

CONNECTIONS



Center for Civic Partnerships

California Healthy Cities and Communities

The Claremont Youth Master Plan – Ten Years Later

[Executive Editor's note: In 1994, the California Healthy Cities Project published the first in a series of planning guides for municipal administrators and policymakers. "Promoting Healthy Youth: Strategies for Recreation and Community Services Partnerships" featured the City of Claremont's Youth Master Plan. Dick Guthrie, Claremont Human Services Director, has written the following column, updating us on what the community has been able to accomplish as a result of this award-winning planning process and tool.]

By Dick Guthrie

In January 1995, the Claremont Youth Master Plan (YMP) was formally presented to a joint meeting of the Claremont City Council and the Claremont Unified School District Board of Education, following seventeen months of work by a community task force. The Youth Master Plan proved to be a hallmark event in the community's history. In the ten years since the YMP was adopted as public policy, the level of program and service impact has been far beyond what was originally envisioned. Here is a look at the impact that the development of a community strategic plan can have on a community.

How It All Began

Claremont is a city of 36,000 residents located on the eastern edge of Los

Angeles County on the border of the fast growing Inland Empire region of Southern California. The community is widely known as the home of the Claremont Colleges.

During the early years of the 1990's both the City and the Claremont Unified School District faced serious financial challenges and service cutbacks. Additionally, population growth and demographic changes in Los Angeles County and the region resulted in a *reactive* rather than a *proactive* community planning process. An aging in place population also threatened to create an imbalance between the youth and senior populations, making Claremont a less attractive place for families to reside.

In September 1993, the City Council and the Board of Education jointly appointed a seventeen-person community task force, the Claremont Youth Master Plan Steering Committee, to develop a strategic plan to improve services and programs for youth and families in Claremont. The YMP Steering Committee was charged with undertaking demographic research, reviewing gaps in services, obtaining youth and community input, and making specific recommendations for improving programs and services. Both the City and



Children enjoying themselves at a Youth & Family Services afterschool program.

School District contributed financial support and staff resources to the effort. Following seventeen months of extensive work, the Steering Committee finalized a document that included a vision statement and ten goals.

Implementing the YMP

The YMP has now been in action for more than ten years and has resulted

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in more than \$11.7 million in new facilities benefitting the community. The following are examples of YMP programs and services:

- The City of Claremont and the Claremont Unified School District have developed a model of collaboration that includes several agreements related to facility usage, joint programs, staff training, joint meetings of elected bodies, student safety, facility and equipment maintenance, and information sharing.
- A City-operated Youth Activity Center (YAC) for high school aged youth was opened in 1994 adjacent to Claremont High School featuring health and social services, drop-in programs, social activities, youth employment services, and educational support.
- In 1994, a new intermediate school (7th and 8th grade) after-school recreation and enrichment program, TRACKS, was implemented based on YMP recommendations. The program includes enrichment classes, sports, trips, special events, and social activities. In February 2004, construction was completed on a new TRACKS Activity Center (TAC) which includes a 2,500 square foot game and activity room, computer center, music studio, gymnasium, and fitness center. This \$4.8 million facility was built as part of a cooperative effort between the City and the School District.
- The Claremont Unified School District initiated a Healthy Start Initiative to provide outreach services to support youth and families at three targeted school sites.
- In January 2005, the City Council approved the creation of a new

program division, Youth & Family Services, to provide case management, counseling services, and information and referral services for youth and families. The program is housed in a new \$1.1 million Youth & Family Support Center.

- There has been a focus on empowering youth and allowing them to impact public policy decision making. The City's Teen Committee meets annually with the Mayor, the City Manager, the School Superintendent, and the Police Chief.
- The City has implemented prevention/intervention services for youth including depression management and suicide intervention; anger management; alcohol and drug abuse counseling; parent-teen communication classes; supplemental on-site school-based counseling; smoking cessation classes; and harassment prevention.



Students learning through computer listening stations at a Youth & Family Services afterschool program.

Community leaders continue to focus on using the YMP to guide implementation of new services. In most cases, YMP initiatives have been implemented through partnerships between the City and either the School District, or community organizations. For example, all Board of Education agendas list the Youth Master Plan as a re-occurring item, and City Council

members and Board of Education members receive progress updates at their joint annual meeting.

A National Model

Over the past ten years, the Claremont Youth Master Plan has become a national model for developing strategic plans to improve youth services and programs. The National League of Cities, the California League of Cities, the California Cities, Counties, and Schools Partnership, and the California Healthy Cities and Communities Program all regularly refer to the Claremont YMP. City and school district staff have served as YMP trainers at numerous national and state conferences over the past ten years. In 1996, the National League of Cities named the Claremont YMP as the winner of the James Howland Award. The YMP has also received other state and national awards, including a California Healthy Cities and Communities Award in 1996.

The Future

In 2006, community members, School District representatives, service providers and city staff will revisit and update the Youth Master Plan. The issues that the community will face over the next several years will be increasingly complex: changing demographics, educational challenges, economic stratification issues, family relationship issues, affordable housing issues, and others. Building and maintaining a youth and family-friendly community will be critical to maintaining a balanced community, both demographically and socially.

For further information, please contact: Dick Guthrie, Director of Human Services, City of Claremont, 1700 Danbury Road, Claremont, CA 91711; Phone: (909) 399-5493; Fax: (909) 625-3184; Email: dguthrie@ci.claremont.ca.us 

Network Member Profile - The Montclair Community Collaborative

Leslie O'Hare Sorensen, Montclair Community Collaborative Co-facilitator

Thirty-two miles east of Los Angeles, the City of Montclair (population 35,000) is located below the San Bernardino Mountains. In the mid-90's, the region's economy began to shift from higher-paying manufacturing to lower-paying service-related jobs. As the economy changed, the City began to experience gaps in community services and decreased access to transportation, medical care, child care, and education. There were mounting cultural, linguistic, and economic barriers to individuals meeting their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. With no coordination between the City, schools, and other service providers, there was no shared vision or process to improve the "health" of the community. These issues inspired the development of the Montclair Community Collaborative.

