



# Building Evaluation Capacity Initiative

2017-2018 Progress Report  
October 2018

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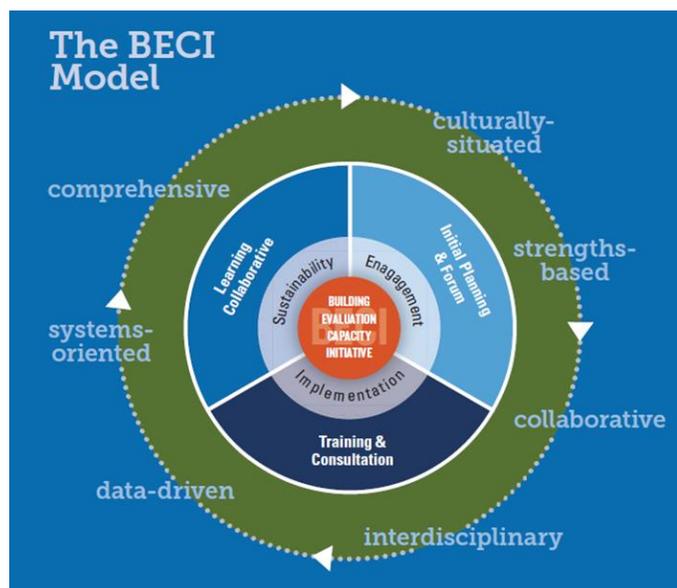
## Overview

This report summarizes progress for the 2017-18 year of the Building Evaluation Capacity Initiative (BECI). BECI provides training and consultation to organizations in Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey to enhance organizational effectiveness through program evaluation, quality improvement, and data-driven decision making. BECI began in 2009 with pilot funding from The Scattergood Foundation to build evaluation capacity in the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, which led to subsequent funding by several foundations to implement and evaluate the Porch Light Initiative. The Scattergood Foundation and The Consultation Center at Yale have worked in collaboration since the Porch Light Initiative to develop, carry out, and identify additional funding to support BECI.

Since 2009, BECI has provided a two-year program of consultation, training, technical assistance, and coaching to almost 50 organizations. After completing the program, organizations are eligible to receive ongoing consultation and training through the Program Evaluation Learning Collaborative. This year, 12 organizations participated in the core BECI model (7 Year 1 and 5 Year 2) and 19 of 33 (58%) alumni organizations participated in Learning Collaborative trainings or consultations. This year, four in-person Learning Collaborative trainings were sponsored by PropelNext, an initiative of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, and The Scattergood Foundation. Virtually all alumni organizations (91%) engaged with the Learning Collaborative monthly newsletter, which was a new addition this year.

## Approach

We combine group trainings, individually-tailored consultation, technical assistance, and coaching to increase the evaluation capacity of organizations. Our **interdisciplinary** team encourages organizations to build evaluation capacity for one program, and then expand capacity to other programs. We consult *with* not *to* organizations by establishing **collaborative** partnerships of mutual respect. Our **strengths-based** perspective seeks to identify and leverage each organization's unique assets and competencies to enhance evaluation capacity. We promote a **comprehensive** quantitative and qualitative understanding and use of data to monitor performance and track outcomes, and encourage the use of a **data-driven** approach to decision making. We also emphasize the routine consideration of cultural factors as these pertain to a program or its evaluation to ensure the work is **culturally-situated**. We have found that programs that take culture into account are more responsive to the diverse needs of people served and are ultimately more successful. Finally, we encourage organizations to be **systems-oriented** in thinking about their program's operation and impact. Systems thinking includes understanding how a program operates over time and within the organization, but also its impact not only on the people it is intended to serve but on other individuals, groups, or organizations who may be affected by it.



## Participating Organizations

Over 50 organizations in the Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey area have participated in BECI since it first launched in 2009. Organizations represent diverse focus areas, including health and wellness, social and human services, arts and culture, sports and recreation, and education.

### 2009-2010

Philadelphia Mural Arts Program (initial pilot)

### 2011-2013

11<sup>th</sup> Street Family Health Services of Drexel Univ.  
Children's Crisis Treatment Center  
Child Guidance Resource Centers (2011-12)  
Mercer Street Friends  
Northern Children's Services

### 2012-2014

Broad Street Ministry  
Child Protection Program at St. Christopher's  
Hospital for Children  
Health Federation of Philadelphia/Multiplying  
Connections  
Mental Health Association of Southeastern PA  
Pathways to Housing PA  
Project HOME

### 2013-2015

Community Organization for Mental Health and  
Rehabilitative Services  
JEVS Human Services  
Pennsylvania Horticulture Society  
Philadelphia Food Access Collaborative  
Turning Points for Children

### 2014-2016

Center for Families and Relationships  
Lutheran Settlement House  
Nationalities Service Center  
Northeast Community Center for Behavioral  
Health  
Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia  
Resources for Human Development

### 2015-2017

ACHIEVEability, Inc.  
Art Sanctuary  
Bancroft  
Episcopal Community Services  
Free Library of Philadelphia  
La Comunidad Hispana  
Need in Deed  
Scribe Video Center  
Smith Memorial Playground & Playhouse  
The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania  
Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

### 2016-2018

After School Activities Partnerships  
Boys and Girls Club of Chester  
Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia  
Diversified Community Services  
Hopeworks 'N Camden

### 2017-2019

Children's Literacy Initiative  
Coatesville Youth Initiative  
MANNA  
Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education  
Starfinder Foundation  
Vetri Community Partnership  
WHYY

## Year 1 Organizations



### Children's Literacy Initiative

Children's Literacy Initiative works with pre-k through 3rd grade teachers to improve early literacy instruction so that children become powerful readers and writers. The focus of BECI Year 1 was to understand all the data elements collected and how to make data available in real time.



