2012

The Library Partnership as a Neighborhood Resource Center: A Research Chronicle

Mary Kay Falconer, Ph.D.
Senior Evaluator
Caitlin Murphy, M.S.W., M.P.A.
Research Assistant
Phyllis E.W. Stolc
Research Intern
Research, Evaluation and Systems

September 20, 2012

Acknowledgements

This chronicle showcasing the Library Partnership in Gainesville, Florida, was developed with the assistance of a team of social service practitioners, program directors and coordinators, and evaluators. The contributions of those at the local site included participation in interviews conducted by the evaluators, facilitation of the evaluators' visit to the center, and the retrieval of information about the center's history, mission, programs, and performance. We would like to express our appreciation to all of the individuals listed below for their investment of time and effort.

- Pebbles Edelman, Senior Vice President of Clinical and Community Services, Partnership for Strong Families
- Katie Fields, SWAG Family Resource Center Manager, Partnership for Strong Families
- Carressa Hutchinson, Library Partnership Resource Center Manager, Partnership for Strong Families
- Angelica Suarez, Library Partnership Family Support Facilitator, Partnership for Strong Families
- Anita Jenkins, Library Manager at the Library Partnership
- Mona Gil de Gibaja, Past Project Consultant for Partnership for Strong Families

The evaluation team that produced the chronicle with the assistance of those listed above included Mary Kay Falconer, Ph.D., Senior Evaluator, Caitlin Murphy, M.S.W., M.P.A., Research Assistant, Phyllis E.W. Stolc, M.A., Student Intern, and Terry Rhodes, D. Min., Director of Research, Evaluation and Systems at the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida. The leadership and guidance provided by Peter Pecora and Paul DiLorenzo at Casey Family Programs also ensured that the chronicles met their standards for a high quality product that will be useful for many communities throughout the nation.

The Library Partnership as a Neighborhood Resource Center: A Research Chronicle

Introduction

The community partnership approach to addressing a wide variety of needs among families at risk of economic, social, and emotional challenges has been underway in the Library Partnership (LP) in Gainesville, Florida. This chronicle begins by explaining the theory behind this community approach, then provides an overview of several primary features of the LP center. Included in this overview is a description of the center's purpose, the programs and services offered at and through the center, its organizational structure and governing or advisory bodies, participation and performance expectations, and funding or other resources that have contributed to the establishment and growth of the center. The chronicle highlights several successes that have been part of the center's development. As part of the sharing of success, select programs and activities that were particularly well received among center participants as well as the broader community are identified. Some of these highlights capture innovative and creative achievements. The chronicle ends with challenges that have been addressed, challenges that remain, and lessons learned.

The LP represents one of several types of community partnerships that have been supported by Casey Family Programs. Casey has committed to developing these kinds of strategic collaborations as part of its Communities of Hope, an initiative informed by those who have supported families in child welfare by improving relationships within neighborhoods and communities (e.g., Bowie, 2011; Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Casey Family Programs advocates for this approach as a model of change. As stated in their recent document *Building Communities of Hope* regarding those who work in the child welfare arena:

> Their collective wisdom has taught us that we cannot be satisfied simply to move children out of harm's way, from an unsafe home into a safer one. Instead, we must extend our hands and guide children into a place where hope prevails and a community of caring adults surrounds them (Casey Family Programs, 2012, p. 7).

Theory of Change in Community Centers

Community-based organizations serving people within neighborhoods and defined geographic areas are not new, but community centers have emerged more recently as an innovative model of service delivery and social change. A community center can draw from several theories of change important in improving child welfare and the well-being of families within communities (Daro & Dodge, 2009; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). A community center can be an agent of positive social change and a source of empowerment and hope (Maton, 2008).

A community center fosters relationship-building among community members and agencies. Multiple generations can be served and brought together to help and learn from each other (Henkin, Holmes, Walter, Greenberg, & Schwarz, 2005). The participation of multiple generations allows the emergence of intergenerational strategies that can become effective interventions to address many challenges facing at-risk families.

Community centers have the opportunity to join with different program partners from the nearby and larger community to coordinate services. Participating agencies with resources can meet a wide range of needs and can work to coordinate and reinforce desired outcomes. The availability of computer technology is an example of a service that has far-reaching impacts through improving access to information and skills that can enhance employability. Programs that include community technology centers have been found to contribute to positive youth development by allowing youth to share their stories and expand their networks (London, Pastor, Servon, Rosner, & Wallace, 2010).

Community centers are one form of place-based collaborative partnerships. Ownership of, pride in, and familiarity with places can increase civic interaction. Through positive interaction, problems can be resolved and amenities can be brought into the place (Semenza & March, 2009). Services at a community center can be located where their acceptance and use can be the greatest. Receptivity to both information and services are improved when a community center allows open and convenient access to culturally sensitive and effective services and programs.

The current community center movement that interfaces with child welfare agencies has been especially promising because more policy-makers and agency leaders are recognizing the limitations of the traditional helping approaches that focus on families one at a time. Based on the social ecological theory in which children and family units are affected by layers of influences outside of the individual and family, inclusion of social institutions and support systems in a family's socioeconomic environment (neighborhood and community) are important in prevention efforts. Rather than continuing the traditional route of using a single intervention in the home, community strategies can provide an array of formal and informal services and resources to impoverished areas, creating an environment that facilitates a parent's ability to do the right thing and a cultural context for positive youth development (Daro & Dodge, 2009). This theoretical framework also asserts that at-risk families and at-risk neighborhoods must be strengthened together to create safe and supportive communities.

The community partnership approach within the child welfare arena also adheres to the premise that no single factor is responsible for child abuse and neglect. As such, there is not just one outside agency or program that can safeguard children (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2007). Therefore, the partnership of multiple organizations and institutions is necessary in order to adequately address the diverse needs of different families in any prevention effort. Connecting at-risk families to a variety of easily accessible resources will not only strengthen those families who seek services, but will also increase protective factors of the vulnerable community at large. Programs that work to improve protective factors, including parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting/child development, concrete support in times of needs, and social/emotional competence of children are particularly effective (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2007). When families are supported by their community and are able to become more self-sufficient on their own, their level of stress is decreased, incidences of child abuse and neglect are reduced, as are the number of children entering foster care. Neighborhood centers that make networks of preventive services and family support available early, and that engage residents to protect and nurture themselves, have proven to be a successful community-based model of addressing the prevention and reoccurrence of child abuse and neglect.

With appropriate and effective program partners, a community center can be a powerful approach that encompasses a constellation of features for preventing child maltreatment. These features include:

> …recognizing and strengthening protective factors, building social networks, maintaining awareness of family and community contexts, integrating professionals and natural helpers into the everyday lives of families, intensifying system approaches by stepping outside of traditional service silos and partnerships, and exploring new ways of integrating services and aspects of the child welfare system (Stagner & Lansing, 2009, p. 31).

