participation during the projects that have been executed throughout this year.

When analyzing the volunteer timesheets for each of the classrooms, few showed documentation of parents being involved in any way with these projects. Yet, with the project records, much involvement is apparent. In fact, at this point, there is very little documentation on the in-kind volunteer records throughout the agency, when reviewing the records for classroom or other volunteers. With staff turnover being at an all time high, and less training being afforded to new staff during the operational year, the majority of Head Start teaching staff do not understand the process or importance of documentation of volunteer hours.

Another issue to explain the discrepancy of actual parent and community involvement and the records of volunteer time is that of the evolving process of this large Head Start program as it strives to grow into computerization. Until recently, the agency did not have computers for record keeping. It has been transitioning into computerization, and many of the supervisory staff are just beginning to become computer literate. The culmination of data entered is only as good as the information entered into the system.

Some information was documented on one form, but not on another. For example, there were many group projects of Community Enhancement, but through conflicting information, teachers did not understand that they could count the involvement of the parents in these projects. Teaching staff do not know what they can and can not count toward volunteer time in the program.

In one instance, a theatrical group came to the center and provided a play for the Head Start children. On the volunteer timesheet for that center, one teacher recorded only three hours of volunteer time. In this case, to begin, if they were professionals, they

could have documented volunteer time at their professional rate, for the hours it took to practice, go to and from the facility, and to perform, for each of the cast members. That would have been much more in-kind than was documented.

Throughout the study, many more instances of the lack of documentation became apparent. The following chart is a culmination of the author's findings:

A COMPARISON OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

Center	Classrooms	Children	Sept.97-Feb. 98	Sept. 98-Feb.99
1	1	20	567 hours	327 hours
2	1	20	1,041 hours	353 hours
3	5	100	7,976 hours	1,080 hours
4	1	20	883 hours	219 hours
5	1	20	522 hours	828 hours
6	1	20	1,509 hours	447 hours

In the chart above, you see the actual volunteer hours reported which were extracted from agency records. According to the fiscal officer, to meet the in-kind requirements, each classroom must acquire approximately 100 hours of volunteer time each month. In the months analyzed, from the period of September of 1997 through

February of 1998, it shows the classroom average number of recorded volunteer hours per month calculates as follows:

Center 1 showed 95 hours per month.
Center 2 showed 174 hours per month.
Center 3 showed 266 hours per month.
Center 4 showed 147 hours per month.
Center 5 showed 87 hours per month.
Center 6 showed 252 hours per month.

For the same time period the next year, September of 1998 through February of 1999, the following was reported:

Center 1 showed 55 hours per month.
Center 2 showed 59 hours per month.
Center 3 showed 36 hours per month.
Center 4 showed 37 hours pr month.
Center 5 showed 138 hours per month.
Center 6 showed 75 hours per month.

It is apparent that only one of the classrooms has shown an increase in recorded volunteer hours. In analyzing agency volunteer records, none of the Community Enhancement Projects were included on the volunteer timesheets.

The two Area Supervisors were instrumental in assisting their teaching staff in the success of the many "Enhancing Communities" projects that did occur. But when analyzing the results of the projects on the volunteer time sheets, the involvement is apparently not reflected adequately. Many of the teachers did not understand the importance of obtaining the appropriate documentation that should have been reflected from the actual projects. When analyzing existing volunteer time sheets, it is quite apparent that many Head Start teachers have no idea of the importance that parent volunteerism plays, or that it needs to be documented. Some teaching staff simply do not know what can be counted toward volunteer hours.

An issue impacting this study is the years selected for comparison. The Enhancing Communities projects were a portion of both years compared. To be a valid comparison, volunteer hours for the entire year should have been included. The factors that have had the most influence and impact on Head Start volunteerism support need for continuation and expansion of the initiative.

By analyzing this project, we have become painfully aware that many of the current Head Start teachers do not understand fully the concept of volunteerism, nor do they realize the reasons behind volunteerism in Head Start. They do not know or understand the requirement of meeting the in-kind community match of 25% of our total budget. But more importantly, they are not aware of our mission of empowering parents through volunteering to become viable citizens of their local community.

