

Executive Summary

The Homewood Children's Village (HCV) is a child-centered, comprehensive community initiative whose mission is "to improve the lives of Homewood's children and to reweave the fabric of the community in which they live." Our work began in 2008 in the Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh, where many of our children are surrounded by abject, generational poverty and educated in substandard schools. Since that time, the HCV has engaged Homewood's children and families, faith- and community-based groups, educators, legislators, and private and public funders in a community planning process, envisioning a "Village" where "Every Child Succeeds."

The "Village" for Homewood's children consists of each of the systems within which our children grow and develop over time: family, neighborhood, schools, and peer networks.¹ Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), the Village seeks to re-construct, mobilize, and/or support each of the systems within Homewood by **convening** existing agencies that provide services for the children and families in Homewood; **coordinating** the services along a developmental continuum from birth through college/career around *individual children*; and **building the capacity** of organizations who seek to serve the children of Homewood.

The day-to-day work of the HCV involves **engaging** Partner Organizations in **collaborative relationship**, **defining the role** that each plays along our developmental continuum; and **enhancing the services and programs** delivered in Homewood. In partnership with our research arm at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, the HCV also works with our partners to design, implement and evaluate our own evidence-based interventions to fill service gaps where an existing intervention and/or providers do not exist.

In sum, the HCV recognizes that we serve our children better by leveraging relationships and the existing resources of service providers in Homewood. In recognition of this model, the HCV was one of only six in the nation selected by Geoffrey Canada, founder and president of the Harlem Children's Zone, to present at the first national HCZ conference in November 2009. Aspiring to be a national model for serving children and families in economically challenged neighborhoods, the HCV will implement, evaluate, refine and disseminate to other communities, a collaborative program delivery model that is scalable, replicable and sustainable.

¹ Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Homewood Children's Village-Mission and Organizational Structure, and Work-to-date

MISSION

The Homewood Children's Village (HCV) is a child-centered, comprehensive community initiative whose mission is "to improve the lives of Homewood's children and to reweave the fabric of the community in which they live." Our work began in 2008 in the Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh, where many of our children are surrounded by abject, generational poverty and educated in substandard schools. Since that time, the HCV has engaged Homewood's children and families, faith- and community-based groups, educators, legislators, and private and public funders in a community planning process, envisioning a "Village" where "Every Child Succeeds."

Recognizing that these challenges persist, the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, and a group of Homewood children- and youth-serving organizations, began to meet in the fall of 2007 and to reach out to key systems level stakeholders (including the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, and the City of Pittsburgh Mayor's Office). By the spring of 2010, this group became a separate 501c3 organization called the Homewood Children's Village. This group expanded to include a larger set of organizations that, between them, offer a full range of physical, mental and behavioral health promotion, prevention and treatment services.

To date, however, many of these services are still largely uncoordinated, and offered independently of one another. Utilizing funding obtained from private donors and foundations, the HCV explicitly seeks to integrate the services and programs of our partner organizations. Specifically, our primary objective is to implement more expeditiously the infrastructure and program changes necessary to integrate fully the community's primary care and behavioral health systems to serve the holistic needs of children in the cradle to college to career pipeline.

THE FRAMEWORK-DIRECT SERVICE OFFICES, NETWORKS, AND COLLABORATIVES

The Board of the Homewood Children's Village has adopted a business plan and strategic framework to carry out its mission, vision, goals and objectives. The HCV Strategic Framework consists of a system of internal and external associations within which the work of serving children and families takes place. The internal associations include the defined work within HCV executive offices and the direct services that are provided by the Village. The external associations include "networks" where the HCV will not engage in direct

service, but rather will convene existing organizations and manage the coordination of services for individual children and families through those networks. Finally, the HCV will work with “collaboratives” to accomplish objectives that are not core to our day-to-day work, but are essential to making the “ecology” of our children whole.

HCV Internal Offices

The role of the Internal Offices of the HCV consists primarily of building the capacity of the internal organization and our external partners to fulfill our mission.

