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# SOLUTIONS FOR AMERICA

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

May 2000

## June Meeting Update

Jacqueline Dugery

*Pew Partnership*

The Pew Partnership has found that facilitating opportunities for practitioners to meet face-to-face is a key component of program success. Regular National Meetings of the *Wanted: Solutions for America* (*Wanted*) project will provide such opportunities for participants from the nineteen project sites. Here are a few details about the meetings in general and an update on the June meeting.

### It's All About Connections

*Wanted* meetings are designed to connect site staff and researchers with information and individuals that can help increase the impact of each organization's work and research. Meetings also help participants to "connect the dots" between the various *Wanted* issue areas. Beginning with "Healthy Children and Families" in June, the meetings will focus on the broad scope of issues addressed by the nineteen project sites. Future meetings will include sessions on economic development and housing, community development, jobs, and technology. Finally, through inclusion of community partners, meetings provide opportunities to build a constituency for each organization's work and to encourage wider dissemination of the *Wanted* solutions in their communities.

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*Baltimore's Inner Harbor*

## *Wanted* Researchers Connect in Baltimore

Sean DiGiovanna

*CUPR*

On Friday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, the *Wanted: Solutions for America* research team met in Baltimore, Maryland for a full day of discussion and strategic planning. The Center for Urban Policy Research set the agenda as the local researchers from all nineteen *Wanted* sites joined the Pew Partnership in analyzing the research effort to date and setting goals for the future.

The meeting started on a positive note as CUPR reported that all the *Wanted* sites met their target dates for submitting their **Baseline Reports** and **Action Plans**. The Baseline Reports are important documents as they detail the characteristics of the *Wanted* programs at the beginning of the evaluation. As the local researchers work with the sites and gather data over the next year and a half, the findings of the research team will be compared with the Baseline Reports to help determine the level of the programs' success.

The Action Plans detail the work the local researchers and program staff have set out to complete over the evaluation period. Included in these documents is a summary of research questions to be addressed, methods to be used and data to be collected.

### Important Dates

<b>June 2-3, 2000</b>	Participant Meeting in Washington, DC. <i>Theme: Families &amp; Children</i>
<b>June 30, 2000</b>	First interim reports due from local researchers
<b>August 31, 2000</b>	First interim report due from CUPR

## June Meeting

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The second national meeting will be held June 2-4 in Washington, D.C. The theme is “Healthy Children and Families.” We will begin the meeting with a keynote address by Lisbeth Schorr, *Wanted* advisory board member and author of *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*. Saturday’s session will begin with an address by Ralph Smith, vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The four seminars scheduled for Saturday will focus on community safety; school, family, and community partnerships; youth employment and job training; and recent research by The Urban Institute on how community organizations and institutions strengthen families. (Watch for more details, including a brief poll on these four topics, in the next few weeks.) There will also be time to meet with your research team and staff from the Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University (CUPR).

Many thanks to Kathy Hegarty, MY TURN; Davy Parrish, The Bridge of Northeast Florida; and Bob Turner, Children’s Aid Society, for their guidance and excellent suggestions regarding this meeting. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions about these meetings. See you in June!

## Baltimore

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At the meeting, it was agreed that the local researchers would consult the *Wanted* sites in developing detailed timelines for the evaluation period. CUPR committed to preparing written responses to all the Baseline Reports and Action Plans within three weeks of the meeting.

In the afternoon, the researchers broke out into smaller groups to discuss common community development issues including community health, youth, economic development, community development, and community infrastructure. Within each group, the local researchers discussed the common approaches and challenges to conducting evaluations of programs within the issue area. The researchers resolved to continue discussion over the *Wanted* electronic mailing list, and to exchange any research instruments and data sources they came across.

The day ended with a strategy session on the future of the *Wanted* evaluation. The local researchers offered CUPR many excellent suggestions. Through this meeting and the continued collaboration via telephone and e-mail, the *Wanted* research team is becoming a true community of scholars.