Another area of significance revealed by this study is that although it was initially presented to the teaching staff that "Enhancing Communities" is a "two pronged" project of parent involvement in the local community, at the time this study began, the only consideration was toward group projects. One prong of "Enhancing Communities" was the development of "group" projects of Head Start parents, while the other prong was an emphasis on opportunities for individual involvement in community projects by Head Start parents. When we began analyzing the overall project, it was discovered that nothing was being done in the area of individual opportunities. Now the Head Start teachers in this county have developed this area by posting current volunteer opportunities in the "parent corner" in each classroom. (Appendix F)

According to the design of the study, volunteerism has been analyzed at both the individual and group level for parents in this county, comparing volunteer hours for

centers in this county. Of the six sites, only one showed an increase in hours (see chart on page 31). The decrease in the number of hours documented on the volunteer timesheets is considerable from the previous year. None of the classrooms at this time are reporting the 100 hours per month needed to maintain the in-kind match for funding. The documentation shows in most cases, instead of increasing volunteer hours, the total hours actually have decrease, though more involvement of parents in community initiatives is demonstrated on the Community Enhancement forms. In essence, what is occurring is that the involvement of parents in the Community Enhancement Projects is not being included on the regular volunteer timesheets (See Appendix D).

The occurrence of undocumented volunteer records can be attributed partially to the number of new teaching staff and to the lack of training in this area. It may also be that some of these projects were actually begun immediately following the October, 1997 in-service training. There were more opportunities for involvement in the urban area and review of the project did reveal that there was a higher incidence of volunteering in urban areas than rural ones, as shown on the chart (see page 31).

“Enhancing Communities” is ongoing, as are the Head Start classrooms. Some projects have not concluded at this point in the operational school year. From materials submitted, it is apparent that the more urban area has more opportunities for a varied volunteer experience. In the urban area, there were almost 200 different contacts listed for community volunteer initiatives, while the rural areas listed contacts for between fifteen and twenty opportunities for community volunteerism. On the other hand, the more rural areas had more volunteer initiatives helping individual citizens. Each center

completed at least one group project. Some centers elected to have on-going projects, with the elderly in care homes.

From the existing records, it was not possible to obtain the actual number of Head Start parent volunteers in these initiatives. At the onset of the project in 1997, the agency had just begun getting computerized for record keeping in the fiscal department. Only this year, under the new Executive Director, have computers become available for management of the Head Start program. The current computer software in use does not allow for the variance of Community Enhancement projects from that of classroom involvement. Many of the management team are just beginning to learn how to utilize the computers. With training, experience, and adaptations or changes in software, records of Community Enhancement projects will continue to develop into opportunities for growth of Head Start parents and make their communities better places in which to live.

Actual Community Enhancement Projects

Community Enhancement projects vary as much as the communities served in this large program area. Though both the individual and group projects were discussed, the teaching staff began with only group Community Enhancement projects. The following are examples of the outstanding initiatives many parent groups developed and executed during the initiative.

A great number of the Community Enhancement projects focus upon intergenerational initiatives, involving the Head Start children with the elderly in nursing homes. Some have formal arrangements with the Activity Director of the home, while others arrange activities month by month.

Head Start parents in one rural center chose their project to help the elderly shut-ins in their community by developing a way to assist them with a spring cleanup effort. They volunteered to clean the yards of these elderly citizens, or by helping them with making minor house repairs. This center developed an actual list from Eldercare, Meals on Wheels, the Senior Citizen's Center, and by asking others in the community for the names of elderly people that might need assistance.

Another center "adopted" a nursing home. The elderly and the children celebrate all holidays together in various initiatives. The children and the elderly of this center have an ongoing monthly visitation. The parents of the Head Start children are quite involved with all activities. In yet another Head Start/Nursing Home project, the Head Start parents decorate the home for all holidays and seasons, in an attempt to make life a little brighter for the residents.

In one rural community, Head Start parents got material donated and then weatherized houses of some of the more elderly citizens. They targeted ten homes, where no other assistance was available to the elderly to get their homes winterized. The parents put plastic sheeting on the windows to assist them.

Many of the projects concerned beautification initiatives, such as planting trees, planting flowers, or in painting of a fence or facility, to enhance the local center's appearance in the community. While others go outside the center into the community to pick up trash, plant flowers, to plant trees, or in the general maintenance of local community flower gardens or parks including the development of better playgrounds.