### Coatesville Youth Initiative

Coatesville Youth Initiative seeks to contribute to a vibrant future for Coatesville by engaging youth in experiences that support their success in school and in life. The focus of BECI Year 1 was the ServiceCorps Summer Leadership Program, a youth leadership development program that trains youth ages 14 to 18 to be leaders in their community.



### MANNA

MANNA provides nutritious, medically-appropriate meals and nutrition counseling to neighbors who are battling life-threatening illnesses such as cancer, renal disease, and HIV/AIDS. The focus of BECI Year 1 was measuring outcomes for the meal delivery program.



### The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education inspires meaningful connections between people and nature. The focus of BECI Year 1 was the NaturePHL program which connects families with healthy outdoor play through education about health benefits, incentives, and resources.



### Starfinder Foundation

Starfinder enhances the personal growth of underserved youth through soccer and learning experiences that engage, inspire, and motivate. The focus of BECI Year 1 was the Senior Leaders program which promotes physical fitness, encourages academic achievement, and provides opportunities for high school students to practice leadership skills.



### Vetri Community Partnership

Vetri Community Partnership empowers children and families to lead healthy lives through fresh food, hands-on experiences, and education. The focus of BECI Year 1 was the Mobile Teaching Kitchen, which provides pop-up cooking classes and demonstrations at schools, community events, and farmers markets.



### WHYY

WHYY is the leading public media organization in the Philadelphia Region, including Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and beyond. The focus of BECI Year 1 was the Media Programs which provide high quality media instruction to middle and high school students in Philadelphia.

## Year 2 Organizations



### After School Activities Partnerships

After School Activities Partnerships' mission is to develop high quality after school activities and resources to empower youth and strengthen communities in Philadelphia. While the original focus of BECI was on ASAP Debate, the scope of ASAP's project has expanded in Year 2 to evaluate the impact of all four core programs, together serving 5,000 youth each year.



### Boys and Girls Club of Chester

The Boys and Girls Club strives to help all Chester youth reach their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood, while giving back to their community. The focus of BECI has been the Power Hour After School Program, which helps young people develop academic, behavioral, and social skills through homework completion, high yield learning activities, and tutoring.



### Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia

The Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Cambodians in the city through youth education and case management, and programs to advocate for the community. The BECI initiative has centered around improving evaluation capacity for the Case Management program.



### Diversified Community Services

The mission of Diversified Community Services is to provide leadership and services that strengthens and coordinates the Point Breeze and surrounding communities' efforts on behalf of children, youth, and families, especially those that are most vulnerable. During BECI, they have focused on evaluating programs for children and youth and for adults/families with a two-generation approach toward addressing and relieving poverty, both in the present and for future generations.



### Hopeworks 'N Camden

Hopeworks 'N Camden uses education, technology, and entrepreneurship to partner with young men and women as they identify and earn a sustainable future. The focus of BECI was to develop a comprehensive logic model of their youth development programs to further develop alumni activities and create a streamlined data dashboard across four key outcomes.

## Evaluation Thinking & Practice

Changes in evaluation thinking and practice are assessed each year through quantitative pre- and post-assessments as well as the organization progress reports included at the end of this report.

Historically, 88% of participating organizations have reported improved evaluation thinking, knowledge, and practice, including establishing evaluation frameworks, and viewing evaluation with increased importance. This year's BECI cohort of 12 organizations reported similar outcomes. When asked how participating in BECI has changed their evaluation thinking and practice, [organizations overwhelmingly shared that developing their logic model provided the foundation for their evaluation work](#), noting that this exercise helped them think more strategically about their outcomes and how they dedicate resources.

Organizations also:

- Created a shared understanding of evaluation and data among staff
- Established structures for their evaluation processes and procedures
- Learned how to incorporate evaluation into their programs
- Prioritized program outcomes
- Refined their reporting processes to present regular, customized reports
- Understood the importance of having access to their own data

As we explored each aspect of the logic model, it challenged us to question the purpose of our program, the relevancy of the activities implemented, and to evaluate the intentional and unintentional impact of our work.

- Coatesville Youth Initiative

As an organization, we are being increasingly strategic and systematic about the way we think about our monitoring and evaluation practices.

- Starfinder Foundation

The logic model we created allowed us to think critically of our program goals and outcomes, and how we would be evaluating the achievement of those outcomes. We realized our program was on the right track with a lot of our planned evaluation methods and protocols, but that we needed to tier our evaluation to all levels of our complex program.

- Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

We understand more keenly how to build the necessary data collection methods, systems, and processes that are needed to track our measures of program success.

- Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia

## Lessons Learned

Each year, organizations participating in the core BECI model are asked to complete a progress report from their perspective, which includes describing lessons learned. The types of changes described vary for each organization, but usually involve actions taken that affect multiple organizational stakeholders, such as staff, leadership, funders, and people served. Often, the lessons learned build on changes made in evaluation thinking and practice or in establishing an organizational culture to sustain evaluation capacity.

Lessons learned this year are consistent with those reported in previous years, and included:

- Evaluation takes time and resources
- Evaluation is an ongoing and evolving process
- How to develop a logic model
- How to use a logic model to inform program planning and evaluation
- The importance of narrowing the scope of evaluation to clearly align with the program's activities, outcomes, and mission
- The importance of strategically developing a culture of evaluation
- The importance of maintaining transparency in evaluation
- The need to continuously review and revise data collection and reporting tools and procedures
- The value of simplicity in presenting data

This training helped us create a working logic model for the WHY Media Labs program and showed us the value of thinking through each step of the logic model when developing a program... The logic model helped us to identify areas we had not thought about and to hone other areas to be more specific and achievable.

- WHY

We learned that presenting data in small, visual bites was critical to encouraging staff and stakeholders to increase their use and understanding of data.

- Hopeworks 'N Camden

We have learned a lot about the process needed to incorporate successful evaluation into our programs including leaning on experts, devoting a lot of time to planning and implementing, and starting with the outcomes... We have also learned that, while we could evaluate everything, often narrowing the scope and identifying a question that we want to solve for is the most helpful in program quality improvement.