## SOLUTION

### Children’s Aid Society The Milbank/Carmel Hill Project Stephen Finn

The Milbank/Carmel Hill Project is making a difference for a city block in one of New York City’s poorest neighborhoods. The Children’s Aid Society (CAS) established the Carmel Hill Project in 1992 with a long-term funding commitment from Bill Ruane, a private donor. The program targets one city block on 118<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City’s Central Harlem neighborhood and uses long-term community organizing to develop trusting relationships with neighborhood residents. A three-person social work staff and collaboration with city agencies, hospitals, and other providers enables the project to address residents’ needs, including better housing, accessible health and social services, and improved education for their children.

In only a few short years, the project has made a significant difference. When the Carmel Hill Project was initiated, 118<sup>th</sup> Street was burdened with abandoned housing and substantial deterioration of city-owned properties. Carmel Hill applied a housing advocacy strategy to turn things around. Buildings were rehabilitated and tenant associations were organized to improve communication among residents and ensure upkeep of the buildings.

CAS’s Milbank Center, located on the block, houses a community health clinic, an after-school program, a summer camp, GED preparation, and mental health counseling services. The Carmel Hill staff also observed that many of the neighborhood children, who attended twenty six schools at various locations in the city, were not performing well academically. The staff arranged for 78 children to receive scholarships to attend St. Paul’s School, which is located near the neighborhood. Project staff work closely with families and teachers to monitor each child’s academic progress and to promote greater family involvement in the child’s education.

“The formula for our success,” says Ann Hamm, Carmel Hill project director, “has been to begin with outreach to assess the needs of clients. We look at each household individually, observing and listening intently, then working with them to resolve their issues. Our focus has always been to empower the clients, which includes building self-confidence and providing guidance. The main ingredient of our success can be attributed to the time and patience we give our families.”

*Wanted: Solutions for America* will help Carmel Hill document its success and improve its service delivery. Researchers Helene Clark, Katie Cumiskey, and Rob Engle will work closely with CAS to identify the most effective mechanisms through which Carmel Hill improves the lives of residents—individuals and families. In the meantime, 118<sup>th</sup> Street continues to show signs of growth. A recently formed block association works with the local police precinct to improve public safety and with the city’s Operation Green Thumb to create more usable open space. New housing will be made available with the construction of town houses for families and a senior citizen apartment building. As a result of the program’s success, CAS plans to expand its services to another neighborhood block.

For more information on the Carmel Hill Project, please visit CAS’ Web site at <http://www.childrensaidsociety.org>.

# COPC Puts CUPR in the Community

**Stephen Finn**  
CUPR

*Wanted: Solutions for America* is only one of many community development projects undertaken by the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR). One project that we are particularly proud of is CUPR's Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC), which is funded by a three year grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Through COPC, CUPR is providing technical assistance to five community-based organizations (CBOs) in West Side Park—an economically distressed neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey. West Side Park was a focal point of civil disorders in the 1960s, and the area experienced three subsequent decades of disinvestment and neglect. The neighborhood, guided by a Community Action Plan developed by the organizations and approved by the state, is now experiencing a resurgence.

Community Action Plan objectives focus on affordable housing, health services, youth development, and economic development. Robert Lake and Stephen Finn of CUPR work closely with the directors and staff of the community groups to determine how faculty, student, and technological resources can be allocated to help achieve the plan's objectives. Additional units of Rutgers University are collaborating on the project as well, including the Newark Center for Families and Communities, an interdisciplinary outreach center that offers students service learning opportunities.

