
SOLUTIONS FOR AMERICA

A Newsletter for the Pew Partnership's Project, *Wanted: Solutions for America*

February 2001

Wanted Research Continues Apace

By Sean DiGiovanna
Center for Urban Policy Research

The Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) is pleased to report that the research component of *Wanted: Solutions for America* continues on-track and is beginning to yield some interesting results. CUPR has just finished vetting the nineteen interim reports it received from the local researchers in January. By and large, the reports indicate a high level of success in implementing the research objectives set out early last year.

This high level of achievement does not mean that things have always gone exactly as expected. In some cases various components set out in the research plans have struggled with difficulties such as poor response rates or flawed implementation. Despite these setbacks, the researchers have worked with CUPR to reevaluate and modify the research plans in order to meet *Wanted's* objectives. This ability to continuously revisit the research plans and to be flexible in the face of challenges has been a positive feature of the hub-and-spoke research model that the researchers have embraced for the *Wanted* initiative.

Emerging Themes

As CUPR receives more information from the local researchers, we are beginning to see some common themes in explaining program success, as well as some common struggles that programs have been forced to overcome. As we briefly discussed on the project LISTSERV™, the role of enthusiastic, dedicated, and capable leadership appears to be a necessity. It is also a factor that is difficult to quantify through research. How important is leadership? One of the advantages of working with the *Wanted* sites over a multiyear period is that we can witness what happens when

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Important Dates

March 2-4, 2001	Participant meeting in San Diego, CA <i>Theme: Housing and Jobs</i>
March-May, 2001	CUPR site visits
June 30, 2001	Third interim reports due from local researchers



Downtown San Diego, California

Pew Partnership Survey Dispels Myths on Citizen Engagement

By Jacqueline Dugery
Pew Partnership

In a recent Pew Partnership for Civic Change survey of more than 1,800 Americans, a portrait of citizens at work and committed to their communities shines through. Citizens are ready, willing, and able to roll up their sleeves and get involved in finding solutions to tough problems. This certainly bodes well for *Wanted: Solutions for America* sites and their work. Here are a few highlights from the survey:

Community Perceptions

Americans feel connected to their communities. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed feel very or fairly connected to their communities and 74% of Americans view the quality of life in their community as excellent or good.

Community Involvement

Citizens are engaged in solving problems in their communities. Over 50% had volunteered in the last year and over three-quarters had helped out a neighbor with a problem. Nearly four out of ten Americans have gotten together with co-workers to sponsor a food-drive, walk-a-thon or other type of community activity.

Community Issues

When asked to rank the most serious problems facing their community, citizens responded with human concerns. Over forty percent indicated that the lack of living-wage jobs was the number one problem facing their community. Thirty-eight percent see illegal drugs as a serious or very serious

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MY TURN: Preparing youth for the future

By Stephen Finn

Center for Urban Policy Research

For high school youth, making decisions about whether to attend college, where to enroll, or which job field to enter after graduation can be daunting. Since 1984, students throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have been able to get help with these decisions thanks to the Massachusetts Youth Teenage Unemployment Reduction Program (MY TURN). This award-winning organization collaborates with school districts in Brockton, Boston, and surrounding areas to assist at-risk youth with the social support and career services they need to succeed in the job market or the world of higher education. MY TURN works closely with school district staff such as teachers and guidance counselors, to help ensure students' vocational and educational needs are met. Since the program's inception, more than 6,000 young adults have benefited from MY TURN's assistance in making the transition to jobs or post-secondary education.

Cofounder and executive director Barbara Duffy, along with an experienced, capable management team, leads MY TURN. The organization operates a number of programs at Brockton High School, two of which are the focus of *Wanted* research. One of the *Wanted* programs helps prepare high school seniors for the professional world, while the other initiative assists other seniors to successfully enroll in the college of their choice. These programs help youth build self-esteem, gain motivation, and access the knowledge and experiences necessary to help them reach for their next professional or educational goals.