History of the Library Partnership

Planning for the Library Partnership (LP) began in 2007. At that time, the concept emerged as a way to reduce the number of children entering foster care with Partnership for Strong Families (PSF), the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), and Casey Families Programs as the key participants on the planning team. A first step in the development of the center concept included identifying *hotspots* or zip codes with the highest rates of child abuse and neglect. By June 2008, community partners were engaged by PSF to gather input on the location of the center. One of the community partners was the Alachua County Library District (ACLD), which was considering opening a library branch in the same community. A collaboration of PSF and the ACLD became the perfect combination for outreach and service provision to residents in this high-risk area. Families in need of social services could enter the LP center without fear of the traditional stigma of being seen entering a social services facility and, while there, they could inquire about ways their family needs could be addressed.

Identifying the location of the center included the consideration of several factors, including:

1) The zip code with the highest rate of child abuse and neglect
2) The presence of other important neighborhood resources, such as a public elementary school
3) The absence of other resources needed in the area, such as a public library

After many meetings with partners and residents in the neighborhood targeted for participating and receiving services at the center, the doors of the LP opened in July 2009. The time frame for opening the center doors was ambitious and shorter than expected, a positive reflection on those who invested their time and commitment to this endeavor.

Purpose and Goal of the Library Partnership

The Library Partnership (LP) "is a place where families can go to obtain the services they need to increase their strength and independence" (Library Partnership, n.d.). The facility operates as a branch of the Alachua County Library and a resource center where families can receive services from more than 40 program partners. The purpose and goal of the LP is stated this way:

> The Library Partnership is a family and community friendly center where the overall goal is to strengthen the northeast [Gainesville] community by supporting the adults and children who live there by: offering services that provide children a healthy start both physically and emotionally, offering parent activities to help parents learn the importance of early interaction with their children as well as support efforts toward self sufficiency, and offering a place where families and other community members can come together to share, support each other and learn about and benefit from their community's resources (Library Partnership, 2011).

Programs and Services Available at the Library Partnership

The large number of programs and types of services available to patrons of the Library Partnership (LP) reflects the wide community network that coordinates with and supports the center's activities. Three major categories of programs are available through the center. As stated in the LP literature, these categories and corresponding descriptions are as follows:

1) Family Support and Child Development – Family activities and services requested by the families, which may include but are not limited to mentoring, parenting classes, tutoring, Girl Scouts, and peer support.
2) Health and Safety – Referrals to health services, health and medical resources for children and adults at the center, and prevention and wellness education.
3) Self-Sufficiency – Concrete help for immediate needs with an emphasis on these assists being geared to long-term independence. Examples are GED assistance, job skill training, employability counseling, housing assistance, transportation assistance, management of family and household budgets, and a clothing closet.
    a. Legal Assistance – Referrals to a local, non-profit organization that provides free civil legal services to eligible clients, notary services, and tax assistance.
    b. Computer Technology – Use of computers for job searches, applying for jobs or unemployment benefits, and other basic computer usage needs.

In addition, the group rooms at the center are available for community partners to reserve and the LP encourages their use for purposes that support the overall mission. For instance, the conference room is used several times per month for Partnership for Strong Families to hold family team conferences with families involved in the child welfare system, staff, and their natural supports to meet in a neutral location.

A more complete listing of programs and services offered at the LP by category is contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Programs and Services by Category at the Library Partnership

Family Support/Child Development	Health & Safety	Self-Sufficiency	Legal Assistance	Technology
• Preschool Story Time • Mentoring • Parenting Skills • Group/Individual Stress Management • Tutoring: Child • Tutoring: Adult • Teen Book Discussions • Teen Acting Classes	• Child Birth Education • Counseling • Dentist Referral • Doctor Referral • Family Planning • Health Information • Insurance • Medicaid Sign-Up • Quit Smoking Help	• Budgeting Classes and Assistance • Child Care • Child Support Information • Clothing Closet • Credit Repair/Debt Reduction • Employability Workshop	• Legal Assistance • Notary • Tax Assistance	• Computer Use • Computer Classes • Fax Services

Family Support/Child Development	Health & Safety	Self-Sufficiency	Legal Assistance	Technology
• Early Childhood Learning and Education	• Special Needs Health Services (Ages 0-21) • Vision Care • Exercise and Nutrition • Child Birth Education • Prenatal Service	• Disability Benefit Information • Financial Literacy Workshop • Finding Employment • Job Fair and Career Day • Job Board • Food • Furniture • GED & College Information • Utilities • Holiday Assistance • Housing Assistance • Phone Assistance • Resumes, Interviewing • Dress for Success • Workplace Behavior • Job Makeover • Transportation		

In addition to the programs and services displayed in Table 1, the LP highlights several programs or events in their outreach literature. These programs and brief descriptions of what they offer are listed below:

- Fight for Your Money is a financial literacy course that teaches participants how to budget and manage limited resources.
- Job Fair and Career Day is a newer program that provides assistance with employment. Job fairs are held at the LP and a job board posts employment opportunities. The LP staff provide assistance with resume preparation, job search skills, and interview techniques. Assistance has also included connecting individuals to employment opportunities in the community.
- F.I.R.S.T. (Families Involved in Reaching Success Together) is a parenting support and peer connection program that was piloted in 2011. The program goes for six weeks and after

completing the course, parents are eligible for a variety of incentives, including car seats and educational toys for their children.

- Juneteenth is an event during the month of June that commemorates the ending of slavery. Musical acts participate as part of the LP Idol Contest. Food and fellowship are also important aspects of this event. This event was located at the LP over the past two years but will rotate to another location in the community next year.
- Teachers Open House is a set time of the year for the teachers, staff, and administration of the local schools within the LP's service area to come and learn about the LP and its services and programs that are available to the children and families they may interface with who could benefit from services offered.
- Health Fair is a way to educate and engage families to become more proactive about the health choices they make for their family.
- Health Corner is a way to privately provide families with healthy tips that will help them improve their life style and address issues that arise due to poor health choices. They are able to obtain information they may need without discussing their health concerns with anyone. Topics range from sexually transmitted infections, child abuse and neglect, heart care, dental care, and more.
- Children's Educational Programming (Girls Tea Party, Miracle Science, B-Magic Show, etc.) is a fun and creative way to educate children with math, science, magic, social development, and etiquette.
- Job Makeover is a way to teach patrons the appropriate etiquette for job interviews, resume writing, dressing for success, and how to get the most out of Internet job searches.