- The ***Office of the President/CEO*** clarifies mission and vision; ensures that the organization maintains its focus upon its defined objectives; engages partner organizations at the leadership level; and negotiates/executes memoranda of understanding that clarify the roles that each plays in the work of the Village.
- The ***Office of Evaluation*** underpins and supports everything that the Village undertakes. The Deputy CEO/Director is building a system of evaluation, which will be used by every HCV staff member and organizational partner to assist with documenting the work of the Village and tracking the outcomes for children and families.
- The ***Office of Community Affairs*** works to engage community members in constant dialogue to assess their individual and collective needs; supporting the work of our partner organizations through the coordination of events; and planning purposeful gatherings for our children, families, and partner organizations to re-establish community.
- The ***Office of Budget and Operations*** handles the fiscal and operational resources of the Homewood Children's Village and works with partner organizations and individual child care-givers to improve their internal business operations.

HCV Direct Service Offices/Initiatives

The Village has embarked upon two direct service initiatives: the Full service Community School and the Office of Promise Fulfillment. Within these two initiatives, HCV staff will design, direct and implement strategies (utilizing best practices and practice-based evidence) for serving and children and families.

- The ***Full Service Community School*** Strategy is an evidence-based nationally recognized model of service, which will be embedded in each school that serves the Homewood community. Within this model, each

school is reconceived as a community hub for general health and wellness, educational and other services for students, their families and the community-at-large. These additional services are provided by professionals and organizations that already serve the Homewood community.

- The ***Office of Promise Fulfillment*** is modeled after the College Success Office created by the Harlem Children's Zone. Working closely within the Full Service Community School model, the Office will use researched and best practice methods to increase rates of college enrollment, retention and graduation among Homewood students (e.g., incentives, tutoring and monitoring). The Office of Promise Fulfillment will support Homewood students in college, many of whom may be the first in their families to go to college.

HCV Networks

As the HCV envisions our collective Village, several domains of coordinated service are essential to the growth and development and general health and well being of our children. To that end, the HCV has identified the three networks that will be managed by staff members of the Village.

- The ***Early Learning Network*** convenes all of the child-care providers in Homewood to coordinate the broad range of care and services for the children; and to build the capacity of those providers to ensure that all children, from prenatal care to kindergarten, are developmentally ready to enter Kindergarten.
- The ***Health and Wellness Network*** convenes medical and social service professionals and organizations to devise specific strategies to address the general health (physical, psychological, and behavioral) and wellness needs of the children and families of Homewood.
- The ***Faith, Family and Out-of-School Time Network*** convenes organizations that serve and attend to the general well being of children and families within the community. This network consists of faith organizations, community recreation centers, athletic leagues and social service agencies, which serve the Homewood Community in out-of-school time.

HCV Collaboratives

The HCV states within its mission that the organization will seek to “reweave the fabric of the Homewood community,” acknowledging that the “ecology” within which our children grow and develop must be addressed. Yet, our core mission embodies service to children and their families. Accordingly, while not directing or managing the work, the HCV will participate in “collaboratives” that support our work and will assist us in realizing our mission.

- An ***Economic Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Collaborative*** focuses upon the built environment of Homewood, connecting the Homewood community to the regional economy of the city of Pittsburgh and seeking to revitalize the business corridor and housing core of Homewood. Members of the HCV Leadership Team and the Board of Directors serve in various capacities with this group.
- A ***Research and Policy Collaborative*** from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and Center on Race and Social Problems provides research and support upon which the practices of our internal offices and operational partners are built. It is through the utilization of evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence that the HCV will foster the change we seek within the Homewood community.

HCV WORK-TO-DATE

The HCV-Planning Year: FY 2010-11

During the first two years of operation, the HCV conducted the following foundational activities to change the trajectory of the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in Homewood.