Students who plan to enter the workforce immediately after graduation benefit from MY TURN's School-to-Work (STW) program. MY TURN staff teach students job-seeking skills such as interviewing techniques, completing job applications, and creating resumes. Through internships and job shadowing, participants also gain first-hand knowledge about various types of jobs and companies. MY TURN's School Training and Education Partnership (STEP) program focuses on helping students gain entry into four-year colleges and successfully complete their first year. The program offers tools and activities that help students increase their college awareness, prepare for the admission process, and select the right school for them.

MY TURN's success has been recognized on many levels, including with the prestigious PEPNet award as a best practices model from the National Youth Employment Coalition. Executive Director Duffy explains MY TURN's success in the following way: "Both the STEP program and our school-to-work initiative have been instrumental in the lives of our young people. We know that how we prepare our young people, along with the invaluable self-esteem building we impart to our participants, helps to successfully mold their future as they transition into adulthood." Currently their research is examining the processes of how MY TURN delivers services so that the strengths and obstacles in operating these youth programs can be identified.

To learn more about MY TURN, visit the organization's Web site at www.my-turn.org.



Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Corporation, Brooklyn, NY.

People and Place in Community and Economic Development

By Mark Pendras

Center for Urban Policy Research

In the course of my work with community and economic development I am continually confronted by the ongoing debate concerning the relative merits of place-based versus people-based development strategies. The issue has been especially acute in recent years, as changing employment trends (deindustrialization, downsizing, high-tech growth) and changing investment climates (state rollback, deregulation, privatization) have left many places around the country scrambling to find effective transition and/or redevelopment strategies.

Supporters of place-based strategies typically suggest that focusing efforts and resources on physically improving places—such as central business districts, specific neighborhoods, or other designated spots like ports, markets, or historic districts—offers development opportunities by improving desirability and thus stimulating investment and creating jobs. Others offer instead that people-based approaches—such as job training, health care, targeted financing, and provision of other services and educational programs—are more appropriate because they better address the needs of the residents of the redevelopment area. As with most things, an argument can be made that the reality lies somewhere in between: without developing the place it is difficult to attract the investment necessary to create jobs for the people living there; yet without investing in the people, whatever jobs are created in a particular place may not go to current residents, leaving the place developed, but for whom?

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That this conundrum exists is of course not news to most of the *Wanted* participants, which is why the issue is worth discussing. Therefore, I will take a moment to review some of the ways both *Wanted* and non-*Wanted* programs are attempting to navigate the potentially contradictory needs of people and place.

Recently, I have become familiar with the Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC), a nonprofit development corporation in Brooklyn, New York. For the sake of redevelopment, GMDC, working in a neighborhood that has been especially hard hit by the flight of industry from New York, has begun rehabilitating some of the old, abandoned industrial buildings as new spaces for light manufacturing. While on the surface GMDC appears to employ a typical place-based development strategy, in fact, physical rehabilitation takes place only insofar as the type of rehabilitation accommodates the specific needs and skills of the local residents. Non-profit status enables GMDC to subsidize rents, while its social mission keeps the focus on developing opportunities specifically for local residents. And in the near future GMDC plans to coordinate efforts with affordable housing developer to ensure local workers can continue to live in the area after redevelopment. As a result GMDC is making some real gains toward bridging the place-people divide in Greenpoint.

In working with GMDC it occurred to me that for many of the *Wanted* programs the people-place issue is also a central concern. Thus, I hope to raise the issue for discussion by commenting on a few of the *Wanted* programs attempting to make gains in both arenas simultaneously.

One example is the HandMade in America Small Towns Project, in Western North Carolina. HandMade works with small towns in rural North Carolina, seeking to achieve economic development that reflects the resources of local places and the needs of their citizens. It does this by directing its efforts toward building awareness of and markets for the handmade products that characterize the region's heritage. It also provides technical assistance to local decision makers in developing their strategic plans, helping to improve local capacity in this area. As such, the program attempts to work with the interconnectedness of people, place, and history in this part of the country and use that uniqueness as a tool for economic development and community preservation.