For programming purposes, the PSF and ACLD engage in joint scheduling of all programs. This coordination allows both major partners operating the LP to ensure efficient and maximum use of space, minimal or no overlap of programs that serve similar target populations, and adequate coverage of needed services for the residents in the neighborhood and wider community. Program calendars that incorporate the programs sponsored or administered by PSF and programs administered by the ACLD are prepared in advance for wide distribution to the center visitors and others. Appendix A has an example of a combined program/event calendar.

In order to encourage participation in programs offered at the LP, incentives have been used. One example is the Fight for Your Money program, which includes a $100 payment toward participants' utility bills. Other incentives include items needed for children, such as a car seat and educational toys. Another new program with an incentive is called the My F.I.R.S.T. Nest Egg Program and is connected to two other programs highlighted above, F.I.R.S.T. and Fight for Your Money. My F.I.R.S.T. Nest Egg gives parents the opportunity to create a savings account for their child's future education-related expenses while learning important parenting and financial planning skills. With the $10 monthly contribution made by the parents and the contributions made by the program's sponsor, the Community Foundation of North Central Florida, families can earn up to $1060 within the first year for their child's future educational expenses. Incentives are almost entirely grant-funded; they are built into grant proposals as part of the overall program and have proven successful in motivating participants.

Organizational Structure and Network of Partners

At the Library Partnership (LP), the organizational structure brings together two public agencies, Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) and the Alachua County Library District (ACLD). PSF is the community-based care organization for child welfare in 13 north central Florida counties, including

Alachua County. The senior vice president for Clinical and Community Services in PSF is the staff member with the primary responsibility for overseeing the operation and performance of the resource center. There is also a resource center manager and a family support facilitator assigned to the LP that are funded by PSF with the assistance of Casey Family Programs. The ACLD has two administrative positions and four additional staff assigned to oversee the LP. The assistant manager of the Public Services Division is the ACLD staff member with primary responsibility for overseeing the operation and performances of library services. There is also a branch manager and five additional library staff at the LP. Both of these organizations report to their respective board of directors or governing board. Appendix B displays an organizational chart for the LP.

PSF and ACLD have two formal agreements together including a memorandum of understanding that outlines ACLD's role in providing additional programming and resources at the LP as a part of the collaborative process and the background screening requirements. In addition, a lease is in place that outlines the use of shared space between the resource center and the ACLD. PSF subleases space from the ACLD for the LP, and the ACLD handles all facility/building matters with the landlord.

The importance of being inclusive and enlisting a large community network to work with the center and support its operation is evident for LP. The number of current program partners and supporters totals around 40 (Library Partnership Annual Report, 2011). They include public sector and private sector organizations and businesses and are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Current Program Partners and Supporters of the Library Partnership (as of July 2012)

Alachua County (Community Support Services, Housing Authority and the Health Department)	Healthy Families
Alachua County Library District	Healthy Start
Big Brothers Big Sisters	HIPPY (In-Home Parenting Program)
Burger King	Hungry Howie's Pizza, Gainesville
Catholic Charities	Infinite Energy
Central Florida Community Action Agency	Job Corps
CDS Family and Behavioral Health Services	McDonalds
Children's Medical Services	Meridian Behavioral Healthcare
CHOICES (Insurance)	Peaceful Paths Domestic Violence Network
Community Foundation of North Central Florida	Rebuilders Program—Gainesville Police Department
Dillard's	Regional Transit Systems
Early Learning Coalition	Resolutions Health Alliance
Faith-based organizations (several including local churches)	Saint Leo University
Florida Department of Children and Families	Salvation Army
Florida Institute for Workforce Innovation	Santa Fe College
Florida Works	Three Rivers Legal Services

Gainesville Housing Authority Gainesville Community Ministries Gainesville Housing Authority Girl Scouts Head Start of Alachua County	United Way University of Florida Volunteers and Interns University of Florida Child Abuse Prevention Program University of Florida Medical School Wal-Mart, Gainesville

There are also several organizations that have made one-time contributions for special events. These contributors are primarily in the private sector. Community partners are not only program providers that share their expertise and resources to serve those who seek help through the LP; they also offer creative ways to encourage participation through incentives. A quarterly partners' meeting is held at the LP as well. It serves as a way to share LP updates with partners while also allowing partners to share program information and provide suggestions to the LP staff.

In addition to the program partners and contributors, the LP relies on volunteers and interns. The vital functions performed by volunteers are often essential to the operation of the center. In 2012, the average number of volunteers per month was 12. The range in hours volunteered per week was 12 to 25 with an average number of 16 hours a week per volunteer. Some of the volunteers were affiliated with a program that focuses on senior citizen employment through the Florida Institute for Workforce Innovations. At the LP, examples of tasks performed by volunteers include staffing the front desk of the resource center and assisting with programs for families (e.g., program development, providing care for children when parents are in parenting or other classes). Student interns from the University of Florida (UF) have been included in the pool of volunteers.

Funding Sources for the Library Partnership

Consistent with the organizational structure for the Library Partnership (LP), the two primary sources of funding are PSF and the ACLD. The lease and operational expenses for the physical space are split 50/50 between these two organizations. ACLD is fortunate to have the authority to raise funds locally as a special taxing district. PSF pays for a portion of the costs of two full-time staff members (the project manager and family support facilitator) at the center. Additional funding is provided by Casey Family Programs for operating expenses and a portion of the salary of the project manager.

Funders that contribute smaller amounts (less than 5%) are also essential. These funders are diverse and represent different entities in the public sector as well as charitable organizations in Alachua County. For the LP, funders contributing smaller amounts over the past two years have included:

- America's Promise 2012
- Civic Engagement Grant (Alliance for Children and Families) 2009
- Community Grant (City of Gainesville) 2011 and 2012
- Community Foundation of North Central Florida 2012
- Gator Exchange Club 2010 and 2011
- Institute of Museum & Library Services 2011 (The Library District was awarded this grant as a result of the innovative collaboration at the LP.)
- Satchels Pizza 2010

- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship 2012
- Women's Giving Circle 2012

Participation and Performance Expectations at the Library Partnership

Achieving a high level of performance is a major focus of the Library Partnership (LP). In addition to developing a logic model to assist with monitoring performance, the LP maintains ongoing records of participation in its programs and services. Requesting participant feedback on the activities and services offered at the LP is also an important part of measuring performance. The current logic model for the LP is presented in Appendix C.

