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Edward Waters College  
Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center:  
A Research Chronicle

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# Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community 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 Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center (EWC-SSCRC) in Jacksonville, Florida. This chronicle begins with the theory behind this community approach and an overview of the EWC-SSCRC. 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, performance expectations, funding, and 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. They include how certain programs and activities have been particularly well received among center participants as well as the broader community. Some of these highlights capture innovative achievements. The chronicle ends with sections on challenges that have been addressed, some challenges that remain, and lessons learned.

The EWC-SSCRC 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 to 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 policymakers 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 need, 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 and 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, including:

...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 Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center**

The Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center (EWC-SSCRC) began in 1995. The center concept emerged as a way to provide an interface between Edward Waters College (EWC) and the surrounding community. At that time, the City of Jacksonville donated the land and facility to EWC for the center. Family Support Services of North Florida (FSSNF), the community-based care agency providing child welfare and family services in Jacksonville and surrounding counties, became a partner in 2008. The EWC-SSCRC is fortunate to have the EWC campus as its location and a well-established history with the neighborhood and surrounding community. The EWC is the first institution established in Florida for the education of African Americans. While the EWC was founded in 1866, the current EWC campus was built in the early 1900s.

Leadership in the community has been an important factor for the development of the EWC-SSCRC. Key individuals active in civic organizations, in faith-based organizations and on community councils have been strong advocates for the center. As explained by staff at the EWC-SSCRC, leadership in the EWC, FSSNF, and DCF as well as in other community organizations is imperative for a broad base of support and commitment. A conference sponsored by EWC and Northwest Behavioral Health Services, and a City of Jacksonville proclamation for Mental Health and Black Community Day on May 12, 2011 is a specific example of how leaders in the community come together to further the mission of the EWC-SSCRC.

The New Town Success Zone in 2007 is a community initiative that added to the foundation for EWC-SSCRC. The EWC-SSCRC is located in this zone. The Success Zone adopted a complementary learning model that promotes strong linkages between school and non-school supports for a healthy and safe path into adulthood. The Success Zone was also the center of a proposal submitted to Florida's Promise Neighborhood program. Engaging neighborhood residents through door-to-door canvassing and meetings provided input on needs from the neighborhood residents. Subsequent efforts focused on after-school programming at the elementary and middle schools. A health survey was also conducted to inform a health assessment initiative that included health services. A park designed to accommodate a children's playground and offer an outdoor location for seniors to exercise was another project connected to the Success Zone activities.

## **Purpose and Goal of the Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center**

As stated in literature prepared by the EWC-SSCRC, its vision is "to be a community and academic support model, promoting positive lifestyle changes and best practices, focusing on social, health and educational services" (EWC-SSCRC, n.d.). The mission of the EWC-SSCRC has been described as a commitment to "providing life-long learning opportunities for senior citizens, adults and their families to improve their skills, pursue knowledge, seek advancement and enhance their quality of life" (EWC-SSCRC, 2010). Because the facility operates on the EWC campus and has the institution as a key partner, the goals of the EWC are also folded into the EWC-SSCRC. These goals are divided into social or health goals and academic goals. In addition to providing quality and "constituent-friendly" services for students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders, the EWC-SSCRC provides health, education, social,

and community services for elderly constituents located in northeast Jacksonville. The academic goals refer to the achievement of baccalaureate degree programs, learning Christian principles, social responsibility, civic engagement, and partnering with distance learning technologies.

## **Programs and Services at the Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center**

The large number of programs and types of services available to community residents at the EWC-SSCRC reflects the wide community network that coordinates with and supports the center's activities. As stated in the EWC-SSCRC literature, the center "provides health services, computer training, veteran services, grand parenting services, tax preparation assistance, community service seminars/workshops, social services, employment referrals and community activities" (EWC-SSCRC, n.d.). Some of the programs and services are funded by grants. There is also a health clinic at EWC-SSCRC known as the Commonwealth Family Practice Center at College Park. The health clinic is operated by Shands, University of Florida. Because of the diverse set of services offered, the EWC-SSCRC functions as a one-stop service center where families can address a variety of concrete and social support needs.