Another good example of a combined development effort is the Vermont Development Credit Union (VDCU) in Burlington, Vermont. By establishing and assisting institutions that provide financial services to underserved populations, VDCU supports the efforts of local residents to develop the places where they live and work, keeping physical development focused on local needs. Another program taking a similar approach is the Milibank/Carmel Hill Project in New York City. Milibank/Carmel Hill's strategy is similar to VDCU's in that it seeks to improve both "the physical and social quality" of a specific geographical area by working with

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leadership changes. Several of the sites have undergone changes in program or organization leadership. By comparing the experiences of these sites in a period of transition, we will be able to glimpse the ways in which leadership can be nurtured, transferred and sustained.

Similarly, many of the *Wanted* sites have had to struggle with growing pains. Ironically, their very success has led them to a place where they must make important decisions about expansion, replication and program revision. These decisions bring with them the associated challenges of determining adequate staffing needs, obtaining sustainable funding, and, perhaps, serving new target populations. The experience of the *Wanted* sites is giving us several examples of the decision-making process organizations must go through in managing their success. Is it more important to stick to a strategic plan or seize opportunities when they arise? Has taking on new responsibilities changed the focus of the organization? Has it further limited other courses of action? These are some of the questions to which we are likely to have some answers at the end of *Wanted*.

Another important issue (and one that will be the focus of our next *Wanted* participant meeting in San Diego) is the role of collaboration in bringing about successful program outcomes. As the research results pour in, we can see collaborative relationships form, develop, and evolve over time. What is becoming clear is that true collaboration is not simple or easy. It requires hard work and strategic planning. The results of *Wanted* should identify some important factors and considerations in getting the most out of collaborative relationships.

Bringing Together the Hub and the Spokes

Starting this spring, CUPR researchers will be making site visits to the *Wanted* program sites. Our team is excited by the prospect of finally seeing for ourselves the successful organizations that *Wanted* is investigating. The challenge of making the arrangements we need to make to spend time with you in a time and cost effective manner is staggering and I want to thank you all in advance for your cooperation.

I also want to urge you to make the most of the CUPR site visits. From our end, we have two main objectives—to get a glimpse of your program in operation and to discuss research progress and findings with program staff and the local researchers. Think about ways that you can use our visit to engender community interest, draw media attention, or advance your collaborative relationships. As with the rest of the *Wanted* initiative, we would like to work with the program sites to make this effort a mutually beneficial experience.

I would be happy to answer and to provide further information or answer and questions on the status of the research initiative or the site visits. Please contact me at digiovan@rci.rutgers.edu or (better yet) use the [LISTSERV™ \(WANTED_PARTICIPANTS@email.rutgers.edu\)](mailto:LISTSERV@WANTED_PARTICIPANTS@email.rutgers.edu) and let everyone benefit from your queries.

Region Nine: Building Healthy Communities

By Mark Pendras

Center for Urban Policy Research

The Region Nine Prevention and Healthy Communities Network, in Mankato, Minnesota, addresses the problem of youth substance abuse head on. Through an innovative and flexible network of officials, professionals, parents, and citizens Region Nine has leveraged a range of support to make great gains in the fight against substance abuse among rural populations.

Due to conditions unique to rural areas, such as the lack of jobs or other alternative activities for youth, scant local law enforcement, and the tendency for parents to spend much time away from home commuting to jobs in other cities, substance abuse among youth has become a serious, embedded, and persistent problem. And limited treatment options for substance abusers only makes matters worse. Recognizing this situation and the lack of effective strategies for addressing it, the Region Nine Healthy Communities Network was established in 1992 to find workable solutions.