- Vetri Community Partnership

Over the past year of piloting different survey tools, we learned that a great deal of consideration should be given to survey administration, in addition to the actual survey content.

- MANNA

## Sustaining Evaluation Capacity

All organizations are also taking steps to sustain evaluation capacity. Based on a recent review of seven years of progress reports, 91% of organizations report improvements in organizational sustainability of evaluation, including enhanced infrastructure, staffing changes, and reallocation or dedication of resources to evaluation.



This year's BECI cohort of 12 organizations reported similar outcomes, sharing that they have:

- Allocated time during existing staff meetings to discuss data and evaluation
- Created logic models for other programs within the organization
- Dedicated time in an existing staff position to evaluation
- Hired new staff to focus on evaluation
- Implemented a new data management system to track outcomes more systematically
- Shared materials from BECI trainings and consultations with staff
- Submitted grant applications to further the evaluation work

ASAP's Director of Programs has begun the process of exploring vendors to create a new programmatic database for the organization, and has been able to think about this new tool from a program evaluation standpoint – thinking about how ASAP will use the information collected to tell a compelling story about the programs and look for new ways to improve, rather than just collecting data without a plan for analysis.

- After School Activities Partnership

The biggest steps thus far to sustaining the BECI work are the steps related to building buy-in and the new dissemination structures the organization has put in place (which should also help with buy-in).

- Children's Literacy Initiative

We are now writing both new and renewal funding proposals with a much clearer sense of what we can deliver regarding evidence of our work and its impact, along with clear data demonstrating our most recent past performances.

- Diversified Community Services

We have continuously reviewed our program goals and objectives and analyzed ways to implement sustainable evaluation practices to ensure that we are reaching our benchmarks for our programs and our members.

- Boys and Girls Club of Chester

## Program Evaluation Learning Collaborative

The Program Evaluation Learning Collaborative provides organizations who have completed the core two-year BECI model with continued opportunities for training, consultation, technical assistance, and peer learning. This year, offerings included an evaluation mini-conference, in-person trainings, onsite and virtual consultations, and a monthly e-newsletter.



### Mini-Conference

Each year, the Learning Collaborative launches in the fall with an annual evaluation mini-conference. **Over one third of PELC organizations (12, 36%) attended the mini-conference.** Topics were:

- Evaluation challenges
- Evidence-based practices
- Implementation fidelity
- Small group consultations



### In-Person Trainings

This year, BECI partnered with *PropelNext*, an initiative of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, to provide four in-person trainings. **Over half of the PELC organizations (52%) attended the trainings,** which covered:

- Visualizing data to maximize impact
- Developing and sustaining organizational leadership for evaluation
- Identifying appropriate evidence-based practices for your organization
- Implementing evidence-based practices with fidelity



### Consultations

BECI consultants also provide individual consultations to alumni organizations. This year, **periodic individual consultations were conducted with eight organizations (24%),** dating as far back as to our 2012 cohort. Consultations focused on:

- Data analysis
- Data visualization
- Logic model development
- Strategic planning



### Monthly E-Newsletter

This year the Learning Collaborative launched a monthly e-newsletter to discuss evaluation topics, share evaluation resources, and announce upcoming events. **Almost all alumni organizations (91%) engaged with the monthly newsletter.** Topics included:

- Data visualization
- Sustaining evaluation capacity
- Identifying evidence-based practices
- Implementing evidence-based practices with fidelity
- New and soon-to-be released evaluation books
- Conducting focus groups

## Our Team



### **Cindy Crusto, PhD**

Cindy is a Senior Evaluation Consultant with YaleEVAL. She has experience training community organizations in program evaluation, and has conducted evaluations of early childhood systems, school readiness, young children's exposure to trauma, college awareness and readiness, youth substance use, and systems of care. Cindy was chair of the American Evaluation Association Task Force that developed the AEA Public Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation.



### **Amy Griffin, MA**

Amy is a Senior Evaluation Consultant with YaleEVAL. She has experience providing consultation on the development and implementation of program evaluations to nonprofit agencies, coalitions, foundations, and local and state departments. Amy has a Master's degree in Communications, advanced graduate training in Family and Child Ecology, and expertise providing technical assistance and training to state departments and community-based organizations.



### **Elizabeth Grim, MSW, MPH**

Elizabeth is a Senior Evaluation Consultant with YaleEVAL. She uses data to strengthen organizations and communities, and has expertise in providing training and technical assistance to community-based organizations, evaluation, data visualization, and policy analysis. Much of Elizabeth's work focuses on the social determinants of health, including housing, homelessness, child welfare, juvenile justice, and education.



### **Samantha Matlin, PhD**

Samantha is a Senior Evaluation Consultant with YaleEVAL and the Director of Evaluation and Community Impact at The Scattergood Foundation. She is also the former Special Advisor to the Commissioner at the City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. Samantha has experience providing evaluation consultation to community-based organizations and state agencies, including implementing and evaluating arts-based neighborhood initiatives, school-based social and emotional learning programs, and programs that serve children, youth, and families.



### **Jacob K Tebes, PhD**

Jack is a Senior Evaluation Consultant with YaleEVAL, the Executive Director of The Consultation Center, and the Director of BECI. Jack has experience conducting child, youth, family, school, and community-based evaluations. In addition to conducting applied research on resilience, he has established public-academic partnerships using evaluation data to inform practice and policy; directed an evaluation of an arts-based neighborhood intervention in Philadelphia; and evaluated various school- and community-based initiatives focused on trauma and/or substance use.

Other technical and support staff for BECI include: Susan Florio, Administrative Associate; Maegan Genovese, MA, Research Associate; and Erin Hoffman, BA, Evaluation Assistant.