In August 1996, over seventy-five local leaders and community members came together to ask "What can we do together to improve the lives of Montclair children and adults?" In response, the Montclair Community Collaborative was formed. The Collaborative worked to develop a shared community vision; identify community needs and strengths; prioritize action plans; and coordinate services. In 1998, Montclair became a California Healthy

City. Montclair's Healthy Cities initiative engaged the Collaborative in a city-wide communication and youth development initiative. The objectives of the initiative were to increase access to information, services, and activities by 25 percent, and to train Montclair High School Youth in communication and conflict resolution skills through a Youth Summit. The Summit helped launch the Montclair afterschool program at five school sites, which today serves over 600 children and youth year round. Youth participating in the Summit also initiated the building of a skate park.


"Neighbors now help each other with neighborhood clean-ups, and they teach each other parenting skills and healthy nutrition."

– City of Montclair Mayor,
Paul Eaton

Since the collaborative began, over \$13 million in grant funding has been secured to provide literacy programs, violence prevention activities, nutrition and physical activity education, after school services, primary medical care for the uninsured, and coordinated services for families in crisis. In addition, a free computer lab, bilingual community newsletter, and a college

preparation program are now available to the community. Local resources are now realigned to support a healthier city.

The Healthy Cities model provides a framework for the Collaborative to address the complex challenges facing Montclair," says Leslie O'Hare Sorensen, Montclair Community Collaborative Co-facilitator. "It outlines a cohesive approach to integrating individual, organizational, and community change." The model has helped school administrators understand the connection between affordable housing access and the academic performance of students, and has helped city officials understand the importance of family literacy and its connection to economic development. "Our Healthy Cities experience really provides hope that we can make a difference, especially if we work together," says Bonnie Mooney, Ontario-Montclair School District Administrator. Residents have benefitted from the work of the Collaborative and continue to see positive changes in their community.

For further information, please contact Leslie O'Hare Sorensen at (909) 625-9459 or (909) 957-4216. 


CHCC Nutrition Grants Awarded

Based on an RFP issued to the California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC) Network last spring, four communities have received nutrition grants through our partnership with the California Nutrition Network. They include the City of Riverside, the City of Delano, the Alameda County Public

Health Department/West Oakland Food Collaborative, and Healthy Communities of Southern Inyo County.

Grant awards of \$20,000 each will assist these communities in educating and empowering food stamp eligible residents to become more knowledgeable about nutrition and to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into their diet. Local initiatives will include gardening projects for families, computer-based activities for youth at

community centers, and community advocacy projects to promote neighborhood access to healthy food.

To view examples of community nutrition and physical activity promotion programs, visit the Healthy Eating resource page on our website at <http://www.civicpartnerships.org/default.asp?id=321>. For more information, please contact Thea Perrino, CHCC Program Coordinator, at (916) 646-8680. 

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California Healthy Cities and Communities assists cities and communities with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans, which address environmental, social and economic determinants of health. CHCC advocates a broad definition of health: a shared vision; widespread community participation; system reform; collaborative partnerships engaging local assets; and a means to measure progress and base improvements upon results.

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A Center of the Public Health Institute

Events & Resources

Websites

Active Living Storybank is a database of more than 100 searchable projects, programs, and initiatives around the nation, promoting healthy living through changes in the built environment, public policy, and education. For more information, visit: <http://www.activeliving.org/index.php/Storybank/134>

DataPlace™ from KnowledgePlex (a website resource on affordable housing and community development) delivers statistical snapshots of a community in seconds. It provides access to data sets, maps, and charts. To learn more about this fast, easy online tool, visit: <http://www.dataplace.org/>

Community Network For Youth Development provides a world where all young people thrive supported by communities that help them to develop their full potential. For more information, visit: <http://www.cnyd.org/home/index.php>

Publications

Zoning as a Tool to Combat Obesity. A publication on the use of zoning to restrict fast food

outlets. Details can be found at: <http://www.publichealthlaw.net/Research/Affprojects.htm#Zoning>

Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Improving Access and Opportunities through Food Retailing. PolicyLink. To view the report, visit: <http://www.policylink.org/pdfs/HealthyFoodHealthyCommunities.pdf>

Ten Principles for Successful Public/Private Partnerships. Combining strengths and resources, the public and private sector are working together to achieve common goals. Available at: <http://www.uli.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Bookstore&Template=Ecommerce/ProductDisplay.cfm&Productid=1487>

Engaging Youth – Why Does It Matter? Public Health Institute Fall 2005 newsletter. Available at: <http://www.phi.org/news-newsletter.html>

American Playgrounds, Revitalizing Community Space. Susan Solomon. Available at: <http://www.upne.com/1-58465-517-8.html>

Events

5th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy & Livable Communities
January 26-28, 2006
Denver, Colorado
<http://www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/SmartGrowth/>

Association for Community Health Improvement “Spring Training for Health Champions”
2006 Annual Conference
March 14-16, 2006
Phoenix, Arizona
<http://www.communityhlth.org>

California Public Health Association – North 2006 Annual Meeting
March 29-30, 2006
Oakland, California
Preservation Park
<http://www.cphan.org>

Mechanisms for Change 8th Annual Conference “Leading with Character”
Spring 2006
Sacramento, California
Check www.youthcitizenship.org for latest information