All of the programs and services offered at EWC-SSCRC can be included in one of three categories: (1) family support and child development, (2) health and safety, and (3) self-sufficiency. Examples of programs and providers in each category are listed here:

### **Family Support and Child Development**

- Teen Court Community Services – juvenile community services
- Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (STEPS) – an in-home advocacy program that provides support for at-risk children and families
- Department of Children and Families – food stamps/Medicaid (residents can log onto the Florida website to look for services on "ACCESS" at the EWC-SSCRC)
- Aging True / Grandparents Raising Children support group
- Monthly food distribution from PSI Family Services (see <http://www.psifamilyservices.com/>)
- Community resource specialist
- D.A.D. Network (This workshop meets once a month to discuss issues and concerns surrounding being a father. This workshop was created to assist inmates who completed the Inside Out Dads training in jail with an outlet to continue to enhance their parenting skills and communication with the mother of their children.)
- Born Learning parenting classes

### **Health and Safety**

- Center Wellness Program – health screening and case management, health education, social services, basic computer classes, and e-health literacy for the community
- Department of Children and Families – food stamps/Medicaid
- Northwest Behavioral Services – mental health counselling
- St. Vincent's Healthcare – pregnancy support and counseling (Brighter Beginnings)
- University of North Florida – Community Partnerships Volunteer Nursing Support

## Self-Sufficiency

- Veteran Re-Integration Program – work-force training/support
- Urban Jacksonville – utility assistance/disabled services
- National Federation of Housing Counselors – housing assistance
- ShAdCo/Sheriff’s Advisory Council – crime prevention education
- War on Poverty/Real Sense; financial counseling/health education
- Work Source – job placement and career guidance
- Florida State College – GED program
- Breakfast Learning Series
- Work Keys classes
- Prep GED classes

While EWC-SSCRC offers a diverse set of programs and services, there is now and has been historically an emphasis on services for senior residents in the neighborhood. Some of the services for seniors are listed below:

## Senior Services

- Elder health literacy program (elder health workshops, health maintenance, social services, e-health training)
- Health screening and monitoring
- Exercise classes, aerobics and fitness gym work-out
- Social services assessments
- E-health and basic computer training
- Senior bridge class (recreation and mental wellness)

The primary partners at the EWC-SSCRC engage in joint scheduling of all programs. This coordination allows both of the major partners operating the EWC-SSCRC to ensure efficient and maximum use of space, overlap in the timing of programs that can complement each other, and adequate coverage of needed services for the residents in the neighborhood. Program calendars that incorporate the programs sponsored or administered by the partners are prepared in advance for wide distribution to the center visitors and others.

Programs that were identified as having the highest level of interest and participation covered different generations and different needs. From the perspective of liaisons with FFSNF, a program for at-risk families with children in the neighborhood, Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents or STEPS, was mentioned. This program serves families that are referred from the community, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as well as self-referrals. According to staff in STEPS, this program has been helpful in engaging families who have been referred by DCF, resulting in a more trusting relationship with providers. Wellness programs for the senior residents in the area and the food giveaways provided by Second Harvest once each month were also highlighted. It was also noted that the family practice clinic is used by a high number of residents in the community.

A recent activity by patrons at EWC-SSCRC was a three-act play written by a community volunteer. This intergenerational play, *Choices*, follows eighth-grade students through the choices they make in their

lives. The play was performed at the EWC Performing Arts Center adjacent to the EWC-SSCRC, and it served as a fund raiser for the center. The preparation and performance was highlighted as an activity that united key partners, participants, and volunteers and it provided a focus for supporting the EWC-SSCRC in the community. The play received endorsements and praise from many community stakeholders and businesses.

For the future, program staff at the EWC-SSCRC and agency liaisons with EWC-SSCRC shared plans for services and programs. They mentioned a focus on job skills as a need at EWC-SSCRC and shared a related program that encourages the development of enterprises by center participants. In order to accommodate more programs and higher capacity for existing programs, several center staff were interested in expanding the indoor space available at the center; there is indoor space available on the second floor, but it has not been set up for use by center participants.

