

**Pomona Youth and Family Master Plan
Community Board Special Dialogue Forums
Aug 26, 2010**

Background: In the summer of 2010, several key leaders involved with the Community Board of the Youth and Family Master plan gathered to discuss special topics to maintain and further detail gaps in the implementation of the plan. The following special discussions were conducted:

- Development of effective public relations and community outreach strategies,
- Identification and targeting of special youth populations supported by the plan,
- Maintaining and sustaining the Strengthening Families Program, Parent Education at PUSD Adult Education, and other family/parent service efforts to include creation of a Parent/Family Advisory Sub-Committee for the Youth and Family Master Plan and,
- Development of a Translation Team to assist in the outreach, translation of materials and meeting translations for the Youth and Family Master Plan---**still needs to meet.**

This report is not design to be a rigorous analysis of all pertinent topics covered to date but rather a preliminary investigation to addressing community connection and involvement with the Youth and Family Master Plan. The following is the input of these sessions conducted over a 3-day period and is not intended to be the final analysis but rather the gateway for continuous “dialogue to action” process to ensure integration of vital substance into the overall plan.

Public Relations and Community Outreach- There are particular challenges to having consistent public relations and community outreach capacity for the Youth and Family Master Plan. The Community Board, as such, is not an organization and does not receive funding directly for developing materials, websites and other outreach tools relying on City, School, partners outreach and free advertisement. The City to this point has taken the bulk of responsibility for funding printed materials, free products, early development of a website, staff time for assisting in the One Pomona E-Newsletter, setting up of tables and frequent presentation to various groups. Some challenges however still exist:

- a- The cut in City funding has impacted maintaining the materials and other outreach giveaways needed to conduct community outreach.
- b- Using volunteers to do some of the outreach is inconsistent due to time constraints and overuse of same individuals to man resource tables, do door to door in targeted neighborhoods, and do presentations to various groups.
- c- Inability to keep up with the requests or the request to set up tables is not given in a timely fashion or the materials are lacking (amount) to present a solid exhibition table.

Based on the input for building Community Board Capacity, the group decided on the following:

- 1) Assemble the YFMP Community Outreach Folder with standard materials, attractive postcard flyer developed by Nancy Matarrita, information on membership and partnership agreement, new brochure outlining the YFMP structure, Pomonafamilyresource.org cards, info on the Community Resource Centers in a centralize folder.
- 2) To begin identifying funding partners to donate monies to assemble and maintain the YFMP Outreach Folder. The estimate total cost is \$10,000 dollars per year. Note: Community Board members have decided not to accept monies from the alcohol, tobacco, firearms industries or their affiliates.
- 3) The group will work on expanding the Pomona E-Newsletter soliciting more articles from new partners, work with Andrea on the web and explore twitter capacity to update community members on the activities and Communities that Care progress of the YFMP.
- 4) Attempt to identify key activities for setting up YFMP resource tables and train other community board members to make presentations to local neighborhood/ parent groups.

Targeting of Special Youth Populations: The group, and to some extent many of the partners within the Community Board recognize that a single strategy for promoting youth pro-social protective factors does not fit all youth populations. While the Community Board is beginning to grasp the “85%- 10%- 5%” youth targeted formula, more research on how to outreach, engage and sustain youth in tested effective programming requires better understanding of what “special youth populations” actually mean. What engages these special populations, how do we outreach to them, how is success measured and how can we help them become more resilient in overcoming risk factors associated with each population’s sub-group.

For our purposes, while there still needs further discussion on this topic, we define special youth population as a well defined group under the age of 18 years of age that share common values, norms, problems and solutions unique to their distinct group. The “85%- 10%- 5%” youth population breakdown is supported by research and the “Communities that Care” operating system study. This body of research denotes that 85% of youth are involved in no risk to one risk factor and are generally considered youth not involved in major problems. 10% of youth are involved in 2 to 3 risk factor and generally respond to early intervention and 5% of youth have multiple risk factors across domains such as individual, peer, family, school and community. For the 5%, major intervention, high maintenance mentoring and intense case management is required. The following at risk populations are only a fraction of identifiable targeted sub-groups within the Pomona community.

- Substance abusing youth or children of substance abusing/recovering parents- users range from ages 11-17, evidence and data of early alcohol, tobacco, and other drug involvement is derived from California Healthy Kids Survey (<http://chks.wested.org/>) with the majority reporting marijuana, alcohol and methamphetamine use/abuse.
- Foster Care youth- research has shown later involvement with adult prisons and juvenile corrections.
- Cal- Safe Girls---parenting and pregnant minors tend to be separated from general population and highly susceptible to domestic abuse by partners. Abandonment by families is typical.
- Girls in gangs---typical gang intervention targets males and young girl’s involvement is not recognized.
- AB540 Students/undocumented families--undocumented youth and their families face many economic, social, legal, and cultural barriers. Affording and attending college continues to be extremely difficult; inability to show legal documents to obtain work, being barred from applying for drivers licenses, and other legal conditions are great challenges to this special population. They are caught between two worlds and live in fear of being deported to an environment they may not adequately be prepared for or relate to entirely.
- Youth with mental health illnesses or early signs—definite problems in recognizing this population due to misunderstanding of behavior, stigma towards illnesses and absence of trained mental health facilitators.
- Homeless youth---shame based existence for many young people and maintaining their social structure is often very difficult to sustain, lack of affordable housing, as well as a decrease in good paying entry level jobs.
- Gamers—youth who spend a lot of time playing games may expose them to violence, graphic sex and negative images, which can alter perceptions of healthy relationships/habits.
- Probation, Gang Involved and Incarcerated Youth---understanding how “institutional behavior” after being released impacts and shapes the high recidivism rate for juveniles and adults. Addressing needs and processes to change attitudes/behaviors while helping to decrease legal restrictions that limit the progress of rehabilitation. Laws governing youth/adult population is still complex and arduous. Resources on how to expunge and seal records is rarely utilized by this population.