One multi-classroom site worked to get donations for materials, and then involved parents and members of the local community to install guttering and drains on the facility. This was a big undertaking, with lots of free publicity.

Another way in which parents choose to be more involved in the community activities was for the parent group to build a float for the local parade. Parents and children of one center actually participated in the Christmas parade, riding on the float. Those on the float then threw Christmas candy to the awaiting crowds. Another center participated in the University Homecoming parade, giving out Head Start recruitment information from the float they had built as it rode down the street upon the float.

Being a great part in the community's holiday festivities was initiated by some centers. In one instance, a formalized effort to work along with the merchants and other community leaders to decorate the city for Christmas was achieved by one site.

Some classrooms began seedlings inside, and later transplanted them not only around the Head Start center, but also the public school. It was not only a great learning experience for the children, but definitely enhanced their environment as well.

Some classrooms choose to assist with local food drives. One targeted obtaining paper goods and food for the needy elderly, while other groups decided to make an organized effort of collecting food for the Operation Christmas Store. Another classroom coordinated with the local Salvation Army to develop and distribute food baskets to the needy around the holidays.

Being involved in food drives for those less fortunate was also initiated by some parent groups. One site collected and sent help to the survivors of Hurricane Mitch, in

Honduras. While in another center, the project is an active campaign to send bottled water to Bosnia.

In one instance, parents of a local classroom obtained clothing for a "Clothes Closet Day" from local citizens, and then conducted a "Clothes Closet Day", recycling used clothing and household goods in their community. The remaining clothing and goods was then donated to a local church or Good Will Industries.

Another Community Enhancement project was that of a blood drive and fund raiser for a family, where a former Head Start child had developed Leukemia. All proceeds were to assist the family with medical bills.

One class decided to adopt the firemen at a local fire station. They made cookies, and then took them to the firefighters.

In yet another initiative of Community Enhancement, the Head Start parents became involved in getting local citizens to sign up and use library cards, encouraging reading. They also assisted the library system in developing an "Information Station" at the local center.

Every one of the classrooms included in this study submitted documentation of successful Community Enhancement Projects. Some have established on-going initiatives with the elderly in the community nursing home. Some classrooms have had more than one project. In total, there were twenty-three projects completed in just this one county. Yet, none of the time spent on these projects was included on the volunteer times sheets for documented in-kind.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Results of the Study

The major goal of this study was to evaluate and refine an initiative that has great promise for not only our Head Start program, but others as well. The mission of Head Start is to facilitate opportunities for low-income families to proactively address barriers to self-sufficiency. To be able to successfully accomplish this task, we must find ways of helping Head Start parents realize the opportunities that lie before them, as they become viable active citizens of their local community.

Through the development of the “Enhancing Communities” initiative, opportunities that were already there became more visible. Also, the local Head Start program became more visible! These projects created much positive public relations for Head Start in the local community. Being able to give something to the community was a good change for some of these parents.

One very positive outcome is that of the intergenerational interaction of the various Head Start/ elderly care home projects. Once these were developed from the Enhancing Communities initiative, many of these have become an ongoing event. These projects provide for a mutual exchange of joy for the elderly, the Head Start parents involved, and the children.

People in the local communities became more involved with the local Head Start. The positive public relations derived from these projects have made a big difference of how the communities view Head Start, and how Head Start views the community.

One very positive aspect that was derived from several of the projects is the intergenerational interaction occurring at the care homes with some of the Head Start Classes. These provide for a mutual exchange for both the elderly living in the homes and the Head Start children, bringing joy to both.

Through these projects, there is great potential for development of the citizenship of Head Start parents, positive public relations for Head Start, assisting Head Start in acquiring the local community in-kind match for funding, and for making communities a better place for all citizens. The Enhancing Communities projects appear to be a win/win situation for all involved.

As the author began analyzing the statistics collected from the 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 records, the success of the projects was not reflected accurately. Not only "Welfare Reform," but also many organizational changes have greatly impacted operations of our Head Start program. Probably the greatest impacts are those of computerization, staff turnover, and reorganization. Some policy changes, such as the lack of monthly in-service training for Head Start teachers, has also had an adverse impact.