## **Organizational Structure and Network of Partners at the Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center**

At EWC-SSCRC, the organizational structure brings together three primary partners: Edward Waters College (EWC), Family Support Services of North Florida (FSSNF), and the City of Jacksonville. The City of Jacksonville owns the land, EWC operates and maintains the facility, and FSSNF contributes program resources and funding. The University of Florida (UF) Shands was also mentioned as an important partner; they operate the family practice clinic at EWC-SSCRC. While formal arrangements are in place for operating the center, leasing physical space, and funding programs, there is not a formal agreement between all of the EWC-SSCRC primary partners at this time. Staff recognize that a formal agreement would facilitate strategic planning and setting goals that reflect the goals of all primary providers, including FSSNF. The development of a formal agreement between EWC and FSSNF is underway.

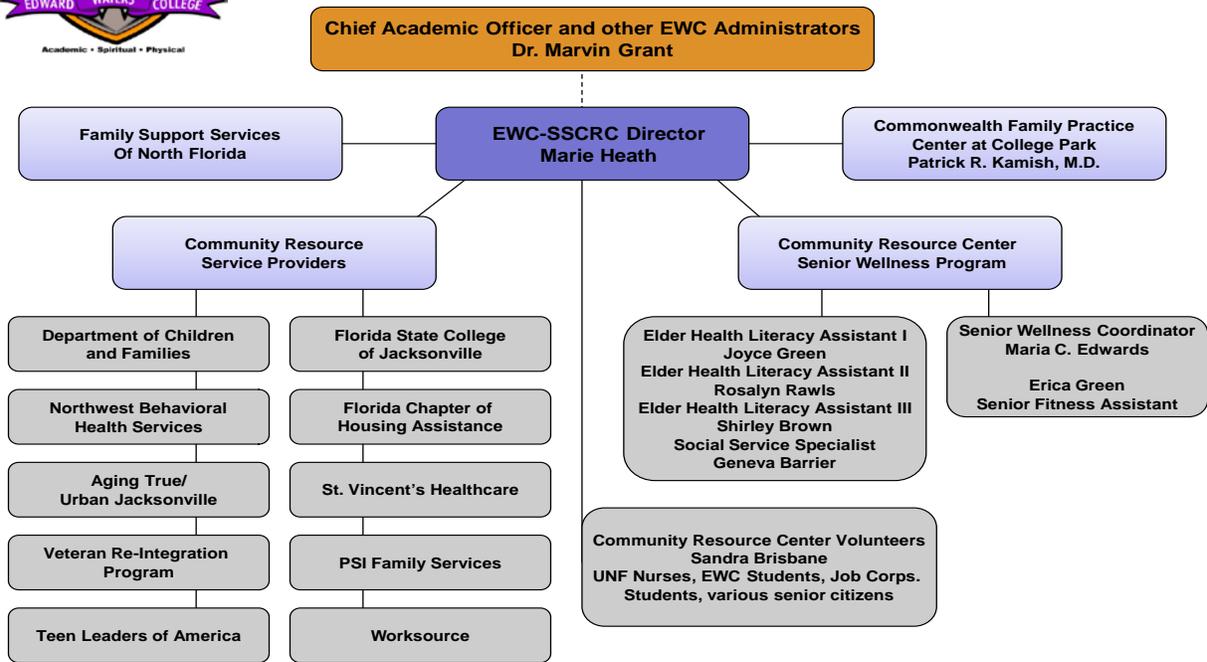
The diversity of services and programs offered at the EWC-SSCRC corresponds with the operation of several different administrative and service units. The service units operating at the EWC-SSCRC are listed below along with the funder and some of the staff positions at the EWC-SSCRC. Several staff are funded by EWC, FSSNF, Casey Family Programs, or through grants to administer programs and manage the day-to-day activities. The manager of the center meets with administrators at EWC (Registrar, Dean of Faculty, Director of Advising, Director of the Library, and Chief Academic Officer) and serves as the liaison between the EWC-SSCRC and EWC. Several service units include the following:

- EWC    Division of Academic Affairs – Center Manager  
         Volunteer Receptionist
- FSSNF   Community Resource Development Specialist  
         Family Preservation Specialist (STEPS)  
         Community Development Specialist  
         ACCESS Worker
- Senior Wellness Grant (Community Development Block Grant)  
         Case Manager  
         Health Specialist
- Commonwealth Family Practice Center (UF Shands)  
         Technology (computer lab on second floor)  
         Volunteer monitor of classes and equipment

Figure 1 displays an organizational chart for the administrative units, staff, and resources supplied by EWC, FSSNF, and the family practice clinic at the EWC-SSCRC.



**Figure 1: Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet CRC  
Organizational Chart**



The importance of being inclusive and enlisting a large community network to work with the center and support its operation is evident at EWC-SSCRC. The number of current significant program partners and supporters is six; additional partners offer classes and other services. The Department of Children and Families (DCF), Casey Family Programs, University of North Florida, Florida State College at Jacksonville, and New Town Success Zone are the significant members in the partner network. The GED classes are offered by Florida State College at Jacksonville. The DCF donated desktop computers for the computer lab.

In addition to the program partners and contributors, the EWC-SSCRC relies on a large network of volunteers. As communicated by center staff, volunteers are referred to as the “Faithful 40.” They are viewed as the life blood of the center and are committed to the success of the EWC-SSCRC in serving the community. The volunteers are used effectively in a variety of ways to expand the resources available to the center. For example, individuals receiving salary in part-time positions will often extend their hours at the center as a volunteer to cover the responsibilities full-time. In addition, students participating in classes offered at EWC-SSCRC volunteer as student interns to assist with administrative functions at EWC-SSCRC. Based on information provided by staff at EWC-SSCRC, there were a total of 75 volunteers at EWC-SSCRC in 2011. The estimated average number of volunteers each month is 40. The range in the number of hours contributed per week per volunteer is 1 to 3, and the average number of hours per volunteer per week is 1.5.

## Participation and Performance Expectations at the EWC-SSCRC

Participation and performance at the EWC-SSCRC are of interest to the providers. The number of participants for certain programs and services are tracked, although measures of performance, including obtaining feedback on satisfaction with services, are not yet firmly established. A logic model to assist with monitoring performance at EWC-SSCRC in the future appears in Appendix A.

The numbers of visitors and participants at EWC-SSCRC are maintained. An estimate of the total number of visitors to EWC-SSCRC, not including the family practice clinic, was 480 in March 2012. Estimates of the number of participants for several programs offered during 2012 at EWC-SSCRC are listed below:

- Dads All Day (D.A.D.): 3
- U-Turns Inc. (Teen Leaders of America): 35
- GED PREP and GED classes: 9/11
- STEPS in-home parent advocacy program: 23
- Food distribution: 300
- Community Resource Center Obesity Clinic: 48
- Community Resource Center Health Literacy Program: 150
- Veteran Re-Integration Program: 20
- Department of Children and Families: 20
- Community Resource Specialist: 28 families

Numbers of participants for the following programs were not reported:

- Prenatal classes (St. Vincent's Brighter Beginnings)
- Urban Jacksonville/ Aging True
- Northwest Behavioral Services
- Teen Court Community Services
- Eldersource

A profile of the participants at the EWC-SSCRC was also developed for this chronicle. According to estimates provided by EWC-SSCRC staff, approximately 90% are African American. The gender of participants in programs at EWC-SSCRC is 75% female and 25% male. According to center staff, 80% of visitors are from the neighborhood.