The Healthy Communities Network is a regional coalition representing eleven drug prevention partnerships and other groups and individuals within the region interested in decreasing substance abuse and building strong, healthy communities. They also make efforts to actively involve the youth themselves, for they recognize, as Region Nine staff member Barbara Lamson puts it, "that youth have great ideas and solutions regarding the issues that face them." Regional staff are paid professionals with expertise in the field of substance prevention, but the local partnerships are almost entirely constituted and run by volunteers (three have a part-time staff person). Representatives from the local partnerships work with the regional staff to exchange solution ideas, set policy, plan for the implementation of strategies, and coordinate actions.

While each community has its particular needs, prevention efforts across the network typically center on a general range of strategic approaches to the problem: public awareness campaigns regarding the existence and severity of the issue; targeted educational programs; source reduction; local training; and development of constructive, healthy, drug free environments that provide alternatives activities for local youth. It is this range of strategies, employed in coordination with active communication and the cooperation of efforts across the network of participating groups that has enabled the Region Nine Communities Network to secure well deserved support and make hard earned gains in the fight against youth substance abuse in rural Minnesota.

Participation in *Wanted* will help Region Nine assess their successes and attract the recognition needed to sustain their participants in their work, while empowering others to join in the effort to build strong, healthy communities.

For more information please visit the Region Nine Prevention and Healthy Communities web site: www.rndc.org.

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and for local residents. It focuses on ensuring the rehabilitation of neighborhood housing while also providing a range of other social services to local residents.

Finally, the Bridge, in Jacksonville, Florida, the Dreamers Project, in Harts/Big Ugly Creek, West Virginia, and Taller San Jose, in Santa Ana, California, can all be seen as utilizing another good strategy for achieving people-place integration. Though very different in their program objectives and populations served, each of these programs recognized the need for a working facility to serve as a physical foundation for a "sense of community," and from which to provide needed services that invest in local residents and develop local opportunity.

Regardless of one's opinion regarding the people-place debate, all programs engage the issue in some manner. Above I discussed a few examples of programs making a clear effort to focus on the development of people and place simultaneously. I am sure there are countless examples of other programs doing the same, utilizing similar or different strategies. Perhaps this would make a good topic for future discussion on the *Wanted* LISTSERV.



pew partnership survey

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problem. Affordable health care was a sufficiently serious problem for 39% of respondents. Too many unsupervised children and teenagers; not enough affordable care for the elderly; a decline in moral values; not enough affordable housing; and teenage pregnancies were rated as serious or very serious by at least 30% of those surveyed.

Community Problem Solvers

When asked to rank 15 problem solvers in their community, 58% rated local police departments as crucial or important problem solvers. Fifty-six percent say local churches, mosques, and synagogues are crucial or important to problem solving. Nonprofit organizations received strong votes of confidence—53% cited them as important or crucial to the solution of community problems.

Collaboration

Americans recognize that tough problems require working together. It was agreed by 58% of Americans that community problems are too big for individuals to grapple with alone. Almost 90% said that working together with others to solve problems achieves better results in the long run.

Opportunities

While Americans are involved in their communities, the survey pointed to several barriers that prevent more citizens from getting involved. In addition to basic time constraints, many respondents (41%) just don't know how to get involved, who to call, or where they should go. Younger Americans, while likely to participate in a community or neighborhood meeting, are less likely to report having been regularly active in some type of community group or club.

SOLUTION

The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative: Helping Kids Through School

By Mark Pendas

Center for Urban Policy Research

Since its founding in 1987, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC) has been actively confronting the growing needs of the students coming through the K-12 public school system in Cincinnati, Ohio.

With an increasing number of the students entering the Cincinnati Public School system from homes with historically low educational attainment, low incomes, and high unemployment rates, and with an increasing number of these students leaving school unprepared to enter the workforce or continue on to college, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative recognized the need to invest in the development of its youth. Starting with the goal of getting all youth through high school with the "training, knowledge, work habits and motivation" to successfully participate in society, it now operates eleven different programs supplying a full variety of services.