The documented volunteer hours, as they have been reported since the inception of this project, do not reflect the actual projects, nor their success. The majority of Head Start teachers in this county are new staff. They are not aware of the importance of

obtaining the appropriate documentation from volunteers, or even what they can count toward volunteer time in the program.

One of the reasons for development of the Enhancing Communities initiatives is to assist our Head Start program in maintaining a solid in-kind base through volunteerism. To maintain our level of federal funding, according to our fiscal officer, we must obtain approximately \$300,000 annually through volunteer time in the programs. This, when translated into terms of "per classroom," would mean that each classroom must be able to document around 100 hours of volunteer time per month. The amount quoted does not even consider the impact of losing dollars through the decline of donated space, where facilities are being purchased for Head Start operations. The in-kind generated would only hold the line as we currently operate, not providing for the diminishing in-kind derived from donated space.

Summary

To summarize the findings of the research of the readiness of the large Head Start program in implementing the Enhancing communities Project, it was found that current systems within the agency need revision to more fully support the project. Methods for obtaining, documenting, and recording volunteer hours need revision.

It was also found the massive changes in staff, administrative and teaching staff as well, have obscured the project. Also, teacher turnover has created a crucial need for more in-house training. Without training, staff does not have the necessary skill to adequately document volunteerism. They also do not currently have the knowledge of the importance of voluntarism to Head Start.

Other findings of the study were that the many opportunities in urban areas do facilitate more volunteerism than those available in the rural areas. Also, more females volunteer than males. It was also found that by involving Head Start parents in local community volunteer efforts creates public awareness of Head Start.

The most outstanding finding is that without an effort to change the current way this large agency manages the volunteer and in-kind program, the agency will not obtain the required community match to meet the federal guidelines. If these requirements are not met, the government may reduce the funding level of this program, thus making it necessary to reduce needed services to children and families in this large service area. Steps need made to remedy this situation immediately.

Recommendations

My primary recommendations is that training, from the administrative staff down, be provided concerning the importance of voluntarism to the Head Start program, parents, and the community. It is necessary for several reasons to provide Head Start staff with in-service training throughout the school year. A portion of this training should contain elements necessary for a successful Head Start program of community volunteerism, including accurate record keeping of volunteers and projects.

Another recommendation is that for greater attention to be given by administrative staff in maintaining the level of in-kind needed to support the Head Start program. A quarterly summary concerning the obtained in-kind, by classroom, must be provided by the fiscal office to the Executive Director, to the Head Start Operations Director, and to Policy Council on a regular basis.

The author's third and final recommendation is that the Community Enhancement initiative be instituted in the other five counties next school year. The author and the Area Supervisors involved in the study to be a part of presenting the findings of this study to the teaching staff of this Head Start program. The timing would be ideal for presentation of these findings at an in-service training before school is out this year. Then in fall, as a follow up, an additional training session should be included on the importance of volunteerism at pre-service training for the Head Start teachers.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

From the time this study was begun, the focus was driven considerably by changes that have recently occurred in the organizational structure and in operational policies. Actually, even the federal regulations have recently undergone change and been revised. The basic concepts and the need for refining and developing volunteerism in Head Start programs across the nation have remained. In review of the massive list of current research involving Head Start, the one area not included is that of Head Start Volunteerism and of Head Start parents in local community initiatives of volunteering (Ellsworth, Associates, Inc. 1999). The following attachment is a culmination of considerations for future research opportunities for "Community Enhancement" and Head Start.

Implications for Future Research

When considering the possibilities of an initiative such as Enhancing Communities, the potential is staggering. The following are considerations for future study concerning the Enhancing Communities Project:

- I. Personal level:
 - A. Increased community involvement by Head Start parents.
 - B. Increased employability of Head Start parents.
 - C. Attitudinal changes of parents toward volunteering.
 - D. Attitudinal change of individual parents toward community involvement.
 - E. Increased awareness of the mission of Head Start.

- II Community level:
 - A. Enhanced community awareness of the Head Start program.
 - B. Social acceptance of individual Head Start parents.
 - C. Development of the local community.
 - D. Reduction of crime in the community.
 - E. Increased awareness of the mission of Head Start.