Outcomes in the EWC-SSCRC logic model include short-term and long-term phases. In the short term, EWC-SSCRC is interested in increasing the use of the center by community organizations, knowledge of community resources, providing concrete supports, referring patrons to a variety of services, increasing literacy and employability skills, and increasing satisfaction with EWC-SSCRC 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 supports and services in times of need
- Enhance social connections between patrons
- Increase leadership and advocacy skills of patrons

- Increase the use of the center for meetings of community groups
- Increase the number of referrals to educational resources
- Improve the ability to measure the number of patrons satisfied with EWC-SSCRC services

The long-term outcomes for EWC-SSCRC correspond with three program categories: 1) family support and child development, 2) health and safety, and 3) self-sufficiency. As mentioned above, the definition and measurement of these outcome indicators has not been completed. These outcomes are listed below by category:

### **Long-Term Outcomes**

- **Family Support and Child Development**
  - Parents gain knowledge and skills to positively parent their children at different developmental stages.
  - Residents understand how to proactively address issues of concern and effectively lead change efforts.
  - There is a safe reduction in number of children entering foster care.
- **Health and Safety**
  - Center participants have an identified primary care provider.
  - Center participants receive or are linked to organizations that can provide quality prenatal care or chronic disease care.
  - Center participants receive or are linked to organizations that can provide needed vision/dental care.
  - Center participants are empowered to implement lifestyle changes that can improve their health.
- **Self-Sufficiency**
  - Center participants have jobs that pay a living wage, have reliable transportation to get to work, and can pay for all basic needs.
  - Center participants know where to go for assistance.
  - Center participants eligible for ACCESS are receiving benefits.

There is interest in expanding the capacity of the EWC-SSCRC to monitor both short-term and long-term outcomes. The development of a data system to serve the center and the open reporting of participant information between specific programs and the center should augment those efforts. It is not known the amount of time that it will take to complete these functions for this purpose. There is also a need to develop a strategic plan that addresses measurable goals and outcomes.

## **Funding of the EWC-SSCRC**

Consistent with the organizational structure for the EWC-SSCRC described in a previous section of the chronicle, the three primary sources of resources and funding are EWC, FSSNF, and the City of Jacksonville. These three organizations come together to provide the land (City of Jacksonville), the physical structure (EWC), and programs (EWC and FSSNF). Casey Family Programs pays for some operating expenses and personnel (a portion of two positions). Shands at the University of Florida operates the family practice clinic. Space in the building for programs is leased by FSSNF. Some funding is also provided through federal grants. Donations from other partners have also been essential. For example, the Department of Children and Families donated personal computers for the computer lab.

The patrons at EWC-SSCRC have also been innovative and creative in funding efforts. The play, *Choices*, was an excellent illustration of how EWC-SSCRC volunteers and community stakeholders came together to raise funds.

## Strengths and Stories of Success

The EWC-SSCRC has several strengths and has demonstrated its success with community residents in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the EWC-SSCRC has the support of three well-respected organizations in the neighborhood and community. The partnership 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 these three organizations involved. Services and resources available through one partner might be the initial attraction, but the presence of several sets of resources at the same location expands the opportunities to reach a wider audience and complement each other.

The commitment on the part of center staff and volunteers is an impressive strength. Center staff share their vision and compassion for those served. Center staff mentioned that sometimes people just need someone to listen to them. Treating visitors to the center with respect and dignity goes a long way in improving self-worth and developing a positive outlook. In addition, communication, interaction, and coordination between center staff working with separate programs have been encouraged. Working together as a team is promoted and considered a key to future success at EWC-SSCRC.

EWC-SSCRC has been able to tap exceptional talent among its participants, volunteers, and community stakeholders to benefit the EWC-SSCRC. The writing, acting, and production of the play *Choices* were accomplished by those who are served by and/or contribute their time to EWC-SSCRC as volunteers.

The presence of a satellite health clinic at the EWC-SSCRC is a bonus for the neighborhood and the surrounding community. The clinic is operated by Shands at the University of Florida and provides primary health care for patients of all ages. It includes a waiting room and six examination rooms with one physician available to meet with patients, 8am to 5pm during the week. The clinic is a resource that attracts members of the community to the EWC-SSCRC that might not ordinarily know about its existence and the programs it offers. In addition to providing medical care, it is another way to conduct outreach to those who could benefit from the other services available.