# Lessons from the Field – Year 1



Children’s Literacy Initiative



Vetri Community Partnership



WHYY



Coatesville Youth Initiative



Starfinder Foundation



Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education



MANNA

# Children's Literacy Initiative

Year 1: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

In the first year of our participation in BECI, the Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) has focused on facilitating the flow of formative data to the teams that is needed when it is most needed. This has entailed regularly scheduled meetings, talking through obstacles to data collection and delivery, and brainstorming solutions to common obstacles. For example, over the past year, CLI has developed tools to support field teams in their use of formative data. One benefit of this work is that it pulls in members of the organization from a variety of teams and helps secure buy-in by making evaluation relevant to staff beyond just the Research and Evaluation team. Obtaining buy-in for a project like BECI is challenging in a busy, growing organization. It requires a time commitment from all involved and requires that staff from disparate teams feel involved in the first place.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

To provide useful data at useful times, we need to know how to operationalize usefulness for each team. Our BECI consultant was instrumental in helping us develop strategies for determining the data needs of each CLI team. The CLI BECI team brainstormed interview questions and crafted a plan for a data needs assessment. Just discussing this process reframed the narrative of BECI for CLI. When beginning this initiative, we had expected to jump right in to data planning with all members of the organization and that the activity would keep folks engaged and interested. However, it quickly became clear that not everyone's needs were being addressed. Our consultant's suggestion was to conduct brief interviews with each team to discuss their work and find the places where the initiative could help them with their work.

Interviews will take place this fall after the busy season (the lead-up to and the start of the school year) has passed. Related to this, one lesson we learned is that regular meetings only serve to keep people engaged if they feel their time is being respected and used well. Interviews, too, will be scheduled at a convenient time, will be kept short, and the rationale will be thoroughly explained beforehand so that interviewees feel free to opt out if desired.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

Another lesson learned is the importance of maintaining transparency in evaluation. If colleagues from other teams are unaware of what evaluation work is happening and why, it makes it difficult to see the value of that work. To that end, the Research and Evaluation team has been working to disseminate not only the results of analyses, but also information about evaluation planning, logistics of data collection, and other aspects of the day-to-day work of evaluation. The goal is to build a familiarity with the evaluation work happening at CLI to pull more people in. So far, the Research and Evaluation team has included information about standard data collection tools in a recent back-to-school edition of the monthly Research and Evaluation team newsletter and are planning a lunch and learn session to talk more about evaluation within CLI with staff from across the organization. The Research and Evaluation team is also updating their dissemination methods for results to make them more user-friendly and more easily

shareable. This spring, the Research and Evaluation team also created a folder on our shared drive that all CLI staff can access and that contains data collected that can be shared with external partners and stakeholders.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

The biggest steps thus far to sustaining the BECI work are the steps related to building buy-in and the new dissemination structures the organization has put in place (which should also help with buy-in). In addition, evaluation work is being carefully considered in determining the cost of a project, which should have an impact both representationally (i.e., emphasizing the value of evaluation) and logistically (i.e., being able to keep evaluation work funded). In the next year of the initiative, CLI hopes to identify and put in place more structures to maximize sustainability over time.

# Coatesville Youth Initiative

Year 1: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

Coatesville Youth Initiative (CYI) seeks to engage youth in experiences that support their success in school and in life. For BECI, CYI is evaluating its ServiceCorps program. CYI was pleased to learn we were selected for the Building Evaluation Capacity Initiative. During the first year, we moved closer to accomplishing our goal of creating an agency-wide data collection and evaluation system that effectively and efficiently capture our impact at the program, organizational, and community level. Thus far, CYI has developed a draft logic model for ServiceCorps as well as for the overall organization. In addition, we identified short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes to track and are in the process of narrowing these down to determine the focus of data collection. One focus is understanding the intermediate outcome of their program after youth complete ServiceCorps. To learn more about this outcome, CYI leadership has connected with similar youth-serving organizations to learn how they track youth alumni. CYI is also currently reviewing available validated youth measures to track outcomes of interest before initiating pilot data collection.

The workshops and one-on-one technical assistance allowed CYI staff to glean best practice from our colleagues in the program; and develop logic models for the CYI and ServiceCorps Leadership Development program. ServiceCorps is a field-tested youth leadership development program that utilizes best practices to train 40 young people (from diverse socio-economic and racial backgrounds), ages 14–18, to be leaders in their community. We train youth as a means to protect them from developing health and behavioral problems that often manifest in substance abuse issues.

As we explored each aspect of the logic model, it challenged us to question the purpose of our program, the relevancy of the activities implemented, and to evaluate the intentional and unintentional impact of our work. This and many other valuable conversations shifted our perspective about the work we do on multiple levels to measure program quality and impact.

Finally, we evaluated our survey instruments and data collection tools to ensure continuity between our program activities, the outcomes we hope to measure, and intervals in which data will be collected. This work will continue as we refine our logic models.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

The Building Evaluation Capacity Initiative workshops and technical assistance helped challenge our thinking about evaluation. We subscribed to the philosophy that evaluation merely measured the impact of our efforts. We rarely used the data to determine what program components we should implement and/or discontinue. For example, when working on our logic model for ServiceCorps we identified a number of unintended outcomes (all positive) our youth experienced as a result of the program. However, once we selected the activities and outcomes for the program it became clear not all our outcomes were the result of our programming efforts and, most importantly, we determined that not every outcome needed to be evaluated. This shift in thinking allowed us to strategically select the short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes that accurately reflect our work and can be easily measured.

## **What are some lessons learned from this initiative?**

Learning from the experts in evaluation and data collection was incredible for our small organization. The expertise, resources, and rich conversation sparked new ideas and creative thinking for the CYI staff.