The COPC partnership has already resulted in a number of important accomplishments. An inventory of more than 3500 land parcels in the 130-block neighborhood identified every house, commercial building, and vacant lot and noted the condition and characteristics of each. The data was integrated with mapping software, enabling the organizations to display attributes of the neighborhood (e.g., the organizations can create maps that show the locations of abandoned housing). Through the digital camera project, a COPC activity that teaches computer and writing skills, high school students are recording the history of their neighborhood. The teenagers, tutored by Rutgers students, take pictures of interesting neighborhood sites and upload these photos to a Web site they developed. Next, these high school students research historical background on the sites, interview residents, and write these histories on the computer. COPC also helped the CBOs set up a computer lab network, developed an operating manual for a neighborhood youth council, and created a resource directory on homeownership counseling. Future COPC work will include

development of a health clinic at one of the CBOs, creation of an after-school program, and securing funds to hire a merchant organizer.

COPC provides some valuable lessons on university and community collaboration that may be applicable for *Wanted* participants. Researchers and community staff need to maintain flexibility in their collaborations. Priorities may change as new information is gathered and more discussion takes place on strategies to resolve community problems or organizational issues, or as other needs become more apparent or contingencies arise (e.g., the availability of new funding or the issuance of government mandates). The generation of new information about neighborhood data and best practices also presents a challenge to CBOs: How will CBOs develop the capacity to translate this information into new programs or revised ways of serving clients? It is likely that CBOs will need to increase staff capacity. In order to support staffing, COPC placed Rutgers students with the organizations. The university units are also helping the CBOs find new sources of funding for additional staff. The funding strategies include collaboration of the CBOs on grant proposals and networking with banks and foundations on the COPC advisory board.

For more information on COPC and the West Side Park neighborhood, please visit the RCOPC Web site at <http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/rvopc/>

## Human Capital Development Research Has *Wanted* Value

**Donita Devance-Manzini**  
CUPR

In an era of rapidly changing economic conditions and public policy, community development leaders must be more prepared than ever to manage their growing organizations effectively and to provide leadership in community advocacy. Many of the issues relate to the professionalization of community development employment—how community organizations become more “businesslike” and efficient. Of particular concern is the ability of the community development field to attract and retain talented individuals who are committed to CDC work. In order to meet this challenge, the community development field must promote attractive career paths, improve the management and leadership abilities of CDC staff; increase minority representation and capture the interest of young people and raise the profile of CDC work and employment nationally.

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## SOLUTION

### Community Renewal, 'HandMade' Small Towns Revitalization Project

Sean DiGiovanna

In Western North Carolina, a group of eleven rural communities are working to promote civic and economic health. By undertaking a series of steps including asset identification and strategic planning, these towns are transforming their beleaguered main streets into vibrant centers of community development. This work is made possible by HandMade in America, a community development foundation that sponsors projects throughout twenty-three counties in Western North Carolina.

The Small Towns Revitalization Project has three principal objectives. First, the program is designed to help communities prepare and implement strategies for the economic revitalization of town centers. Second, through creating and implementing their strategic plans, community residents build skills and relationships that lead to increased community capacity. Finally, by encouraging dialogue and cooperation among participating towns, HandMade hopes to promote regional identity and cohesion.

"The key to the program's success is local motivation and commitment," reports Patricia Cabe, Director of Community Development for HandMade. "While we can offer resources and technical assistance, it is the work of community residents themselves that truly makes the difference. It is truly remarkable to see the brilliant ideas these communities have generated when given a little help and encouragement."

The towns participating in Small Town Revitalization (STR) must first undertake a methodical and comprehensive assessment of their community's assets and potential. Towns then create and adopt strategic development plans and forge the key partnerships needed to bring about lasting change. The funds to support these efforts come from a variety of sources including Kathleen Price Bryan Family Fund, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the North Carolina Division of Community Assistance, as well as others. In addition, participating towns are expected to raise matching funds for a portion of the support.

For the *Wanted: Solutions for America* evaluation, HandMade is working with Leslie Anderson, Margaret Carlson and Anne Davidson, all from the University of North Carolina's Institute of Government. For the evaluation, the researchers will focus on the six communities that began participation with STR in 1996-97 – Andrews, Bakersville, Chimney Rock, Mars Hills, Robbinsville and West Jefferson.