The availability of computer technology is another strength at EWC-SSCRC. Personal computers are not only available for GED and GED prep classes, but also for use by other visitors at the center. A large room on the second floor of the center is the location for 16 desktop computers, each with a separate work area. Allowing use of computers for a variety of needs maximizes the use of the technology and can be an opportunity for visitors to build on a set of skills that can improve employability. Planning applications in computer technology that encourage the maintenance of family connections, such as SKYPE or assistance with accessing websites that store family photos for senior visitors to view, are another possible benefit. The amount of physical space devoted to this service is also a testament to the importance it holds at EWC-SSCRC.

The multigenerational presence at EWC-SSCRC is also a strength. A well-established program for seniors has been at EWC-SSCRC since 1999. Adding programs to serve families with young children in 2008 was a perfect extension to create a broader scope in ages served at EWC-SSCRC. The combination of programs that target different age groups can promote community interventions and strategies to

reinforce desired outcomes for families and children. Recently, during the Team Leaders Summer Camp, a panel discussion was held to allow the youth an opportunity to engage with the seniors at the center.

## Challenges

The ability and resources to respond to changes in needs among residents in the neighborhood and community are challenges. Having enough food during the food giveaways was a recent concern. Another related concern is providing services that help participants in the immediate or short term as well as long term. Some of the long-term needs refer to economic opportunities and employment, which are difficult to meet. The community residents' needs are sometimes greater than the available resources.

Administrative capacity and systems that allow the center to count and track participants served at EWC-SSCRC are limited. Center staff recognize that a central database should be available to enter and maintain numbers served on an ongoing basis. However, there is reluctance on the part of the separate programs to share participant information. Confidentiality of participant information must be preserved in a data system developed for the center's use. A coordinated effort for entering and compiling participant data for EWC-SSCRC is needed.

The execution of memoranda of understanding with program partners is also a challenge. These agreements can augment efforts to obtain and compile the information needed for the reports. They also formalize the working relationships between the center and other program staff to ensure consistency and accountability in funding. However, forging *true programmatic* engagement requires the agreements to authorize some flexibility in these interfaces. Shifts in funding are sometimes appropriate in order to meet new needs and offer the best mix of programs. In addition, having a more efficient review process that can address the needed legal and other administrative requirements would be a step in the right direction and would minimize unnecessary delays.

Efforts to advertise the EWC-SSCRC and services available at the center have been an ongoing challenge. Funding for this outreach is not available in tight budgets. Better signage at the center site to reflect the services provided was one improvement suggested by center staff. Posting advertisements on billboards in the surrounding area was another suggestion mentioned. The recent development of a website, [www.schellsweetcrc.org](http://www.schellsweetcrc.org), has contributed to outreach and the sharing of information about the services available at EWC-SSCRC. However, communicating with those residing in the neighborhood and surrounding community will require a more diverse set of outreach options.

## Lessons Learned

While the development and launching of a community center can be a rewarding and community strengthening experience, there is a lot learned in the process. Sharing tips for achieving success with community centers like EWC-SSCRC is certainly one way to augment similar efforts elsewhere.

It is important to have a core of well-recognized and financially sound organizations sharing the financial requirements of the center. In addition, a broad network of partners in the public and private sector can contribute valuable support and resources. The combination of major funders and a wide network of partners helps sustain the operation of the center and enhances the capacity to respond to new needs and new funding opportunities.

Volunteers who are compatible with the mission and needs of the center are essential. If an existing program at a center's facility is fortunate enough to have a team of volunteers, recruiting them for other purposes at the center might be feasible. Knowing the skill set and other strengths needed in the volunteer pool is also valuable. This can help ensure the best fit between the volunteers and those being served at the center. Volunteers can also contribute to efforts to keeping the center open and accessible to the clients over wider timeframes that are more convenient.

A process for executing formal agreements between the key funding partners and the community network of partners deserves concerted attention. Agreements need to be executed in the initial stages of a center as well as during its ongoing operation when needs change and new program partners are enlisted to meet these needs. Agreement provisions might also need to vary depending on the level of commitment and the role of the partners. Agreements to lease space might be appropriate for selected program partners. Other agreements might specify funding levels with conditions for program and service expenditures associated with that funding. The level of flexibility with the funding might also need to be specified clearly in the agreements used for center purposes.