Through this experience, we:

- Learned the purpose, strategy, and methodology of evaluation practices.
- Gained a network of incredible colleagues from the Philadelphia region to share ideas, expertise, and experience. The workshops and grantee meetings were great opportunities to glean best practices and realize we were not on this journey alone. Many of the challenges we faced were shared by others. Collectively, we brainstormed solutions and learned from one another.
- Increased our knowledge of the logic model in its entirety, the components (definitions), and how to create a narrative about the work we do. There are so many ways to develop a logic model and with support we developed a process that worked for CYI
- Learned how to build a logic model for our organization and departments.
- Explored strategies for creating a culture of evaluation within our organization and engage staff at all levels in the education process.
- Recognized the importance of analyzing our evaluation efforts so we are strategic and focused.

## **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

We took the initial step of dedicating a staff position to data collection, analysis and evaluation. We have a full-time Data and Evaluation staff person whose role, amongst other things, includes designing and implementing evaluation methods, gathering and analyzing data, preparing evaluation reports on outcomes, and submitting recommendations as appropriate; designing and implementing analysis methods for the short- and long-term impact of CYI's programs and services; designing evaluation strategy and methods for key grants that support prevention and youth development; and gathering and analyzing data.

To operationalize the work, we started on our logic models, we earmarked time during our monthly staff meetings to educate and inform staff about training topics and logic models. We also gathered feedback to create our logic models and shared the draft documents for comments, questions, and final touches.

Our Associate Director of Data and Evaluation also scheduled meetings with staff from our Youth and Family and Prevention departments to begin developing logic models for CYI programs and initiatives in those departments.

In an effort to glean best practice from other youth-serving organizations participating in the BECI program, we also held a series of meetings with Hopeworks 'N Camden, Starfinder Foundation, and After School Activities Partnership of Philadelphia to learn more about their data collection process, established quality assurance protocols, data collection software used to track outcomes and impact, and reports generated for internal and external use.

## Summary of Progress

The MANNA team is very grateful for the progress we have achieved so far with BECI. After the fall trainings, we hit the ground running and met with our consultant to develop a logic model. While developing this tool, we were able to think critically about the specific outcomes we hope our program achieves for our clients, and in what order: short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term. Segmenting our outcomes in this way allowed us to prioritize our evaluation needs. As a team, we decided that evaluating the outcomes we expect to see while clients are enrolled in our program should take priority over long-term outcomes that occur post-services. Additionally, we already began piloting two different survey tools that could be used to support claims about short- and intermediate-term outcomes, so we decided to utilize Year 1 of BECI to evaluate the effectiveness of these tools and determine which one should be used in our ongoing program evaluation.

Our consultant guided us through an important data crosswalk exercise that aligned all the information we were collecting on our surveys with the outcomes on our logic model. The exercise exposed gaps in data needed to substantiate certain outcomes, in addition to overlapping questions that provided less meaningful data. Since a pilot was already underway with these two surveys, the crosswalk considerations will be used to revise the tools after our initial analyses are complete. We are currently in the final stages of the pilot and hope to have survey results analyzed by early fall. Based on initial findings and feedback from staff who are administering the surveys, we are already discussing alternative survey questions and considering revamping one of the tools. Although we have learned that building an effective evaluation strategy takes time, we know the process is crucial for identifying areas of program strength and weakness and ultimately ensuring we are meeting the needs of our clients.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

Participating in BECI has provided us with far more structure in our evaluation efforts than we have ever had before. The logic model alone provides us with a framework of analysis that reigns in our conversations when we start exploring new survey tools and question types. The model helps us think about the claims we want to make with the data we are collecting; if the data cannot be tied to one of our outcomes on the logic model, we know we need to think twice about the overall purpose of collecting that data. Checking our priorities against the logic model creates a simple yet necessary system of accountability that we had not utilized before.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

Evaluation takes time. Without unlimited capacity to administer and analyze surveys, the evaluation strategy must be incorporated into program staff's already busy workloads. Over the past year of piloting different survey tools, we learned that a great deal of consideration should be given to survey administration, in addition to the actual survey content. One of the surveys we are piloting is the SF-12 health survey, a 12-item validated tool used to measure physical and mental health. Although this is a shortened form, we quickly found that the survey was taking over 10 minutes to administer over the

phone to our clients, who were sometimes confused by the questions and answer options. At first, we were drawn to this tool because it was validated and offered us the ability to benchmark outcomes with the general population; however, we will need to consider the tradeoffs involved before deciding on how to move forward with our ongoing evaluation strategy.

Another important lesson we have learned is the value of piloting different tools before making a final decision. In addition to the SF-12 health survey, we also administered an evaluation tool developed by MANNA staff that incorporated more program-specific questions about the impact of our meal service. This tool had not undergone any rigorous testing for reliability or validity, but we felt it was important to collect data with greater relevancy to our program in addition to general physical and mental health. Through this pilot, we learned that our clients could answer the questions more easily than the SF-12 and therefore survey administration took about half as long. However, after preliminary analyses we found that the survey does not have high enough reliability in measuring the constructs we want to know more about. This pilot showed us that we need to continue revising and piloting the tool to improve its overall strength if we want to include it in our evaluation strategy moving forward.

We are currently considering other tools to pilot so we can compare the time it takes to administer, client comprehension level and ability to answer the questions, as well as the survey outcomes. We are excited to pilot the PROMIS (Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System) measures which is another set of validated tools that measure overall mental and physical health.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

An exciting development we have recently made is the hiring of a Director of Research and Evaluation, Dr. Jule Anne Henstenburg. This new position both increases our capacity for ongoing program evaluation and institutionalizes the role of data and evaluation in MANNA's culture. Jule Anne will be joining our BECI cohort and looks forward to continuing the momentum set forth in Year 1 of the initiative. One of Jule Anne's other projects will be establishing a more formal branch or department at MANNA to house our research and evaluation initiatives. The work we do through BECI will be housed here and will allow us to sustain our evaluation efforts well beyond the two years of the program.