The number of visitors and participants at the LP is tracked daily. Records maintained by the center staff using digital counters indicate that visitors to the resource center from July 2011 through February 2012 averaged 864 per month. The highest number of visitors was 1,216 in November 2011, a spike likely due to holiday events and food drives. During this same period of July-February, there were a total of 6,914 visitors to the resource center (number may include repeat patrons), and 52,297 visitors to the library for strictly library or computer usage (may include repeat patrons). Figure 1 displays the number of visitors over the July 2011 through February 2012 time frame.

A more conservative set of figures for participation indicate the number of LP participants and visitors who were related to *authorized* services. During calendar year 2011, there were 3,341 residents served with an average of 278 residents served per month.

Based on demographics collected on a visitor form (Getting to Know You) and attendance forms for groups, the percentage of participants receiving direct services at the LP who were children was 18%. Approximately 47% of all LP patrons served were African American.

In 2011, a compilation of data and information related to outputs and short-term outcomes in the LP logic model was completed. The outputs for 2011 are listed below:

1. **Number of residents who received information:** This number equals the total number of people who enter the LP and are counted on the digital counter. Over 80,050 people visited the LP in 2011; 11,037 of those visitors came specifically to the Resource Center. Of those visiting the Resource Center only, 5,276 requested specific services.

2. **Number of educational programs offered by type:** This is the number of specific programs/ services by category that were specifically offered at the LP.
   Family Support and Child Development= 110
   Health and Safety= 19
   Self-Sufficiency= 45
   Miscellaneous= 4

3. **Number of residents who attended educational programs by type:** This number represents the total number of people who attended each program/service offered at the LP by category.
   Family Support and Child Development= 1037
   Health and Safety= 1018
   Self-Sufficiency= 2088
   Miscellaneous= 1076

4. **Number of meetings held:** 86 meetings were held at the LP. This information is based on the number of facilitator group sheets completed.

5. **Number of participants who attended the meetings**: 2,180 people attended meetings at the LP. This information is based on the number of meeting participants recorded on the facilitator group sheets.

6. **Number of community events held:** This number includes community-based events organized by the LP and partnering agencies as taken from the community events calendar. There were 31 total events (Juneteenth, several legal workshops, Health Fair, Spay & Neuter Campaign, other health events, etc.).

7. **Number of participants at community events:** 1,608 people attended the community events.

8. **Total number of adults served:** 4,275 adults were served. The total is based on the information recorded in the monthly report section titled "Programs and Services Rendered."

9. **Total number of children served:** 1,669 children were served. The total is based on the information recorded in the monthly report section titled "Programs and Services Rendered."

10. **Number of residents who report being satisfied with the Library Partnership:** Of 315 patrons surveyed, 95% report being satisfied with LP services. The source of this data is the LP satisfaction survey, which has been administered annually since March 1, 2010.

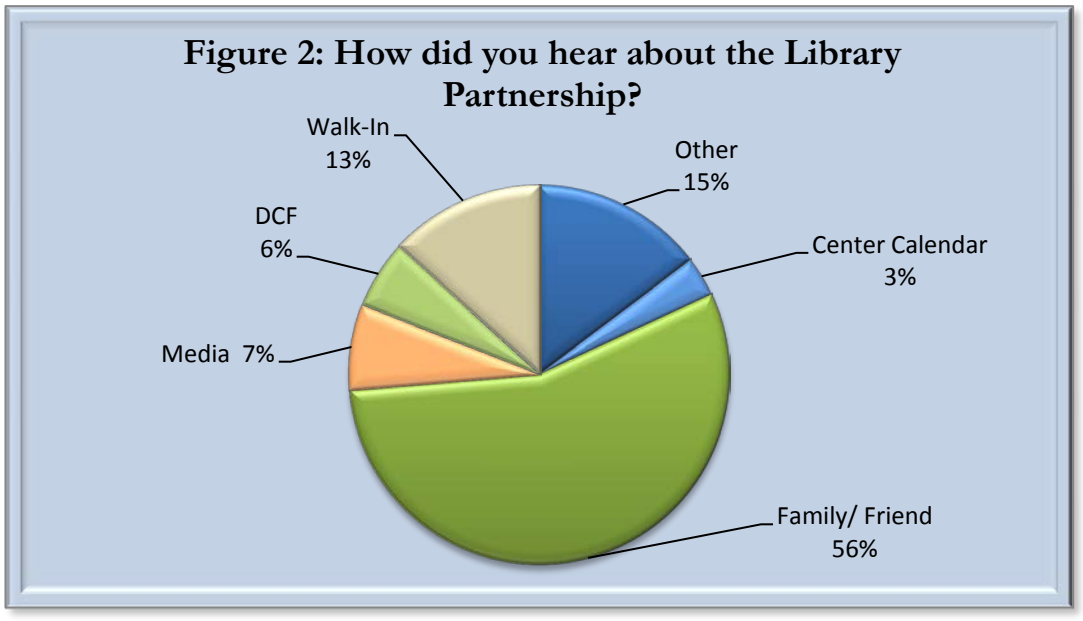
Outcomes in the logic models developed by LP staff include both short-term and long-term results. In the short term, LP is interested in increasing the use of the center by community organizations,

increasing resident knowledge of community resources, providing concrete support, referring patrons to a variety of services, increasing adult literacy and employability skills, and maintaining patrons' currently high levels of satisfaction with LP services. This set of outcomes is considered achievable within a shorter period of time and can be monitored for changes annually. The short-term outcomes are listed below:

Short-Term Outcomes

- Increase knowledge of community assets, resources, and needs based on patron participation and input
- Increase patrons' access to concrete support and services in times of need
- Enhance social connections between patrons
- Increase employability skills of patrons
- Increase financial literacy skills of patrons
- Increase use of center for meetings of community organizations
- Increase referrals to educational/developmental resources
- Increase number of patrons satisfied with LP services

At this time, short-term outcome measurement for the LP within the past year has included the patron level of satisfaction with the services offered. The survey captured feedback from 205 LP patrons between July 2011 and February 2012. The results from this source indicated that 94% of the respondents were very pleased with the services they or their family received. Another high percentage of survey respondents, 95%, indicated that they would recommend the LP to others and 96% indicated they would return to the LP for additional services. Other information gleaned from the patron satisfaction survey regarding how they heard about the LP is displayed in Figure 2.