## Summary

Since the EWC-SSCRC was established in 1995, it has made its mark as a resource center meeting a diverse set of needs in the neighborhood and surrounding area. Three community partners, Edward Waters College (EWC), the City of Jacksonville, and Family Support Services of North Florida (FSSNF), have joined hands to make this a viable and appealing place to receive services. The location of the EWC-SSCRC on the EWC campus allows the center to blend the goals and missions of two well-established organizations that also have independent identities in the broader community. The center's mission recognizes that academic, social, and health needs are incorporated in its goals. The convenience of the center's location, the attractive façade and welcoming atmosphere of the facility, the committed staff and volunteers, and the selection of programs that serve a wide range of ages and needs have been a positive combination for EWC-SSCRC.

At this time, the EWC-SSCRC offers a variety of services and programs, including family support/child development, health and safety, and self-sufficiency. The programs operating at EWC-SSCRC serve families, young adults, and seniors. Use of the center space is coordinated by the center manager and a combined calendar is prepared for general dissemination. The family practice clinic has an assigned space at the EWC-SSCRC and operates as a separate but vital unit at the center. There is interest in offering services and programs that cover the entire life span, from birth to senior status. In addition, opportunities for participants to pursue entrepreneurial ventures were mentioned as a need and interest for future program development.

The funding required to operate the EWC-SSCRC relies primarily on EWC and FSSNF. Operating expenses and several staffing positions are covered by each of these entities. The City of Jacksonville owns the land where the center is located. Additional funding for operating expenses and personnel is provided by Casey Family Programs. Several programs in the community offer their services and hold classes at EWC-SSCRC. Donations from other agencies have been notable: desk top computers, which are used for multiple purposes at EWC-SSCRC, were donated by the Florida Department of Children and Families. More innovative fund raising has occurred at EWC-SSCRC as well. The community-produced play, *Choices*, brought together talent at the center and on the EWC campus for the purpose of raising funds.

Collecting more complete resident use and program performance data has been of interest at EWC-SSCRC. An estimate of the number of visitors to the EWC-SSCRC, not including the family practice clinic, was 480 in March 2012. A profile of the visitors at the center that was developed by EWC-SSCRC indicated that around 90% are African American, 75% are female, and 80% are from the immediate neighborhood. At this time, performance and satisfaction with the services at EWC-SSCRC have not been measured. With advances in the data collection and sharing mechanisms, it is possible that these measures will become part of the knowledge base that will be available to the EWC-SSCRC for planning and improving services.

While EWC-SSCRC has experienced substantial success and has several strengths as a community resource, there have been challenges and several lessons learned. For example, obtaining ongoing input from the neighborhood on needs and suggestions for improving the services or redirecting resources has been a challenge. Scheduling programs and services at times that are convenient for and complement the needs of participants has been challenging but a priority. The adequacy of efforts for outreach to the neighborhood and the community has been a concern among center staff. Signage at and in the general area of the EWC-SSCRC has not been sufficient to communicate with the neighborhood and the community at large. However, the website (<http://www.schellsweetcrc.org>), and coordination between EWC and FSSNF in preparing a calendar of programs that is distributed to visitors, have kept some channels of communication open and active. Volunteers are vital to the operation of the EWC-SSCRC and should be part of any center's plans. Long-term planning to ensure the viability of a center is also a must.

Appendix B contains photos of the EWC-SSCRC, including the front entrance, lobby, computer lab, center participants, and the play, *Choices*.

## **Preparation of the EWC-SSCRC 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 EWC-SSCRC and visited the center on April 17, 2012. During the visit, the team completed a tour of the facility and interviewed several staff and volunteers. In addition, the evaluation team observed activities in a program focused on senior wellness and a GED prep class.