## Summary of Progress

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education is one of the first urban environmental education centers in the country, with 340 acres of fields, forests, ponds, and streams in northwest Philadelphia. Our core programs are designed to inspire meaningful connections between people and nature. The focus of BECI Year 1 was our NaturePHL program. NaturePHL is a cross-sector program helping Philadelphia children and families achieve better health through activity in local parks, trails, and green spaces. The collaborative program brings together physicians, clinicians, educators, public health advocates, park and recreation agencies, and other organizations to offer outdoor activity prescriptions for Philadelphia families. NaturePHL connects families with healthy outdoor play in their neighborhoods through education about health benefits, incentives, and resources.

NaturePHL has been successful in implementing our outdoor activity counseling messages in the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In the first year of NaturePHL, we trained providers and residents at two primary care clinics on the counseling messages and clinical resources we created. We provided universal and intensive counseling to about 50% of all well child visits for children aged 5-12. As we started our second year of NaturePHL, we continued evaluation on our screening surveys and data collection on the number of messages being given according to CHOP's EMR, as well as refining evaluation tools for our Nature Navigator. We are implementing NaturePHL resources into the other two primary care clinics, so our reach is expanding and more Philadelphia families are being informed on the benefits of outdoor activity and time in nature.

More specifically, during our first year of BECI, we developed a NaturePHL logic model, revised our screening surveys to include a clinic code to better track data across sites, developed pre- and post-surveys for families participating in the program, and created a survey for clinicians delivering the program. We analyzed data from our screening surveys and CHOP's EMR to understand whether the NaturePHL is being delivered with fidelity. We also collaborated with graduate students to conduct focus groups and other data collection and analyses to further explore our outcomes.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

Our participation in BECI has enabled us to develop more concrete evaluation protocols. The logic model we created allowed us to think critically of our program goals and outcomes, and how we would be evaluating the achievement of those outcomes. We realized our program was on the right track with a lot of our planned evaluation methods and protocols, but that we needed to tier our evaluation to all levels of our complex program. BECI trainings provided us with the tools and resources we needed to implement evaluation plans at the provider level of our outdoor activity prescription program as well as the patient level, which helped us to better evaluate our program as a whole.

### **What are some lessons learned from this initiative?**

Our program leaders learned the importance of presenting data correctly through BECI's training on creating user friendly plots and graphs. We were very surprised how different information could be displayed and interpreted, and how the correct use of graphs could allow our program to better communicate our goals to our community.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

With the guidance of BECI, our team created physician surveys to better evaluate the success of our counseling messages and if they are feasible for our providers. We are editing our coded focus group data based off what we learned from BECI, and have adjusted a lot of our graphs after BECI's recommendations of how to communicate data effectively.

# Starfinder Foundation

Year 1: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

Starfinder Foundation is a sports-based youth development organization whose mission is to enhance the personal growth of underserved youth through soccer and learning experiences that engage, inspire, and motivate. We harness the values, learning opportunities, and community-building power of soccer to offer a deep experience through which kids gain the skills, confidence, and resiliency to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

The program Starfinder chose for BECI is the Senior Leaders program. While we have drafted versions of logic models in the past for this program, the initiative has allowed us to develop a fully-realized model of the Senior Leaders program for the first time. With this in place, it has strengthened our program development and evaluation practices. Starfinder is intentional in the delivery of our practices and activities. Through the process of developing the logic model, we comprehensively documented and characterized the many varied activities within this program. This has not only guided outcome evaluations, but it is also helped us think more about process evaluation as well. As an organization, we are doing a better job communicating the importance of evaluation to all staff and developing a culture that emphasizes the importance of evaluation. During this past year, there have been many in-depth discussions at all organizational levels regarding our current evaluation practices and opportunities for improvement; and more importantly, how we can use data to tell our story as an organization more effectively. Finally, we have been developing ways to collect and track longitudinal data about our alumni to look at long-term outcomes. This year, we piloted an alumni follow-up survey that we have refined with assistance of our BECI consultant.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

As an organization, we are being increasingly strategic and systematic about the way we think about our monitoring and evaluation practices. The initiative has highlighted areas for improvement in outcome evaluation, including additional outcomes that we want to begin measuring, and areas where we had useful data already but were not utilizing it. Additionally, we are refining the way we communicate program impact information, both to external stakeholders and internally with staff members.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

That evaluation is an ongoing and evolving process. The hectic nature of nonprofit work makes it easy to push off data collection and evaluation activities until reports are due. Thus, it is necessary to create an organizational culture that understands the value of evaluation and integrate it into everyday practice. In addition, it is difficult to measure everything we might want to and we need to think creatively about ways to utilize the data and information we have available to demonstrate impact.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

Even though we are a small organization, we have staff members who dedicate part of their time to metrics and evaluation. By having these individuals, we have been able to consolidate and refine our data collection and evaluation process to make it less time-consuming. This has also made the data more accessible and useable agency-wide. We plan to integrate additional program staff into the data collection process and ensure they are educated and trained about the importance of data collection. Finally, we engage in ongoing assessment of our logic model to ensure that it aligns with current programming and make changes when necessary.

# Vetri Community Partnership

Year 1: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

Vetri Community Partnership is a non-profit organization empowering children and families to lead healthy lives through fresh food, hands-on experiences and education. With four core programs - Eatiquette 360, My Daughter's Kitchen, Vetri Cooking Lab, and Mobile Teaching Kitchen - our overall goal is to increase nutrition and culinary education and knowledge about cooking with fresh, whole foods. Increasing levels of obesity, entrenched poor eating habits, and a lack of nutrition education adversely affects short- and long-term health outcomes. Challenges in combatting these issues include the lack of experience with cooking real food, the lack of exposure to a variety of vegetables, the lack of access to fresh produce, and a general bias against vegetables. Our vision is to help communities improve eating habits so that they can reduce nutrition-related diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Our objective is to increase practical cooking skills and nutritional knowledge by exposing participants to tasty produce so that they increase vegetable consumption.