Understanding gang mentality and reintegration into community settings from “How can I get mine” to “How can I give back” should be further funded. It seems California does not implement enough evidence-based strategies to rehabilitate this population adequately.

- LGBT and Questioning youth—in certain school environments group members felt LGBT youth were empowered but still recognize the need to understand gender identifiers and terminology and special needs.
- 85%ers---the group of youth who generally are successful yet from time to time require some guidance and attention to their needs to assure maintaining protective factors.

This does not represent further subsets or terminology that were left out of this list but were briefly discussed like; “Tweens”, Parenting Minor Fathers, “Latch Key” kids, Children of Serving Military Deployed Personnel or Special Physical Ability Children. This report denotes major/common groups recognized by the preliminary group.

In general, some recommendations surfaced on how we can target special youth populations—

- a) Provide more current research/data on proven effective and innovative strategies that can be implemented in a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) and fiscally conservative manner. We have no lesson learn “how to” guide that partners can share with each other on their challenges and successes with each particular special youth population. We hope that this discussion will lead to further analysis and action-integrated planning to educate all participants of the Youth and Family Master Plan and the Pomona community on effective strategies for targeting special youth populations.
- b) The biggest gap that still exists is how we communicate strategies to one another. There needs to be a process, system of communicating with each other that is specific to sharing of how we strategically target special youth populations that foster definite roles for the partners who wish to serve youth and their families. Possibly an YFMP blog system or website to specifically share information to educate partners and community members on a continuous basis.
- c) Further identification of Special Youth Population needs, noting their diverse cultural, spiritual and family infrastructure status, to better articulate outcomes and achievables for continuous support of a **Citywide Mentoring initiative**. Possibly working with University researchers to produce studies of this early exploration of special youth populations to further educate Community Board members.

Strengthening Families and Parents: In addition to building Community Board capacity, support of a Citywide Mentoring Initiative, improving overall Academic Student Success and implementation of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Comprehensive Gang Model; the plan has supported the Strengthening Families program, the Parent Education/ PUSD Adult School and other family serving agencies that deal with preventing Domestic Violence, promoting Health initiatives and grieve recovery for families who have lost children. Once again, the recent economic shortfalls have affected the capabilities of the City, School District and family serving Community Board partners to effectively provide services/programs to the families and parents in Pomona. The courts continue to send families to Parent Education programs and PUSD is still providing services but the need to build resources to expand the classes are critical at this stage. The group however agreed that the focus should remain on strengthening Families as an entire unit and should remain a top priority for the plan.

The group has made several recommendations to address these challenges:

- a) The Community Board should continue to support the implementation of the **Strengthening Families program**, in partnership with the Parent Education at PUSD Adult School and other family serving agencies within the Community Board network. These groups should create the continuum of care family serving network within the Community Board setting.

- b) Currently there have been several grants written by the City of Pomona to support the continuation of the Strengthening Families program and outreach to the Pomona community. In addition, there are discussions currently taking place within the City to explore the use of Community Development Block Grant monies to support the program at a smaller scale and possibly fund another Strengthening Families Program training for new members and/or a train the trainers' workshop to build capacity to develop in-house Strengthening Families Trainers but other funding options must be explored through private Foundations.
- c) There is a recommendation to develop a **Family/Parent Advisory Sub-Committee** within the Community Board. Acting similar to the Pomona Youth Advisory Committee this sub-committee would work with the Community Board on various aspects of implementation and provide input into the needs of all community members.

Note: Pomona's First Baptist Church will be implementing the Strengthening Families program commencing Sept 14th and has requested working with East Valley Community Health Center, the City of Pomona and the Parent Education at PUSD Adult School.

Final Recommendations and Conclusions: It has been the collective vision of the architects of the Youth and Family Master Plan to truly shift institutional and community infrastructures to adopt the "Community that Cares" operating system. We submit this early report as a steppingstone for greater discussion, analysis and integration of critical input/resources into the overall implementation of the myriad of strategies to address the critical outreach to the identified populations in this report. I would like to make additional recommendations that fall out of the special dialogue parameters but do have an impact on truly implementing a collective vision:

- a) Develop "Communities that Care" local organizing trainings and standard practices; incorporating language and strategic movements of "Dialogue to Action".
- b) Communication is critical to the success of the plan but we need to differentiate between what information should be generally shared, what information is on a "need to know" basis and how community partners handle rumor control and backdoorisms (petty/egoistic politics). People will disagree and all opinions should be respected but the Community Board should hold standards for unwarranted personal attacks meant to divide the Community Board.
- c) The Community Board, from time to time, should set aside time to work on leadership and team building skills that foster alignment of common interests in principle negotiation. The "**Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In**" is an example of a training that I would recommend. The authors argues that this method can be used in virtually any negotiation. Issues are decided upon by their own merits and the goal is a win-win situation for both sides. Below is a summary of some of the key concepts from the book. The four steps of a principled negotiation are: 1) Separate the people from the problem, 2) Focus on interests, not positions, 3) Invent options for mutual gain and, 4) Insist on using objective criteria. In principled negotiations, negotiators are encouraged to take the view that all the participants are problem solvers rather than adversaries. The authors recommend that the goal should be to reach an outcome "efficiently and amicably"¹

¹ Wikipedia 2010