- III. Agency level:
 - A. Further development of the Family and Community Partnership Component.
 - B. Development of a replicable model for other Head /start programs.
 - C. Enhanced publicity at the local level.
 - D. Enhanced communities.
 - B. A replicable model for other Head Start programs

Recommended Action Steps

The implications for the Head Start community are clear. With diminishing resources of community support and the increase of federal funding, the demand for Head Start to review and to act on volunteer policies is here. It is essential that certain steps be

taken to assess current agency needs and practices concerning volunteerism. Before an agency begins a new initiative, they must prepare by the following steps:

1. Assess the current in-kind contribution need of the agency.
2. Review current methods and procedures for obtaining documentation.
3. Analyze the systems in place. Will they support a new initiative?
4. Develop necessary procedures for support.
5. Analyze future needs for in-kind.
6. Provide training for all staff concerning findings.
7. Implement projects to support the in-kind requirement.
8. Review progress of projects on a monthly basis. If needed, some projects may take additional support.
9. Inform key members of the community prior to beginning any new initiative.

In conclusion, for any agency project to be successful, all staff involved must become aware of the importance of the initiative. Without the participation and support of all relevant members of an organization, the project is weakened.

For Head Start programs to stay in compliance with the federal regulations of in-kind match, they must begin to review and formulate projects to assist in obtaining more community support. The Enhancing Communities Project is one answer.

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APPENDIX A
PROJECT SUMMARY

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12/98

“ENHANCING COMMUNITIES”

This initiative which began in Action, Inc. last year has the potential for many positive outcomes in the local community: for Head Start, for each community involved, but most of all for the parents of Head Start children. Through coordination of voluntarism opportunities for Head Start parents in their local community and not merely in the Head Start classroom, these parents will become more vested citizens. As parents realize the opportunities for personal growth through volunteering, they will also become more viable contributing members of their community. “Enhancing Communities” provides for **individual** as well as **group** volunteer opportunities for Head start parents. Though our Head Start began the initiative throughout our six-county area last year, it needs further development.

We are currently analyzing the successes and shortcomings of the project and just how it can further develop. This semester the Head Start classrooms in Payne County will be utilized for a more formalized pilot to further this goal.

As the concept was introduced to the classroom staff of the six county area of Action, Inc. last year, several community projects were executed. Many of the classrooms did very well with the group projects, but some did not. The aspect of individual opportunities was not even addressed. We will concentrate efforts in making available current opportunities for local community initiatives of volunteering. These will be posted in our classrooms on the parent bulletinboards, and updated monthly, or even more frequently as needed. Some our staff will be contacting various sources for the volunteer opportunities at the local community level.

Action, Inc. Head Start is people helping people at the local community level, even though we are primarily federally funded. The following information is just for your information. We do not want to reinvent the wheel, but to better integrate Head Start parents into initiatives to enhance their community.

BACKGROUND:

Head Start is a family antipoverty program that has provided opportunities for over fifteen million children and their families nationwide over the last thirty years. It is a comprehensive child development program for economically disadvantaged children and their families, with the primary goals of improving the health and social competence of preschool age children, while promoting self-sufficiency for parents. For Head Start to continue, programs must soon analyze the ways in which we promote self-sufficiency for parents.

THE PROBLEM: Meeting federal funding regulations through local community support. (Inkind contribution requirements).

Though Head Start is federally funded, it requires community support to function. According to the regulations, for every federal dollar of support, the local Head Start

Program has to acquire a matching amount of community support equal to 25% of that dollar. This local community matching can be in the form of volunteer time by parents or people of the community, or donated goods, or in donated space. To accomplish this mandate, it has been a difficult task, at best. Over the last few years, as Head Start continues to expand and develop, federal funding has increased to approximately four billion dollars nationwide. The local community inkind must increase in relation to the federal funding. Two specific factors add to the complexity of the mandated community inkind contribution:

1. Lack of appropriate donated space for Head Start in the local communities.
2. Availability of parents as traditional classroom volunteers.

Space: in past years, Head Start was located almost entirely in donated space: churches, schools, community buildings, or about anywhere that would meet daycare licensing standards, and those standards mandated by the Head Start Performance Standards. Recent legislation has made it possible for Head Start Programs to actually purchase facilities. Though funding for the purchase of facilities is very limited, how does this affect the local matching inkind that was once obtained by the utilization of donated space?