While each of our programs has structures in place for collecting information and informing our practice, our evaluation often prioritized the needs of our funders rather than assessing our own quality improvement or process evaluation. Participating in both the group sessions and working with our consultant has helped us improve our internal understanding of the language of evaluation. We are now focusing on the methodology of weaving process and program evaluation into the structure of each of our programs while incorporating the goals of our funders.

For this initiative, we opted to focus on Mobile Teaching Kitchen, which offers participants pop-up sampling and demonstrations at community centers, schools, farmers markets, and food distribution locations. Because Mobile Teaching Kitchen acts as a drop-in service, collecting information from participants presents many challenges. Working with the team at Yale, we created a logic model detailing our activities, outputs, and projected outcomes. We have created and piloted a short survey based on the outcomes that we expect from participants that directly correlates to our logic model.

Though we have been collecting information and data from visits with our Mobile Teaching Kitchen since the program's launch in the fall of 2016, our approach is now much more intentional, educated, and streamlined. We look forward to a year of data collection using our new survey and to applying the lessons learned to the rest of our programs.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

Our experience working with the team at BECI has shown us that, with methodical thinking and planning, we can ensure that we are building an internal capacity to evaluate data and learn from our findings. When one first gets involved in "evaluation," it can feel very daunting and overwhelming because it seems like an exercise that should be taken on by experts in the field of social science. When we first started incorporating evaluation into our programs, we didn't have much direction and we didn't know what to do with the information that was collected. We have learned a lot about the processes needed to incorporate successful evaluation into our programs including leaning on experts, devoting a lot of time to planning and implementing, and starting with the outcomes. Our knowledge gained this year

has helped us to see that sometimes a successful evaluation is learning from mistakes within our survey tools or realigning our methodology to better suit our programs.

### **What are some lessons learned from this initiative?**

In going through the process of building the logic model, we spent a lot of time diving into the philosophy, goals, and projected outcomes of a single interaction with the Mobile Teaching Kitchen. This exercise has been crucial to understanding how participants interact with a demonstration or tasting and what we intend for them to gain from the experience.

We have also learned that, while we could evaluate everything, often narrowing the scope and identifying a question that we want to solve for is the most helpful in program quality improvement. Though we were in the practice of collecting a lot of information, both quantitative and qualitative, we weren't quite sure what to do with the data. Now, we have a methodological approach to asking the questions that we want answers to and creating processes for using that information to improve our program. We have gained a great deal of confidence in our internal knowledge of evaluation and research in the non-profit field. However, when necessary, we have taken the initiative to contract with experts for analysis and to rebuild surveys.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

We have just undergone a new strategic planning process, and one of our updated goals is to increase our evaluation of each of our programs for both quality improvement and assessing impact. In order to ensure that this is part of the operating plan, we have set a timeline for leveraging the work that we undertook for the Mobile Teaching Kitchen to complete logic models for our other programs. Our team meets frequently to discuss evaluation, lessons learned, and check in about the information being collected in the field and the entire staff continues to have monthly dashboard meetings to ensure that we are on pace to reach our goals.

## Summary of Progress

WHYY applied for this evaluation training to help WHYY grow its ability to understand and measure the impact of the WHYY Media Labs Program. The Media Labs Program began in 2015 as a direct service effort to provide our brand of high quality media instruction to 27 middle and high schools in the School District of Philadelphia. WHYY Media Labs are designed to teach students the fundamentals of media production as a tool for learning in all curricular areas, both in-school and afterschool. Through this three-year partnership with the District, WHYY installed fully-equipped Media Labs into each school and exceeded our goal by serving 28 schools by 2018.

WHYY began this evaluation training in the last year of this three-year partnership. WHYY has used this training to create a logic model to guide the work, to negotiate the contract set with the program's independent evaluator, Research for Better Schools, and to have a better understanding of what is most impactful to measure.

In spring 2018, WHYY began planning for the next phase of the WHYY Media Labs program. We used the logic model we created from the training to inform our strategic planning and identify what we want to accomplish over the next three years. We are in the process of completing a logic model for this next phase to help guide us in our implementation and evaluation. We are also identifying what data should be gathered throughout the year and who will be responsible.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

At the start of the WHYY Media Labs program, WHYY entered in a contract with Research for Better Schools to evaluate the program. After the first year of this training, we felt more confident and knowledgeable when discussing what evaluation we needed that wasn't being compiled. This training taught us the importance of both pre-surveys and post-surveys to measure change and helped us understand the importance of having access to our data.

WHYY negotiated and amended the contract with Research for Better Schools to include the following:

- Conduct a survey with Cohort 1 and 2 teachers to inquire about any sustained practices in line with the program model
- Modify current surveys for pre- and post-administration
- Shorten/revise current survey tools
- Prepare/send WHYY data files

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

This training helped us create a working logic model for the WHYY Media Labs program and showed us the value of thinking through each step of the logic model when developing a program. We were required to complete a logic model for a grant proposal in the spring and felt confident completing the exercise due

to this training. The logic model helped to identify areas we had not thought about and to hone other areas to be more specific and achievable. We hope to institutionalize the logic model development at the beginning of each organizational project to help WHY Y identify goals and measure impact.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

For the next three years of this program (Phase 2), we have raised \$1,256,748 to date, allowing us to build in resources to grow the evaluation of the program on our end. WHY Y is in the process of hiring two Site Coordinators for this program. The Site Coordinators will oversee an improved system for gathering data. In order for a teacher to receive a stipend for a completed in-school project, the teacher and WHY Y Media Instructor for that school will fill out a spreadsheet at the end of the project, providing us with regular quantitative and qualitative data such as the corresponding lesson plan, the number of students engaged, quotes from participants, etc. The Site Coordinators will also observe classrooms on a regular basis, monitoring the program for continual improvement. By having someone dedicated to gathering this data, we will be able to have a sustainable flow of information to help evaluate the program.