In addition to the patron satisfaction survey, a satisfaction survey of around 40 community partners was conducted by the LP in January and February of 2012 for the 2011 program year. Based on the input provided by 34 respondents, it was found that satisfaction with several aspects of LP performance was 92% or higher. The survey addressed level of satisfaction on the following:

- Accessibility of LP staff when making inquiries regarding services, programs, room scheduling, and other
- The usefulness of the LP's list-serve (email) messages in notifications about community updates, LP services/programs, events, and meetings
- The ability of the LP to resolve problems quickly and efficiently
- The level of professionalism of LP staff
- The overall performance of the LP
- Client satisfaction with the LP

The survey of community partners mentioned above also helped identify needed improvements. Two identified needs were the development of a more formal training module for the LP volunteers and regular supervision of all volunteers, both of which have been implemented. Better collaboration with schools and childcare centers was also an identified need. In response to this need, student groups, classes, teachers, school administrators, and other school support staff were invited to the LP for tours and an open house. Additional opportunities to work with the neighborhood schools were also planned. Engaging the community advisory council was another needed improvement identified. A "program spotlight" was added to the LP quarterly meetings in an effort to gain familiarity with the programs and consult with the program staff on ways to serve residents in the northeast region served by the LP.

In 2011, compilation of information on other short-term outcomes was also completed. This information was more qualitative than quantitative in that activities and programs were highlighted as evidence of performance related to each outcome. These short-term measures do not include quantitative measures of increases or decreases. In some cases, the staff and residents need to define more specifically the outcomes of interest (e.g., social connections between residents). The outcomes are listed below:

1. **Increase knowledge of community assets, resources, and needs based on resident participation and input**
    - Community advisory council meetings monthly
    - Community outreach via housing developments, community fairs and events (i.e., World's Greatest Baby Shower), school parent meetings, school advisory boards, door to door during summer 2010
    - Getting to Know You Form—includes information from patrons on service and program needs; more than 950 forms have been completed
    - Patron and partner surveys—more than 300 have been completed

2. **Increase residents' access to concrete support and services in times of need**
    - Financial literacy classes

- Kinship care: Learn basic behavior tools to help with difficult child behaviors for relatives serving as foster parents. Support groups were offered during a short-term grant: currently, this is done one on one and through appropriate referrals
- Children and healthy relationships: Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network provides information for parents on how to talk with their children about healthy relationships; agency programs and services for survivors of domestic violence
- Intergenerational program (pilot): Elderly participants of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and youth from the Youthbuild Program work together to enhance the basic computer skills of the SCSEP participants who are reentering the job market at age 55 or older
- Faxing, copying, resume help
- Free clothing and assistance with emergency housing and food
- Free jacket giveaway
- Free book giveaway

3. **Enhance social connections between residents**
    - Done through much of the programming/events offered – Juneteenth, clothing drives, financial literacy (members formed a network for sharing valuable information such as coupon sharing), Girl Scout meetings, Cookies with Santa, and the numerous programs the ACLD offers monthly

4. **Increase leadership and advocacy skills of residents**
    - The community advisory council is the primary vehicle used to encourage community civic engagement. The LP solicits and respects the feedback of the group, which is made up of community residents and businesses and organization representatives (PBS, WUFT-Radio, churches).

5. **Offer convenient meeting locations for local community groups**
    - Small conference room (maximum occupancy 12)
    - Large meeting room (maximum occupancy 49)
    - 117 total meetings held with 1,275 persons in attendance; LP rooms are being used approximately 75% of the time
    - Examples of the groups include family team conference meetings, sorority groups, various University of Florida groups, Community Agency Partnership Program (CAPP), faith-based groups, Girl Scouts, etc.

6. **Link families to educational/developmental resources**
    - Tutoring programming: Several Supplemental Education Services (SES) tutoring agencies provide tutoring. SES is a federally funded program that provides academic tutoring in reading, English language arts, and mathematics, free of charge to eligible students in eligible schools. The tutoring occurs outside the regular school day – before or after school, or on weekends. Tutoring is offered at home, in schools, in community centers, online or at provider centers.
    - Homework Helper: 1:1 tutors (UF students and retired teachers) for anyone needing tutoring
    - Mentoring programming: for all school-aged students. Facilitated by Girls Scouts and Big Brothers Big Sisters

- Story Time: Bonding between parents and young children while reading
- Theater & Drama Club: Creative expression activity for youth
- Clifford the Big Red Dog: Literacy and reading program
- Children and Healthy Relationships: Peaceful Paths provides information for parents on how to talk with their children about healthy relationships
- Florida Friendly Landscaping Class: Class covered plant choices and techniques for creating a garden
- Good Nutrition on a Budget: Eating healthy without the expense

The long-term outcomes for LP correspond with three program categories: 1) family support and child development, 2) health and safety, and 3) self-sufficiency. There has not yet been a compilation of data and related indicators for the long-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes for the LP are listed below:

- **Family Support and Child Development**
  - Safe reduction in number of children entering foster care
  - Parents gain knowledge and skills to positively parent their children at different developmental stages
  - Parents learn skills and engage in opportunities to develop social and emotional competence in their children
  - Families and children engage in opportunities to create social connections and support networks
- **Health and Safety**
  - Families have resources to develop resilience
  - Families have an identified primary care provider
  - Families receive or are linked to organizations that can provide quality prenatal care
  - Families receive or are linked to organizations that can provide needed vision/dental care
- **Self-Sufficiency**
  - Families have jobs that pay a living wage, have reliable transportation to get to work, and can pay for all basic needs
  - Families know where to go for assistance
  - Families have access to resources that provide effective education

There are plans to extend the capacity of the LP to enter data reflecting LP services into the systems maintained by PSF for families in the child welfare system (P-kids/P-net). This upgrade in their capacity will allow outcomes to be calculated for those families in the child protection system and served at LP. At this time, there are no plans to expand data selection for families not currently in the child welfare system. In summary, a wide range of participant and service output data is collected. Actual changes in parent knowledge, skill, increase in certain family resources, employment, child maltreatment, foster care rates, and other key outcomes need to be measured in ways that are practical.

Strengths and Stories of Success

The Library Partnership (LP) has several strengths and has demonstrated its success with community residents in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the LP has the support of two well-respected organizations in the community with a shared vision and sufficient resources to get the LP established

and operating. These two organizations have worked as a collaborative to plan the start-up, including the renovation of the storefront used as the facility for the LP, the shared use of this facility, and programming to serve the neighborhood and wider community.

Ongoing communication between these partners has been essential and ensures maximum use of the facility and a balanced offering of programs and services. The strength of the outreach to the neighborhood and community is reinforced with both organizations participating. Services and resources available in one partner might be the initial attraction, but the presence of both sets of resources at the same location expands the opportunity for both organizations to reach a wider audience and complement each other. This LP collaboration fosters an additional strength; the hours during which the LP is open to the community are maximized. While services available through PSF and the network of community providers might not be available all hours that the LP front doors are open, the hours that can be covered by the library staff add to the visibility and use of the LP across families with a variety of scheduling constraints.