CYC's efforts range from leadership and awards programs to job training and college preparation, and all have had a considerable degree of success, as graduation numbers, training levels, and percentages of graduates either working or enrolled in college have all increased. For the *Wanted* program CYC has chosen to focus specifically on the mentoring aspect of three of its programs—the Taft Career Academic Program (T-Cap), the Educational Talent Search (ETS), and the Mentoring and Tutoring Program—in order to gain a better understanding of the best types and overall effectiveness of mentoring efforts.

The T-Cap is a school-to-work program that begins with entering high school students, providing career training, paid internships and other similar services to participating students through all four years of high school. The Educational Talent Search (ETS) program takes a different approach by targeting students from low income homes as early as seventh or eighth grade in order to provide the support (study-skills workshops, guidance counseling, academic field trips) needed to help these students progress through high school and on to college. The Mentoring and Tutoring Program seeks to connect students with positive role models in order to help increase the percentage of students graduating from high school.

Each of these programs is unique in terms of its approach to addressing the needs of Cincinnati youth, yet common to all CYC programs is a consistent focus on helping students gain the educational and professional skills they need by connecting them to the Cincinnati community and mobilizing the resources of that community to invest in its youth. CYC hopes that participation in the *Wanted* program will allow it to determine its most effective strategies and gain the exposure and recognition needed to achieve its mission of bringing together "people, institutions and other community resources for the purpose of helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior necessary for full and responsible participation in society."

For more information please see the CYC web site:
www.cycyouth.org.

News & Announcements: *Wanted* Programs on the Move

Four Announcements from Jacksonville's *Bridge*

First, the Bridge is pleased to announce the addition of a new Associate Director staff position. Dr. Shannon Perry began working August 28. She is assisting in the data collection and tracking for the Pew Evaluation in addition to other responsibilities. The addition of Dr. Perry to the Management team is a welcome resource and strength.

Second, as Bridge Programs have expanded services, staff, and resources, another building project is underway that will enhance the neighborhood. The campus on Pearl Street is beginning \$580,000 in renovations to improve the safety, attractiveness, and handicap accessibility of the old Springfield neighborhood houses that house our programs.

Third, the Bridge "Straight Talk" Program for youth funded by the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation will be featured on ESPN "More Than a Game" on March 14. Over 150 youth have participated in the sexuality education curriculum and 15 have completed Peer Training in this strategy for teen pregnancy prevention. Seven of the "Peer Educators" will attend the Ryan White Conference in Denver February 16-20 with the Coordinator, Mindy Middleton.

And, finally, fifteen sixth and seventh grade youth from the Bridge Connection I Program were selected for "Take Stock in Children" full four year college scholarships. To receive the scholarships, the youth must maintain a "C" average and good attendance through high school. In addition, The Bridge Scholarship Program awarded nine scholarships to Bridge graduates. International Bridge Connections -during the summer two 11 year old Bridge youth were selected to attend Children's International Summer Village Camps in Norway and Knoxville, TN.

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HandMade in America

In partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission, HandMade in America has established a new grant program for participants in its Small Towns Revitalization Program. Each of the 11 communities participating in the Small Towns Program can apply for up to \$10,000 in funding for revitalization and preservation projects. In December, the Board of Directors of the HandMade Community Development Corporation awarded over \$80,000 in grant funds for projects ranging from courthouse renovation to greenway construction to historic district markers. The grants program not only helps give communities the necessary resources to complete a project but is intended as a teaching tool, according to Pat Cabe, director of the HandMade CDC. "We are very grateful to the Appalachian Regional Commission for providing the funding for this program," she said. "Not only will it help to complete needed revitalization and community improvement projects throughout western North Carolina, but it will serve as a teaching tool to help volunteers learn to manage grants and projects."

Solutions for America is a publication of the
Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) at Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey,
in association with the Pew Partnership.

Submissions for the next issue must
be received by May 15, 2001.

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