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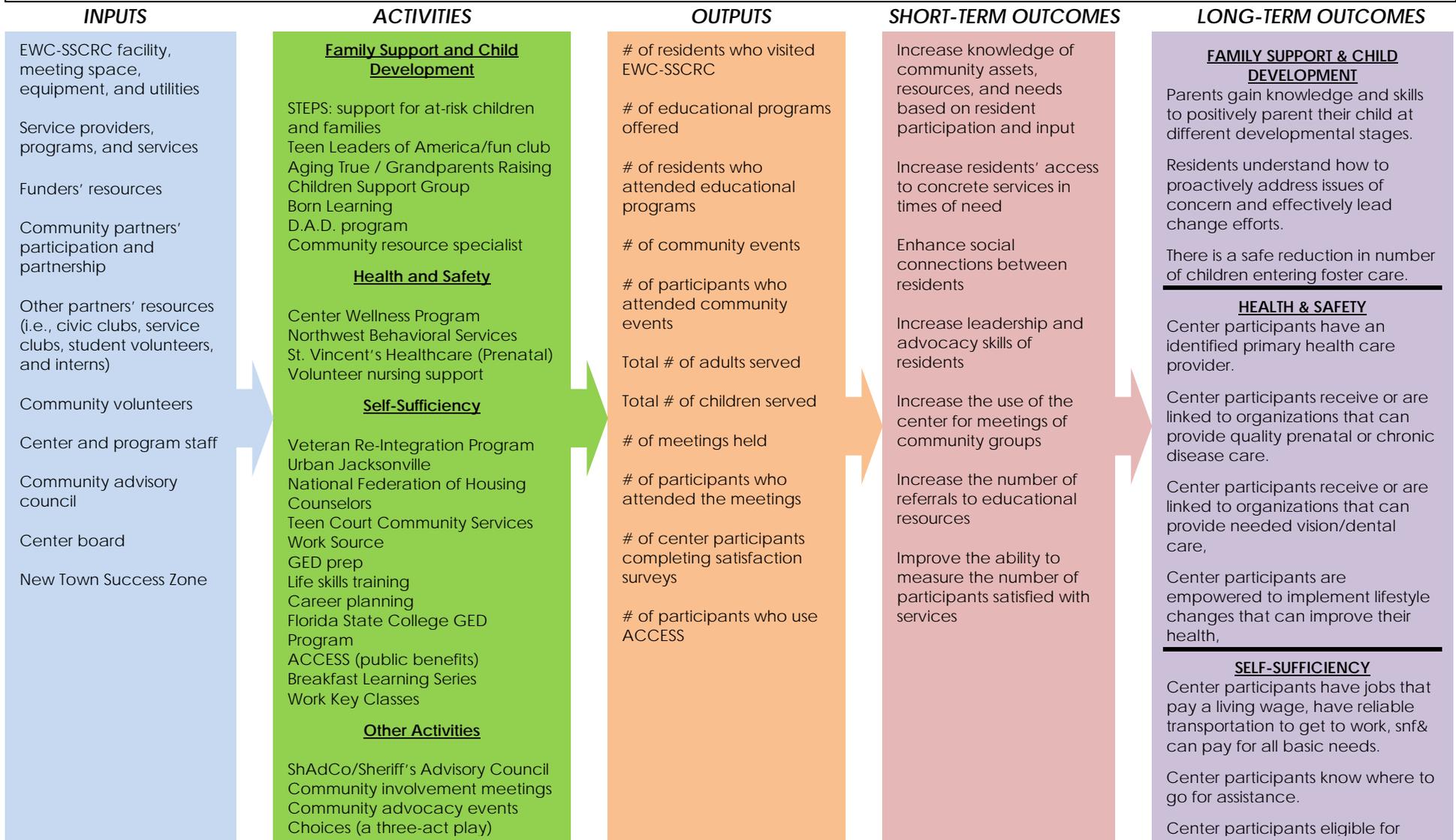
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## Appendix A: EWC-SSCRC Logic Model

### Logic Model: The Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center

**Goal/Vision:** To be a community and academic support model, promoting positive lifestyle changes and best practices, focusing on health, social, and educational services.

**Target Population:** Adults and their families who live in northwest Jacksonville.



## Appendix B: Edward Waters College Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center Photos

### Photos of the Edward Waters Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center

Front Entrance, Lobby, Computer Lab, Center Staff, Center Participants, and the play, *Choices*