Committed leadership and staff from both PSF and ACLD partners have been strengths. Leadership in PSF and ACLD has been a vital part of developing the concept initially, formalizing the partnerships, and moving implementation forward. Commitment among the staff at the LP was also demonstrated. Compassion in serving the visitors and perseverance in following through on assistance are both excellent qualities that have added to the success with services. Turnover among LP staff has not been a problem.

PSF has an established data system, P-kids/P-net, for entering and maintaining information relevant to serving patrons of the LP and throughout the child welfare system. This system allows PSF to track demographics (age, race, etc.), how often an individual is seen for services, what services the individuals are requesting, and more. This platform will also augment efforts in the future to expand their tracking of long-term outcomes.

The merits of the LP have been recognized nationally. In 2010, the LP was recognized as a *Bright Idea* program by the Harvard University School of Government. The LP was also given credit as a reason that Alachua County was selected as one of the *100 Best Communities for Young People* by America's Promise Alliance two years in a row. In 2011, the LP was recognized by the Institute of Museum and Library Services for the innovative work that is being done in the community with this type of collaboration.

When asked to indicate the programs that have had the highest level of participation, the LP staff mentioned two. One was the job fair, which attracted 255 people. This focus on employment expanded to include assistance with job searching and interviewing. In addition, networks with major employers in the community (UF, City of Gainesville, Alachua County Schools and several private sector entities) have allowed LP staff to connect individuals to actual jobs.

Another successful activity mentioned was the financial literacy class, Fight for Your Money. The class participation has been at capacity with more interested in participating each time it is offered. The $100 payment toward participants' utility bills is an incentive that staff considered a primary reason for this success.

Challenges

While recognizing that the Library Partnership (LP) has had success and several accomplishments, it has also been faced with several challenges. Identifying and addressing these challenges is actually a sign of strength for the LP. In addition, innovation in service delivery includes experimentation and trial and error. The ability to step back and consider alternatives and ways to improve is essential. This section highlights several challenges that surfaced during the development and early operation of the LP.

Obtaining ongoing feedback from the neighborhood and community on needs and suggestions for improving the services or redirecting the resources has become a challenge. Earlier in the development and operation of the LP, a community advisory council was actively engaged to provide input on the LP. Focus groups were held, and lists of needs and suggestions for activities at the LP were provided. However, within the past two years, the level of activity in that council has declined. In response to this change, the LP staff sought input from residents at apartment complexes where targeted community residents live. What proved to be more successful was engaging younger residents by conducting a survey in the library. The input provided by the younger generation shifted attention to programs that will stop bullying, ensure justice in the community, and upgrade playgrounds. In addition, the patron satisfaction survey, which specifically asks for feedback and is given out to visitors daily, and the annual partner survey have been successful ways to gather feedback on service gaps and other suggestions.

Another challenge addressed at the LP was the scheduling of programs when it was convenient for the parents and families. Program resources were not always available during evening hours or on the weekends when parents are available to attend. A shift in the timing of parenting classes was made to respond to this participation barrier.

Media and efforts to advertise the LP and services available at the LP have been an ongoing challenge. Radio spots and bus placards have been helpful communication tools in the past, but insufficient resources to make these an ongoing effort has been an obstacle. In addition to its websites (http://www.librarypartnership.org and http://www.aclib.us/library-partnership), LP developed a list-serve and email notification process to provide updates on events and activities at the LP for community partners. This has resulted in many patrons learning of LP services and programs via these partners. Efforts have also been made to engage the local print and broadcast media and to keep them regularly informed of programs and events held at the LP. PSF as a whole has improved media relations in recent years and established personal connections with local journalists. This has resulted in no-cost publicity and neutral promotion of the LP within the community – particularly with *The Guardian*, which is the most-read news source for the target community.

As mentioned earlier, developing a process that allows the measurement of short-term and long-term outcomes is another challenge that has faced the LP. There is interest among the staff in measuring and understanding their impact on the visitors who seek and receive services. These outcomes span securing employment to becoming better parents and improving self-sufficiency. Consistent with the logic model, the LP would find it beneficial to track these outcomes. Resources are needed to accommodate this task. Consent among participants and cooperation with agencies that monitor services provided for those referred to service agencies would be important in achieving this goal. PSF is currently developing an enhancement to the P-kids/P-net system, which will allow for enhanced tracking of other critical data elements, including the geographic distribution of visitors to the center.

Lessons Learned

While the development and launching of a community center can be a rewarding and community-strengthening experience, much is learned in the process. Sharing tips for achieving success with neighborhood and community centers like the Library Partnership (LP) is one way to promote success in similar initiatives elsewhere. This section lists several key lessons that were learned developing and operating the LP.

In efforts to cut costs and stay within budgetary constraints, collaborating with a broad and diverse network of partners in both the public and private sectors has allowed the LP to reach more families. The resource center staff has also relied on the expertise of other organizations and agencies for facilitating portions of the programs offered (e.g., Job Make-over, Fight for Your Money).

Recruiting volunteers who are compatible with the mission and needs of the center and have the right skill set is also important. Safety is a key priority for any facility open to the public. Volunteers at the LP are required to have Level II background screens and drug testing and to go through a screening and selection process. Volunteers are recruited from all cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds of the community consistent with PSF's goal of maintaining a diverse workforce. The LP solicits volunteers from universities, community colleges, community organizations, and visitors to the center via the organization's website and when appropriate through print media. If chosen, volunteers are required to complete orientation and training.

Sustainability and a solid plan to ensure that the LP is viable and present in the northeast community years from now are critical. Leadership and staff realize that larger-scale grants and sharing the LP's story to a broader audience are key to that.

Summary

Since the initial concept of a community center began to take hold in 2007, the Library Partnership (LP) has made great strides in establishing its presence as a resource center meeting a diverse set of needs. Two community partners, Partnership of Strong Families and the Alachua County Library District, joined hands to plan, fund, and develop the center. The location of the center was based on information regarding high rates of child abuse and neglect, the presence of other neighborhood resources (a public elementary school), and the need for library services. The fit between the two community partners was ideal due to convenience of location, appeal to those in the neighborhood and community, and the capacity of both partners to respond to emerging needs.

At this time, the LP provides a variety of services and programs, including family support/child development, health and safety, self-sufficiency, legal assistance, and technology, primarily computer access. The programs are coordinated by PSF and ACLD staff at the center in order to use the space wisely and in a manner that maximizes coverage by staff and visibility. Among the programs offered by PSF, incentives have been valuable in efforts to attract participants and ensure their completion of programs.

Funding required for the LP is split 50/50 between the two community partners. Additional funding for operations and personnel has been provided by Casey Family Programs. A wide network of other community partners in the public sector and the business community has strengthened the resource base and provided opportunities to offer more diverse services and programs.

