



Summary of Family Strengthening Peer Network Meeting

March 28, 2007

National Human Services Assembly, Washington, DC

Co-Chairs

Caroline Crocoll, USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
Jennifer Davis, Goodwill Industries International

I. Family Strengthening at the National and Community Level

How do we build community among our organizations and our affiliates?

Discussion and ideas:

- Learn more about each organization in the peer network so we can build better connections (organizational structure, programmatic focus areas, opportunities/constraints)
- Share fact sheets about organizations; highlight other organizations in internal newsletters; invite other organizations to regional or national gatherings
- Which organizations not currently involved with the peer network should be involved?
- Creating subcommittees on national and local community building. A national subcommittee will promote understanding and knowledge among peer network members and identify how to advance partnership. A local subcommittee will promote partnerships and collaboration among our local affiliates.

II. Preventing Foreclosure

Presenter: Milt Sharp, NeighborWorks America

- Foreclosure trends: consumers' average debt increased 12% from 2004 to 2005; mortgage debt owed by households outpacing home equity; cash-out refinancings and home equity loan volume has increased ten-fold
- Causes: housing market, business practices and borrower behavior; unemployment/curtailment of income and illness/death in family are leading delinquency triggers

- Cost to borrower: lost home, equity and ruined credit
- Cost to community: \$30,000 to \$50,000 based on law enforcement and other costs
- Cost to lenders: \$44,000 to \$58,000

Solutions:

- Improved foreclosure intervention methods must be developed, starting with consumer awareness; 60% of families that go into foreclosure have never contacted their lender
- In June, NeighborWorks America and Ad Council are launching 3-year national advertising campaign targeted at low- and moderate-income delinquent borrowers. The Ad Council campaign will promote toll-free number to provide financial counseling and connect caller with lender or local NeighborWorks organization

III. Successful Parenting Framework

What is “parent success”? Discussion highlights:

- Child outcomes—children do well when their parents are effective
- A blend of parent change/behavior and child outcomes
- Must be careful not to blame all of society’s problems on parenting
- Rand studying this topic

What unique contributions could the Family Strengthening Policy Center make in this area?

- Marketing strategy to promote family strengthening
- Unifying language
- Focus on how we connect with parents when there isn’t a crisis
- Ideal is universal parenting education
- Need a comprehensive system to support children—different levels of support
- Promote universal norms of parenting across race/class
- Include parents in significant roles, at the table
- Must be strengths-based
- Emphasis on parenting as critical element of child success

IV. Potential Topics for July Meeting

- Reports from subcommittees on community building
- How to foster family strengthening agency culture
- Family volunteering

Participants

Amy Beall, The Hatcher Group

Renee Carl, National Human Services Assembly

David Carrier, National Human Services Assembly

Caroline Crocoll, USDA CSREES, Families, 4H & Nutrition

Jennifer Davis, Goodwill Industries International, Inc.

Ross Ford, Baltimore Rising

Molly French, National Human Services Assembly

Kayla Jackson, National Network for Youth

Jo Johnson, Child Welfare League of America

Irv Katz, National Human Services Assembly

Polina Makievsky, Points of Light Foundation

Audrey Morgenbesser, American Institutes for Research

Elizabeth Mugala, National Network for Youth

Kathleen Ross, Child Welfare League of America

Milt Sharp, NeighborWorks America

Jane Stenson, Catholic Charities USA

Steven Tuminaro, NeighborWorks America