Parent Volunteers: Under the legislation of welfare reform, more parents of Head Start children are no longer available to volunteer during the traditional hours of the Head Start classroom. In 1996, almost 55% of mothers in our nation work outside the home, and almost 30% of the children under 18-years-of age lived with only a mother in the household. (Children's Defense Fund, 1997.) As the "Welfare to Work" initiative has progressed, more single moms will be in the work force. (Wijnberg & Weinger, 1998.) How is that going to impact involving parents in Head Start? How will it affect the local inkind match? Though, the development of self-sufficiency is the most important factor, the issue of meeting the mandated local community share is a very real concern for local programs.

For local Head Start Programs to maintain the community support necessary for continued federal funding, under the current legislation, we must reach beyond the traditional ways of operation and explore creative initiatives. Though this project is not the absolute answer to the problem of diminishing inkind support at the local level, it is a beginning. In addition, it supports the basic mission of Head Start to facilitate the self-sufficiency of Head Start parents, helping them to become more involved citizens of their community.

APPENDIX B
INTRODUCTORY IN-SERVICE TRAINING

**DESIGNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER:
A Roadmap to Enhancing Your Community**

In-service Training
October 17, 1997

The introduction to the “Enhancing Communities” concept was conducted to all teaching staff of Action, Inc. at an in-service. The information presented was culminated with the attached worksheets, which were completed by the staff of each classroom. We then discussed these within the entire group. After this interactive training session, the teachers were then to implement the actual projects with parents at both the local classroom and center level. Projects were to be developed at both the individual and group level.

A follow-up training session was to be conducted, to review and further develop the initiative, during the August pre-service training of 1998. Due to agency reorganization under the leadership of a new Executive Director, it was determined that there was no time for a follow-up session at that time. The project, though continuing to some degree, needed further development. It was determined to focus efforts for development of the project in one county that would serve as a model for the other areas of our agency. After refinement, the Enhancing Communities initiative will be replicated in the other five counties in the Action, Inc., Head Start program area.

"THE JOURNEY"

To embark upon a journey
Without a goal in mind,
Can lead to aimless wandering
And a waste of time.

For dreams alone don't make it so,
And once you have that vision,
What roads you choose to take
Are really your decisions.

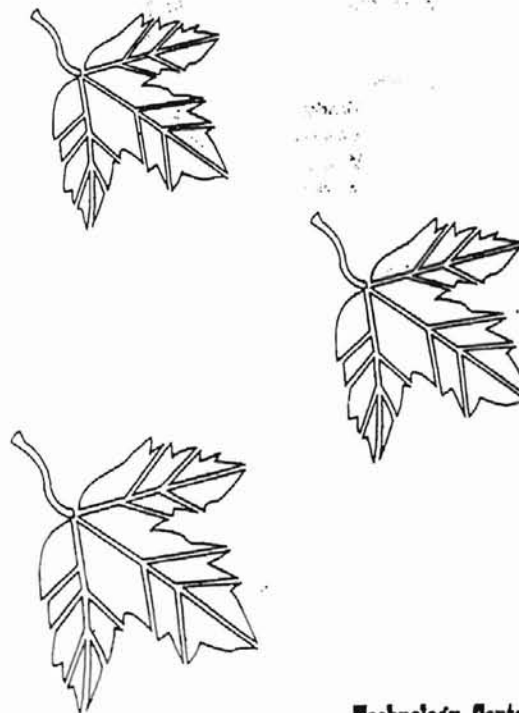
If you don't know where you're going,
Or plan your journey's end,
How will you know when you arrive,
And what messages to send?

For when you're lost and wandering
Your dreams begin to fade,
And hopelessness obscures your path,
Hiding what gains you have made.

Just what you wish to happen
Will take a master plan.
Without a map to guide you,
Your dreams may turn to sand!