Use and performance have been a keen interest at LP. The number of visitors to LP from July 2011 through February 2012 averaged 864 per month. Children are about 18% of the participants served at LP. Performance has recently focused on satisfaction of the providers and the center visitors with LP. Surveys among community partners indicated that satisfaction with several different aspects of LP was 92% or higher. Among the LP patrons responding to a satisfaction survey, 94% were pleased with the LP services, and 96% indicated that they would return to the LP for additional services. A logic model was developed early in the operation of LP and has guided efforts to monitor progress and performance. In 2010 and 2011, compilation of data corresponding to outputs and several short-term outcomes in the LP logic model was completed and comprehensive. A comparison of the 2011 measures with more recent data has not yet occurred and long-term outcome indicators have not yet been calculated.

While LP has experienced substantial success and has several strengths as a community resource, there have been challenges and several lessons learned. Obtaining ongoing input from the neighborhood on needs and suggestions for improving the services or redirecting resources has been a challenge. Recently, there has been some success obtaining input from younger residents, and this has shifted attention to programs that address bullying and educational children's programming. Scheduling programs at times convenient for families has been another challenge. Continuing efforts through the media to communicate with the neighborhood and the community has been difficult due to insufficient funds. However, the LP's websites (http://www.librarypartnership.org and http://www.aclib.us/library-partnership), email updates (listserve), postings on Facebook, and coordination between PSF and the ACLD in preparing a calendar of programs that is distributed to visitors have kept some channels of communication open and active. Volunteers and interns are vital to the operation of the LP and should be part of any center's plans. Long-term planning to ensure the viability of a center is also a must.

Appendix D contains several photos of the LP, including the front entrance, sections in the library with computers, a children's corner, and meeting rooms for community organizations and program participants.

Preparation of the Library Partnership Chronicle

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida prepared this chronicle with guidance and funding provided by Casey Family Programs. The evaluation team obtained information available on the LP and visited the LP on April 15, 2012. During the visit, the team conducted a tour of the facility and interviewed several staff. In addition, the evaluation team observed two activities at the LP: F.I.R.S.T. parenting-support class graduation ceremony, and a class on legal issues in domestic violence that was open to professionals and individuals needing assistance.

References

Bowie, P. (2011). *Getting to scale: The elusive goal*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.

Casey Family Programs. (2012). *Building communities of hope*. Seattle, WA: Author.

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2007). *Strengthening families: A guidebook for early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: Author.

Daro, D., & Dodge, K. (2009). Creating community responsibility for child protection: Possibilities and challenges. *The Future of Children*, *19*(2), 67-93.

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Arthur, M. W. (2002). Promoting science-based prevention in communities. *Addictive Behaviors, 27*(6), 951-976.

Henkin, N., Holmes, A., Walter, B., Greenberg, B., & Schwarz, J. (2005). *Communities for all ages: Planning across generations*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Library Partnership. (n.d.) *Library Partnership*. (Brochure.). Gainesville, FL: Author.

Library Partnership. (2011). Library Partnership: A neighborhood resource center. (Annual Report: Sharing the Success Stories of 2010). Gainesville, FL: Author.

London, R., Pastor, M., Servon, L., Rosner, R., & Wallace, A. (2010). The role of community technology centers in promoting youth development. *Youth & Society, 42*, 199-228.

Maton, K. (2008). Empowering community settings: Agents of individual development, community betterment and positive social change. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 41*, 4-21.

Semenza, J., & March, T. (2009). An urban community-based intervention to advance social interactions. *Environment and Behavior*, *41*, 22-42.

Shonkoff, J., & Phillips, D. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Stagner, M., & Lansing, J. (2009). Progress toward a prevention perspective. *The Future of Children, 19*(2), 19-38.

Appendix A: Monthly Program Calendar Example

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE CENTER
1130 NE 16TH AVE

Resource Center Hours
(352)334-0160
Monday, Tuesday & Friday
9:00 am - 5:00 p.m
Wednesday & Thursday
11:00 am—6:00 pm
Saturday 10:00 am - 1:00pm
Closed Sundays

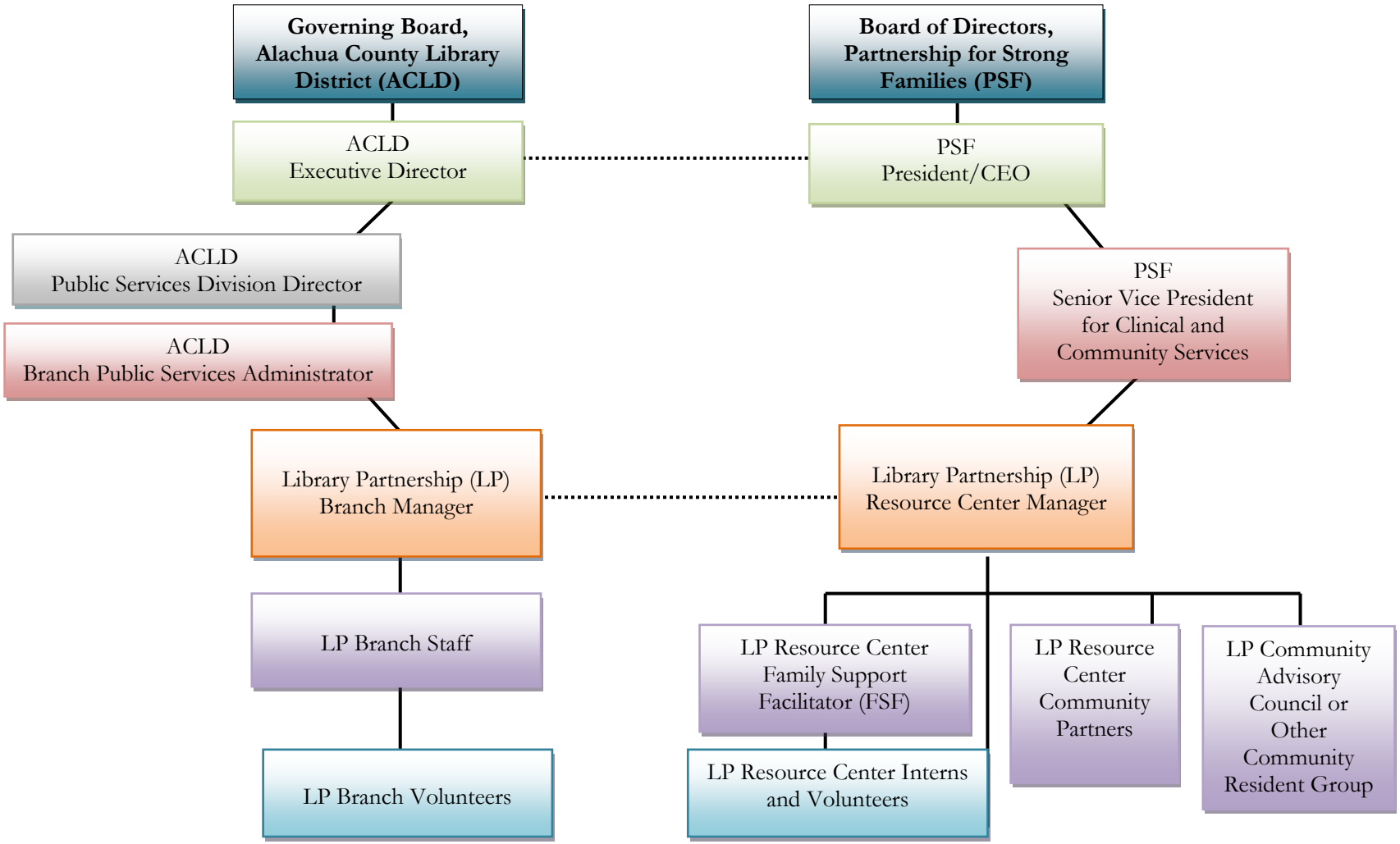
Library Hours
(352) 334-0165
Monday & Tuesdays 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Wednesday & Thursday 11:00 am - 7:00 pm
Friday 9 - 5:00pm
Saturday 10:00 am - 3:00pm
Closed Sundays