To learn more about Handmade in America and the Small Town Revitalization Project, visit the Web site at <http://www.wncrafts.org/>

### Human Capital

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In fall 1999, CUPR researchers began work on a two-year contract to assess the Human Capital Development Initiative (HCDDI). HCDDI is a national grant-making program designed to address four human capital issues: recruitment, education and training, career development, and compensation and human resource management in the community development field. The National Congress of Community Economic Development (NCCED) administers the program. CUPR's role is to document HCDDI's national and local accomplishments, to capture and disseminate the lessons learned, and to assist in developing future human capital development policies and strategies. CUPR researchers will develop case studies that explore the promising practices and lessons learned from the pilot programs and from the Targeted Implementation Plan, NCCED's strategy to advance the human capital agenda nationally.

HCDDI provides grants to ten collaboratives for pilot programs in 13 cities. The initiative, begun in 1997, provided funding for the collaboratives to develop programs to address locally defined human capital needs in the four target areas. The collaboratives began to implement a diverse set of programs in July 1998.

The lessons learned from HCDDI could prove valuable to *Wanted's* diverse projects in a number of ways. HCDDI collaboratives work to develop and test methods that challenge and strengthen the workforce—leaders, staff, and volunteers—as well as to attract and retain talented individuals to the field. In doing so they discover first-hand the challenges, pitfalls, and desirable paths important to building organizational capacity.

Among the programs offered by the collaboratives are internship and fellowship models; career counseling and personal development strategies; innovative career-marketing strategies; skill development and certification programs; leadership recruitment and skill development; improved information systems; compensation and human resource practice reviews; outreach to youth, undergraduates, and mid-career professionals in related institutions; board and volunteer recruitment and training; and cultural training.

As with other community and non-profit organizations an important component of increasing the human capital capacity is to raise the national profile of this important work. By focusing on these valuable issues, HCDDI may help others to develop effective programs that meet the important challenges and avoid the burnout faced by these organizations.

## SOLUTION

### Beautiful SMILES Dental Health for Arlington

Sean DiGiovanna

Children in Tarrant County, Texas have been given a reason to smile. Through the work of Dental Health for Arlington (DHA), students have received dental screenings, restorative care, lessons in dental hygiene and preventative care including the sealing of healthy molars. The program, Sealing Molars Improves the Life of Every Student or SMILES, began in 1994 and service is delivered in school by volunteer dentists and hygienists.

In 1991, United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County asked the Junior League of Arlington (JLA) to help with a needs assessment to be conducted in Arlington. One of the top four needs identified in Arlington and Southeast Tarrant County was free or low cost dental care. The survey revealed that Arlington residents were waiting seven months to be seen by a county dental program 25 miles away. Transportation to the clinic was a problem for many as neither Arlington nor Tarrant County has a public transportation service. Individuals with dental emergencies often waited up to seven weeks to be seen. As a result, a coalition of community organizations formed Dental Health Arlington, which was incorporated in 1992.

In April of 1993, DHA opened the Allan Saxe Dental Clinic. During the first year of clinic operation, volunteer dentists treated patients of all ages and ethnic groups. Dentists encountered rampant decay in the mouths of the children. In an effort to stop the cycle of significant oral health problems, a preventative dental program was created for low-income children. In Spring 1994, DHA piloted the SMILES program in two local disadvantaged elementary schools.

Since then, SMILES has achieved a great deal of success. In its six years of operation, SMILES has conducted almost 20,000 screenings and has provided almost 8,000 students with sealed molars. "DHA and SMILES are superb examples of what a community can do when it pulls together to attack a significant problem," says Sally Hopper, Executive Director of DHA. "Looking to the future, we believe this program can successfully be expanded and can serve as a model to other communities with similar challenges."

Through its *Wanted: Solutions for America* evaluation, DHA hopes to document the program's success and to promote the program as a model for replication. Working with Carolyn Cason, University of Texas at Arlington School of Nursing, DHA hopes to gain some insight into expanding SMILES to include more children, and to identify future sources of funding and community support to ensure the program's sustainability over the long term.