1. Using the integrated data from Department of Human Services and the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the HCV conducted a needs assessment and segmentation analysis to understand the target population (i.e., moderate to highest need) who will be the focus of our services.
2. The HCV developed a plan to deliver a continuum of solutions based on “evidence-based” practice and “practice-based” evidence, and therefore has the potential to drive results. During this planning phase, the Homewood community engaged in a conversation to revitalize the neighborhood. HCV has been a key convener and partner to garner resident input and support for the work residents want to see in our community.
3. The HCV established effective partnerships to commit resources to sustain and scale up what works. Each of the partners who comprise the “Village” has demonstrated their commitment and formalized their collaboration through the MOU’s presented in this application.
4. The HCV worked with our partners at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and the Pittsburgh Public Schools to build a longitudinal data system that will provide information that the HCV will use to learn what works best, to continuously improve those solutions and to provide accountability. Further, the HCV partnered with evaluators and researchers at RAND Corporation and the University of Pittsburgh to increase our organizational capacity to analyze and process these data. The HCV also hired an experienced researcher and evaluator as the Director of the Office of Evaluation to oversee this work.

5. The HCV created, convened and participated in *active* communities of practice focused on solving persistent problems related to access to early childhood education, educational reform, and community revitalization. These convenings resulted in
 - a. The establishment of the Early Learning Network which will foster a culture of “Kindergarten readiness” for those who provide care for children ages 0-5, with a particular emphasis on mobilizing and empowering relative/neighbor care providers;
 - b. The reconstitution of all of the schools serving Homewood K-12 utilizing the “turnaround” school model; and
 - c. The development of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan, “Bridging the Busway” that will be implemented over the next 10 years.

The HCV-Inaugural Operational Year: FY 2011-12

To accomplish our work, the Village has raised more than \$6 million from private philanthropy in the Pittsburgh community. Our partners, with whom we have executed memoranda of understanding detailing the work that they will do within the Village, are as follows:

- Allegheny Department of Human Services
- Building United of Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Higher Achievement of Pittsburgh
- Homewood-Brushton Community Ministries
- Operation Better Block
- Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children
- The Pittsburgh Promise
- Pittsburgh Public Schools
- Primary Care Health Systems
- RAND Corporation
- University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work
- Urban Innovation 21
- Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
- YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh

The Village has also engaged the following potential partners in our work, seeking to clarify and memorialize a role that each would play in the work of the HCV:

- The Allegheny Conference
- The Allegheny Department of Health
- Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
- KBK Enterprises
- Neighborhood Learning Alliance
- The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
- Reading is Fundamental
- United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Pennsylvania

In July of 2011, the Homewood Children's Village hired its inaugural President and CEO, Derrick Lopez. The task of the President/CEO was to build upon the planning work of the previous two years, by establishing an organizational structure to carry out the work and implementing the work of the HCV. Since that time, the Village has accomplished a significant body of work. What follows is an overview of our work since July 2011.

HCV Office of Community Affairs

Led by Director Lisa Perry, the Office of Community Affairs is a critical part of the work of the Village as it seeks to develop a "brand" in the Homewood Community and promote the work of the Homewood Children's Village both locally and nationally. The work of this office serves as the face of the Village to the entire Homewood community, and their work since July includes the following:

- Planned the Back to School Block Party in front of the Academy at Westinghouse on August 13, 2011 in which more than 600 community members participated in a celebration and information sharing event for families from Pittsburgh Lincoln (K-5), Pittsburgh Faison (K-5), and the Academy at Westinghouse (6-12).
- Participates on Pittsburgh Faison Primary School's Community Pillar Team and works directly with their Community Liaison to ensure that the work of the HCV is coordinated with the needs as identified by the leadership and staff of the school.
- Organized the Safe Passages to School Initiative Press Conference, securing the attendance of the Mayor, the Superintendent of Schools, and Councilman Ricky Burgess to launch this initiative on Thursday, November 10, 2011.
- Planned and executed the "Evening in the Village" on November 17, 2011 at the Academy at Westinghouse, showcasing the work of the Village to our partners in the foundation community, and the community-at-large. This "friend-raiser" was a resounding success by any measure.
- Coordinated, in conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh, the HCV "Breakfast Roundtable" on Friday, November 18, 2011, hosting Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Study Center, and Mrs. Jane Quinn of Communities in Schools in New York.
- Secured a "Ticket for Kids" partnership that gives our children the opportunity to participate in sports events and arts and cultural programming in the city free of charge. On November 18, 2011, the HCV secured 120 tickets for a University of Pittsburgh Women's Basketball game. Moreover, 55 students attended "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," a production of the Kuntu Repertory Theatre at the Carnegie Library on February 2, 2012.
- Planned and executed a Holiday Party for the AHRCO Families – December 17, 2011- Fourteen families with more than 40 children participated in the festivities which included storytelling, arts and crafts, a bouncing machine in the gymnasium, a holiday meal, and a visit with Santa Claus, who posed for a photo with each child.