January 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 **CLOSED** 	3 9:30 - 10 am Preschool Story Time 11:00 - 1:00pm Alachua Co. Housing applications and Information 3:30 - 5pm Beading for Teens	4 11:00 - 12pm Internet job search, resumes and more 5:00 to 6 pm Basic computer Skills	5 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet 3:30—4:30 pm Teen Book Discussion	6 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet	7
8	9 10—11 Bridges to Prosperity 10—11:30 am Senior Social 3:00 - 5:00 pm Girl Scouts	10 9:00 - 12pm Empowered to Live the Life you choose 9:30 - 10 am Preschool Story Time 10 am Child Care Information 11:00 - 1:00pm Alachua Co. Housing applications and Information 10:30 - 11:30 pm Fraud and Exploitation of seniors 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent 4:30 - 5:30 Girls Tea Party	11 11:00 - 2pm Empowered to Live the Life you choose 2—4 pm FREE Notary Services 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent	12 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet **2:00 - 3:30 pm LP Resource Center meeting** 4 to 5PM Arts and Crafts 11- 3 pm Health Street	13 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet	14
15	16 **CLOSED** 	17 9:30 - 10 am Preschool Story Time 11:00 - 1:00pm Alachua Co. Housing applications and Information 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent 3:30 - 5pm Beading for Teens	18 11:00 - 12pm Internet job search, resumes and more 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent 5:00 to 6 pm Basic computer Skills	19 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet 3:00—6:00 pm VITA Tax Preparation 3:30—4:30 pm Teen Book Discussion	20 9 to 12pm Head Start Registration Drive 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet	21
22	23 3:00 - 5:00 pm Girl Scouts	24 9:30 - 10 am Preschool Story Time 11:00 - 1:00pm Alachua Co. Housing applications and Information 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent	25 2—4 pm FREE Notary Services 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent **3:30 to 6:00 pm COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR**	26 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet 3:00—6:00 pm VITA Tax Preparation 11- 3 pm Health Street	27 11 am - 1:00pm Clothing Closet	28
29	30 3:00 - 5:00 pm Girl Scouts 3:00—6:00 pm VITA Tax Preparation	31 9:30 - 10 am Preschool Story Time 11:00 - 1:00pm Alachua Co. Housing applications and Information 3:00- 5:00 pm Parent to Parent				

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE!!
EMPOWERED TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU CHOOSE: SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF AWARENESS
PARENT TO PARENT: PARENTING GUIDANCE

Appendix B: Library Partnership Neighborhood Resource Center Organizational Chart



Appendix C: Library Partnership Neighborhood Resource Center Logic Model

Goal: Strengthen the community by supporting adults and children through services that provide children a healthy start, promote positive parenting practices, offer programs that support self-sufficiency, and provide a place where families can come together to learn, share, and support each other, resulting in a safe reduction in the number of children entering foster care.

Target Population: Families who live in the 32609 zip code area and surrounding communities in 32641 and 32601 zip codes.

Inputs	Services	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
• LP facility, meeting space, equipment, and utilities • Service providers' programs and services • Funders' resources • Community partners' participation and partnership (i.e., churches, schools, daycare providers) • Other partners' resources (i.e., civic clubs, service clubs, student volunteers, and interns) • Community volunteers • Center and program staff (PSF, ACLD, and Providers) • Community residents • PSF board • ACLD board	**Family Support & Child Development** • Prenatal services • Parenting skills • Alternative Discipline • Head Start registration • Literacy/ Reading programs • Tutoring: Child/Adult **Health & Safety** • Child safety • Counseling • Healthcare information • Family planning **Self-Sufficiency** • Employment services (resumes, interviews, Dress for Success, job searches) • Clothing Closet • Job Fair • Notary services • Computer access • Copier/fax services • Referrals for legal services • Legal workshops • Financial literacy (budgeting, debt repair, savings)	• # of patrons who visited LP • # of programs offered by type • # of patrons who attended programs by type • # of community events held • # of participants who attended community events • # of adults served • # of children served • # of center participants completing satisfaction surveys • # of meetings for community organizations held • # of participants who attended the meetings for community organizations	• Increase knowledge of community assets, resources, and needs based on patron participation and input • Increase patrons' access to concrete supports and services in times of need • Enhance social connections between patrons • Increase employability skills of patrons • Increase financial literacy skills of patrons • Increase use of center for meetings of community organizations • Increase referrals to educational/developmental resources • Increase number of patrons satisfied with LP services	**Family Support & Child Development** • Safe reduction in number of children entering foster care • Parents gain knowledge and skills to positively parent their children at different developmental stages • Parents learn skills and engage in opportunities to develop social and emotional competence in their children • Families and children engage in opportunities to create social connections and support networks **Health & Safety** • Families have resources to develop resilience • Families have an identified primary care provider • Families receive or are linked to organizations that can provide quality prenatal care • Families receive or are linked to organizations that can provide needed vision/dental care **Self-Sufficiency** • Families have jobs that pay a living wage, have reliable transportation to get to work and can pay for all basic needs • Families know where to go for assistance • Families have access to resources that provide effective education

Appendix D: Library Partnership Neighborhood Resource Center Photos