Linda Fuller

**HEAD START
IN-SERVICE TRAINING**



Technology Center

October 17, 1997

**Head Start
In-Service Training -
Technology Center**

October 17, 1997

- 8:30 Registration - Refreshments
- 9:00 Welcome -
Seminar Centers B and C
- 9:30 Session I
Workshop A - Group 1
Workshop B - Group 2
Workshop C - Group 3
Workshop D - Group 4
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 Session II
Workshop A - Group 2
Workshop B - Group 3
Workshop C - Group 4
Workshop D - Group 1
- 11:45 Lunch (on your own)
- 12:45 Session III
Workshop A - Group 3
Workshop B - Group 4
Workshop C - Group 1
Workshop D - Group 2
- 1:45 Break
- 2:00 Session IV
Workshop A - Group 4
Workshop B - Group 1
Workshop C - Group 2
Workshop D - Group 3
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 Head Start Bowl Competition
- 4:15 Adjourn

WORKSHOPS:

- A. "Just Enjoy Life - Laugh Often"
(High/Scope Creative Representation)
Presenters:
Skylab I
- B. Transitions: This Is Your Reality Check
Presenters:
Skylab II
- C. Family Involvement: High/Scope Style
Presenters:
Seminar Center A
- D. Designing Our Future Together: A Roadmap To
Enhancing Your Community
Presenters:
Seminar Center D



Group 1

Group 2 -

Group 3 -

Group 4 -

ENHANCING COMMUNITIES

In the spirit much like that of the "Christmas Store" that developed many years ago, "Enhancing Communities" will actively involve Head Start parents in the local communities in positive ways. This initiative will build communities through its citizens' involvement at the local level and enrich the local community. We will tap into one of the most under-utilized natural resources we have: the natural resource of human potential of the Head Start parents.

With the continued growth and development of Head Start according to the revised performance standards, we must involve Head Start parents in their local communities in a variety of ways. To make the greatest difference in the local communities, we must somehow develop more active participation of our Head Start parents as viable citizens as part of their community. Everyone has some expertise in some area; everyone has something to share with others. This is true of even Head Start parents. By becoming involved in local community enhancement projects, we can give Head Start parents an opportunity to be recognized as not the "local problem" but rather as part of the "solution". This project will provide these citizens an opportunity "to give back to" and to be a viable part of the community.

We must facilitate citizen involvement in the local community by our Head Start parents. Through this initiative we can strengthen parents and communities, and at the same time enhance public relations for Head Start.

Staff _____
Center _____
Date _____

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
(Center level)

I. How can you make your community a better place?

II. What issues would you like to see addressed in your local community?

III. What volunteer organizations exist in your service area?

- IV. How can you, as the Head Start teacher, document the number of parents you have matched in volunteer positions in your community?

- V. Who is the contact person for each of these organizations?

- VI. What is the project?

- VII. How can you coordinate with other initiatives in your community?

- VIII. Does your group need to obtain permission for the project from anyone? Whom?

- IX. What are some examples of projects for your classroom parents?

“A THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT”

From deep within our very soul,
The power of love resides.
In some it seems to be near death,
Hidden so deeply inside.

Some fear to touch an outstretched hand,
Toward involvement they're appalled.
Yet hearts are filled with loneliness,
Just waiting to be called.

A thousand points of light they say,
Shining brightly from your soul,
Can help you see more beauty than
You thought your heart could hold.

The dream of life and liberty
Is still alive and well,
But each of us must realize
Just where our hearts must dwell.

The glow of love is waiting
For us to let it shine,
By giving freely of ourselves
And of our precious time.

Everyone does something well,
Illusive as it seems.
It's up to each of us to care
Enough to realize our dream.

A thousand points of light will glow,
Illuminating us along the way.
How much difference we can make
With each and every day!

Linda Fuller

APPENDIX C
PARENT AND COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP PLAN

FCP-19

Staff Interaction with Parents

- 1) Use a variety of methods for conveying information, for example, guest speakers, hands-on experiences, or newsletters.
- 2) Consider parent attitudes, cultures, languages, beliefs, fears, and educational levels. To the extent possible, education for parents should be designed around each family's individual characteristics.
- 3) Make use of content experts in the areas of health, nutrition, and mental health for assistance in designing appropriate programs.
- 4) Refer to the Community Assessment, and consider using community resources when developing education programs for parents; and
- 5) Consult with the Health Services Advisory Committee.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY ADVOCACY**Performance Standards 1304.40(g)(1) &(2)****(g) Parent Involvement in Community Advocacy**

Rationale: The active involvement of parents in advocacy and activities with other community members develops self-esteem and builds skills, while helping to organize and enhance community services and resources that best respond to parent's needs and interests.