Visit the DHA Web site, <http://www.star-telegram.com/homes/dha>, for more information on the SMILES program.

## News & Announcements

Sabrina McCants and Davy Parrish of **The Bridge of Northeast Florida** attended the National School Age Care Alliance Conference April 13-15 in Pittsburgh, PA. The purpose was to learn about NSACA standards for Quality School Age Care and about the supports a program needs to meet the standards. NSACA has established a national accreditation program and The Bridge is interested in accreditation. Over 1,100 provider's staff from programs around the country attended the conference.



**The Region Nine Healthy Communities Network (Mankato, Minnesota)** received a commendation from Governor Jesse Ventura on April 28. The 2000 Partnership Minnesota Cooperative Public Services Award was presented at the 12th Annual Partnership Minnesota Conference. Region 9 Coalitions honored include: Janesville, Waldorf, Pemberton, (JWP) T.E.A.M. Task Force; Le Sueur - Henderson Healthy Communities, Inc.; Madelia Coalition for Healthy Life Choices; Mankato Area Healthy Youth; Maple River Community Network; Martin County Networking; Montgomery SAFE; New Ulm Voices of Change; St. Peter Healthy Community Alliance; United South Central One Healthy Community; Waseca Healthy Community-Healthy Kids; and Waterville-Elysian- Morristown.



**Boston Main Streets** was on a national stage recently as over 1500 people from across the country gathered in Boston for *National Town Meeting on Main Street 2000* (April 2-5). The National Trust for Historic Preservation selected Boston to host this annual conference in conjunction with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Main Street program, and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first urban program in the nation – Boston Main Streets. Boston hosted the most successful National Town Meeting ever, setting a record for attendance. Citizens Bank was the official corporate sponsor of the conference, and contributed \$50,000 in support of the event.

At the event, Boston Main Streets unveiled a new publication, "Beyond Baked Beans: Discover Boston Main Streets." This colorful guidebook about each of the 19 Main Streets districts includes maps, directions, places of interest, types of restaurants, and other details about the neighborhoods. The guidebook is designed to encourage both residents and visitors to explore Boston's neighborhoods beyond downtown, and served as an opportunity for conference attendees who were unable to attend the scheduled tours a way to visit the Boston Main Streets neighborhoods. "Beyond Baked Beans: Discover Boston Main Streets" is a free publication of the city of Boston, and will continue to be available by calling 617.635.2000.

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The **Pew Partnership** welcomes Sharon Siler, as Administrative and Communications Assistant. Sharon has a background in human resources management and is a native of Charlottesville, Virginia.



The **Pew Partnership**, **CUPR** and all the *Wanted* participants extend a warm welcome to Leslie and Rick Kirkwood of Urban Dynamics Corporation. The Kirkwoods are the new local research team for **Jacksonville Community Council Inc.** Jeffrey Will and Tim Cheney of the Northeast Florida Center for Community Initiatives will continue as the local research team for **The Bridge of Northeast Florida**.



Our thoughts are with the communities of Arlington, Texas and Shreveport, Louisiana – both homes to *Wanted* programs – which experienced destructive tornadoes in March and April. Thankfully, both **Dental Health Arlington** and **Shreveport Community Renewal** were not severely affected by the storms, although it will take some time for the communities to rebuild.

### Workshop Announcement

**Beyond Shelter** (Los Angeles) will conduct two national workshops on its “Housing First” methodology. The “Housing First” approach advocates for the immediate relocation of homeless families into permanent housing and then provides up to one year of home-based case management services *after the move* to help families achieve improved social and economic well being.

- July 12, 2000: 1 day INSTITUTE at National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference, Washington, DC.
- October 19 & 20, 2000: 2 day TA WORKSHOP Wilshire Grand Hotel, Los Angeles California.

For information, please call 213/252-0772 ext. 222 or visit <http://www.beyondshelter.org>

***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.

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Questions, comments, submissions and requests for information should be directed to:

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