HCV Office of Evaluation

Led by Director Shannah Tharp-Taylor, the Office of Evaluation has begun its work in earnest. The work of this office underpins and supports everything that the Village undertakes. The Director is building a system of evaluation, which will be used by every HCV staff member and organizational partner to assist with documenting the work of the Village and tracking the outcomes for children and families.

To that end, the Director negotiated a contract with “Social Solutions” to utilize the web-based software, “Efforts to Outcomes.” The Directors of Evaluation and the Full Service Community Schools attended the regional training in Baltimore from December 6-8th to learn ETO’s functionality and to map our strategy for the best use of this tool to support our work, both now and moving forward.

The strategy being built in coordination with HCV staff and our partners will include the following:

- Capturing the efforts and inputs critical to planning and executing events and activities conducted through the Office of Community Affairs to engage and inform families and stakeholders;
- Documenting our work along the Developmental Continuum including partners’ work and the services provided through the Full Service Community School and the Office of Promise Fulfillment;
- Developing and training partners in the use of paper-based templates to capture necessary data in the absence of computer access;
- Documenting the completion of the Children Youth and Family Master Planning Process, supporting our consultant to complete the plan, and recommending next steps based on findings from that work.

The Director conducts monthly program update and accountability meetings with HCV Staff and began scheduling similar meetings in January 2012 with our Operational Partners to establish metrics, to conduct formative assessments of progress, and to recommend next steps to accomplish program goals. Additionally, moving into FY 2012-13, the HCV will hire a Data and Evaluation Associate to assist the Director in the detail-oriented tasks of the Office of Evaluation.

HCV Office of Full Service Community School

Led by Director K. Camara Watkins, our Full Service Community School Initiative launched at the Academy at **Westinghouse (a 6-12 school)** in August of 2011. Working in close collaboration with the Principal, the HCV has been recognized as a full partner within The Academy. The FSCS has added 25 additional staff members that are employed by the HCV through various grants. Remarkably, 22 of the staff are people of color in whom our children can see themselves and their individual possibilities. These staff members work with individual students to provide case management, additional academic support in and out of the

classroom and to increase communication between the school and parents/guardians. In addition, in collaboration with teachers, the FSCS staff works with cohorts of students to support them in their classrooms.

Of particular note is the HCV Safe Passages to School Initiative, which was launched on November 10, 2011. In partnership with the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Public Schools, this initiative consists of three prongs:

- **Prong 1** – Demolition of vacant and abandoned houses within three blocks of The Academy. To date, of the properties identified, three have been torn down.
- **Prong 2**—Identifying and establishing through long-range planning, “safe-routes” to school within one mile of the school through which children walk. A “systems project” with the Heinz School at Carnegie Mellon University will occur in the spring to conduct this work. Marteen Garay, a recent graduate of the Heinz School of Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon is leading this work.
- **Prong 3** –Beginning on November 7, 2011, the Village retained SD Transit (a Homewood-based business) to provide bus transportation to and from school for students who live between one and two miles from The Academy. Westinghouse sits in the middle of a very challenging neighborhood and most of our children are relegated to walking because they live within a two-mile radius of the school. Student tardiness and absenteeism is a perennial problem at The Academy because students have to navigate the challenging terrain of Homewood and the abandoned houses where illicit behaviors often occur. When the HCV learned of this need, general operational funds were re-purposed to accommodate a solution.
 - 171 students have made a documented inquiry about the service.
 - 74 students have completed the necessary paperwork and are eligible to utilize the bus service on a daily basis. These students represent a tenth of the school population.