Strategies: Action Inc., supports and encourage parents to influence the character and goals of community services in order to make them more responsive to their interests and needs. Staff can provide this support by being an active partner with parents regarding FPA. Staff can also provide support through comprehensive understanding of services that families

FCP-20

utilize. It is vital that staff know to “whom” they are referring families. Parents/families are able to influence the character and goals of community services becoming involved on many levels. It is important that they give constructive feed-back to service providers and/or their supervisors. They can also have an influence by becoming active on ;

***Boards**

***Committees**

***Councils, etc ...**

Who: Parents should be provided with regular opportunities to work together and with other community members, on activities that they have helped develop and in which they have expressed an interest. Each Parent Committee will select a yearly “**Community Enhancement Project**”.

From: PIV-117 will be submitted to the Parent Involvement /Literacy Coordinator by December 1.

How: Staff will give parents information about the roles and functions of Head Start policy groups early in the program year, and during recruitment and enrollment. Parents may actively participate in Parent Committees, on Policy Council, which provide opportunities for developing confidence and skills for further community advocacy, and encouraging community members to attend **Policy Council** meetings.

- 1) **Serving on the Health Services Advisory Committee and other advisory committees.**
- 2) **Becoming involved in groups and organizations that support the culture of the family or community.**
- 3) **Participating in parent/teacher organizations and local school boards and communicating with school organizations about ways that parents can assist in decision-making in schools.**
- 4) **Joining or starting various community committees that have well-defined goals, such as improving neighborhood safety.**

FCP-21

- 5) **Obtaining information on organizing techniques and, as appropriate, using Head Start facilities and equipment for meetings.**
- 6) **Taking individual actions to improve the community.**
- 7) **Helping other parents and community members to understand the impact they have on the character of community services and the impact that such services have on the lives of Head Start families.**

Parent Involvement Coordinator and Area Supervisor will actively involve parents and staff in an on-going process of identifying and evaluating resources and services as needed to maintain up-to-date information about community resources.

**Parent Involvement In Transition Activities
Performance Standard 1304.40(h)(1)-4**

(h) Parent Involvement:

Rationale: A thoughtful plan leading up to actual transition and placement, developed with active parental involvement in the planning and transition process and with sensitivity to the multiple aspects of transition, can significantly enhance the success of the child and family in a new environment.

Strategies: Children and families need to be supported during transitions. Parents are assisted to understand what to expect in new environments; and staff assist children and parents throughout the year with transition in and out of the program.

Who: Parents are encouraged to actively participate in transition activities. Staff provide activities/opportunities.

PIV-117

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Center/Classroom: _____ **Date:** _____

Center Committee Chairperson: _____

Provide a brief summary of the project chosen by your center/classroom, include other organizations, programs, and names of contact persons also involved in the project:

Expected Completion Date of Project: _____

Possible Follow-up Needed: _____

PIV 117A

Center

Date

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT: INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

See attached sheets for community happenings and local organizations

Organization/Address Type of Activity Contact Person/Phone

APPENDIX D
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW
BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 02-09-99

IRB #: HE-99-060

Proposal Title: ENHANCING COMMUNITIES

Principal Investigator(s): David Balk, Linda Jean Fuller

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature:



Date: February 9, 1999

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Linda Jean Fuller

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA ²

Linda Jean Fuller

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: ENHANCING COMMUNITIES THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF
HEAD START COMMUNITY VOLUNTARISM

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Webster High School, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1966; Received Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University in May, 1999.

Professional Experience: Employed by Action Inc. Head Start in 1978 as a teacher. Served in various capacities of management and development of Action, Inc. from 1979 to current position of Associate Director for Children and Family Services. Finalist for the 1999-2000 National Head Start Fellowship.

Volunteer and Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Head Start Association, National Head Start Association, Association of Community Action Agencies, National Association of Community Action Agencies, Child Care Careers, Oklahoma Early Childhood Professional Development Team, Oklahoma Early Childhood Director's Credentialing Program, Growing up Strong Trainer, League of Women Voters, Children's Defense Fund, Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, Strengthening Partnerships Between Schools and Communities, Oklahoma Early Childhood Association, Southern Early Childhood Association, National Association for the Education of Young Children,