DAILY OPEN GYM and BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION: A DAILY OPEN GYM from 7:00 – 7:45 a.m. is supervised by Derrick Lopez and University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work Interns. Every morning more than 200 students arrive between 7 and 7:30 a.m. Attendance has improved, tardiness has diminished, and more students are now obtaining breakfast. As a result of this initiative, all students at the Academy are also now able to enter the building every morning at 7 a.m. Otherwise, students would not be permitted to enter the building until 7:30 a.m. when breakfast begins.

NOTE: The Principal and Design Director at **Pittsburgh Faison K-5** requested that we expand the Full Service Community School Model to their campus during the second semester. Our Community Affairs Director participated regularly on the Community Pillars Team, and members of the HCV staff have participated in several school events. Moreover, our Executive Assistant to the CEO, Detria Dixon, completed her placement practicum at Faison for her Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Pittsburgh. During her five

days of work each week, Ms. Dixon completed a needs assessment for the implementation of the Full Service Community School at Faison in the fall of 2012.

HCV Office of Promise Fulfillment

In January 2012, the HCV launched the Office of Promise Fulfillment to support the students at the Academy at Westinghouse. Akin to the Office of College Success in the Harlem Children's Zone, the launch utilized the templates developed by HCV Intern Marteen Garay, who worked in the Office of College Success in the Harlem Children's Zone prior to coming to the Village. Elizabeth Barnes is serving as the Consulting Director of the work at Westinghouse seeking to serve the 70+ seniors in the building. Of note, Mrs. Barnes has worked to accomplish the following:

- Preparing all students for graduation in partnership with the school counselors, assigned HCV mentors and Neighborhood Learning Alliance (conducting tutoring and administering credit recovery).
- Piloting the "Bridge to College" Program for students in grades 10-12, which will include the following activities:
 - Developing general college readiness and soft skills for post-secondary success through a weekly program that will
 - assess where students are in terms of literacy and numeracy; and
 - engage students in mathematics and English study to support them as they matriculate into college level work where they can obtain credit.
 - Working on college applications, essays, and the FAFSA
 - Involving students in service learning projects and exposure to the world-at-large.
- Developing a "Bridge-to-College" program and comprehensive pathways for students in grades 6-12 from lessons learned.

OTHER HCV INITIATIVES

Enriching All Homewood Schools-Utilizing our Developmental Continuum (See Narrative Attachment A) that guides our work as well as the "Six Developmental Pathways" developed by Dr. James Comer at the Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center, the HCV has approached the Pittsburgh Public Schools regarding the development of a "Comer" Zone for Homewood Schools.² Should the Pittsburgh Public Schools adopt this proposal, the Developmental Continuum would have the following iterative educational structure.

- Birth to Promise Comer School "System" serving the Academy at Westinghouse Feeder Pattern

² See generally, Comer, J., Joyner T. & Ben-Avie, M (eds.) (2004). Six Pathways to Healthy Child Development and Academic Success. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- CoZi Initiative for Family/Neighbor Care and Crescent Early Childhood Center³
- Comer School Development Program and Community Schools Model
 - Pittsburgh Faison K-5
 - Pittsburgh Lincoln K-5
 - Academy at Westinghouse 6-12
- University Assisted Full Service Community School
 - Health, mental health, academic, social, recreational support and out-of-school time activities
 - Faculty and student support
 - Professional development, continuing education, and perhaps a certificate and degree with the Comer Training

³ CoZi refers to an educational model developed by James Comer and Edward Zigler for early education. See generally, Finn-Stevenson, M. and Stern, B. (1997). Integrating Early-Childhood and Family-Support Services with a School Improvement Process: The Comer-Zigler Initiative. *The Elementary School Journal*, 98 (1), 51-66.