Our group has also been sharing materials and takeaways from our training with other members of the organization. In May 2018, our consultant came to WHY Y to present on focus groups, as that was a topic of great interest to other departments in the organization. Our goal is to include evaluation and assessment on every project and institutionalize the process, beginning with the development of a logic model to guide the work. We are making it a point to build in support for program evaluation in every grant proposal that we submit whenever possible.

# Lessons from the Field – Year 2



After School Activities Partnership



Boys and Girls Club of Chester



Hopeworks 'N Camden



Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia



Diversified Community Services

# After School Activities Partnerships

Year 1: July 2016 – Summer 2017

Year 2: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

After School Activities Partnerships (ASAP) facilitates after school and summer enrichment clubs in schools, libraries, community-based organizations, and recreation centers throughout Philadelphia. In the 2016-2017 school year, ASAP served more than 5,000 youth in 351 total programs. Through the following citywide initiatives, ASAP expands the traditional scope of after school activities to cultivate communities of diverse youth for whom extra-curricular passions are the gateway to success in the classroom and beyond: ASAP Chess, ASAP Debate, ASAP Scrabble, ASAP Drama, and ASAP Directory of After School Programs.

ASAP was excited to be selected as one of the organizations in the Scattergood Foundation's Building Evaluation Capacity Initiative 2016-2018 cohort. Having already established a staff-led Data and Outcomes Committee informed by ASAP's 2015-2017 Strategic Plan, the time was ripe for a deeper dive into program evaluation. By the end of our first year in the program, ASAP staff had developed a detailed logic model for one program, ASAP Debate, and selected a new verified tool to evaluate youth outcomes – the Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey. To pilot this new tool, ASAP administered the survey at the beginning and end of the 2017 Summer Debate Academy.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

To continue growing in our evaluation practice, ASAP spent the 2017-2018 school year rolling out the Panorama surveys to student participants in all four of our programs measuring (1) Self-Efficacy, (2) Sense of Belonging, and (3) Grit/Resilience. In addition, for each initiative, ASAP selected a fourth survey module that assesses outcomes specific to that initiative. ASAP Debate and ASAP Drama selected Social Awareness; ASAP Chess and ASAP Scrabble selected Growth Mindset. All five of these social-emotional competencies are highly correlated with increased academic performance. By the end of the 2017-2018 school year, ASAP collected Panorama survey data from more than 600 youth. Using these average scores and ranges as a benchmark, ASAP is excited to use the same measure to collect both pre-season and post-season evaluations from a similar number of youth this in the 2018-2019 school year.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

While students responded fairly well to the aforementioned survey, we learned that two weeks of a summer program was not long enough to have measurable results, and that the surveys needed to be shorter – three or four modules/outcomes instead of ten. With this in mind, we were excited to tackle the challenge of year two. ASAP's BECI experience has also continued to help us understand that best practices for evaluation need to be championed at every level of the organization.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

Staff leadership works to ensure that program evaluation is a constant consideration in program design, and program staff members have found new ways to advocate for data collection with partners. ASAP staff have also worked with the Programs Committee from ASAP's Board of Directors to develop a more user-friendly, public-facing version of the organization's logic model, which will be included in ASAP's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Finally, ASAP's Director of Programs has begun the process of exploring vendors to create a new programmatic database for the organization, and has been able to think about this new tool from a program evaluation standpoint – thinking about how ASAP will use the information collected to tell a compelling story about the programs and look for new ways to improve, rather than just collecting data without a plan for analysis.

# Boys and Girls Club of Chester

Year 1: July 2016 – Summer 2017

Year 2: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

The Boys and Girls Club of Chester strives to nurture the development of our young people and guide them along the path to future success by providing an environment that supports excellence in education, good character and citizenship, and a healthy lifestyle. Our vision is that all Chester youth reach their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood, while giving back to their community now and in the future. To achieve this mission, we have chosen to focus on our Power Hour After School Program. This program is designed to provide Club staff and volunteers with the strategies, activities, resources and information to create an engaging homework help and tutoring program that encourages Club members at every age to become self-directed learners. Power Hour helps young people develop academic, behavioral and social skills through homework completion, high yield learning activities and tutoring.

Participation in the BECI process has helped us narrow our focus to concentrate on just one aspect of our program, after school services. One of our principle concerns was that we needed to develop an evaluation process that met the needs of not just our funders, but also provided key information that would help our staff to continuously monitor youth outcomes and staff development. This year, we have focused on two main areas of capacity development regarding the evaluation process: standardizing procedures for data collection and analyzing data. We developed and implemented a survey to measure club member satisfaction regarding our Club Fridays and Youth Summit activities as well as conduct a survey of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers parents. We have used SPSS software to analyze the data and report out to our various funders and partners. Additionally, our key card system has allowed us to maintain accurate data regarding club member attendance and program participation.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

We continue to utilize the BECI strategies for implementing a system-wide culture for program evaluation. Each of our program staff are involved in the standardization of procedures that aid in data collection and analysis. This has been an invaluable experience.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

Because of the new attendance tracking, we are realizing the importance of conducting daily or program-specific pre- and post-test surveys. We initially thought that we could measure participant progress by pre- and post-testing after a series of workshops. Through analyzing the attendance data, we realized that we weren't capturing the same population each time. Different groups of students would attend each week. We have now implemented a system whereby we pre- and post-test knowledge or other concepts before and after each program activity. An example of this is the We Own Fridays program. We now pre- and post-test youth the day of the activity, rather than waiting until the end of a curricular unit that is done over a series of weeks.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

We continue to be committed to providing evidence-based services in our Club. We recognize the importance of making data-driven decisions that allow us to enhance the services that we offer to our members. For this reason, we have continuously reviewed our program goals and objectives and analyzed ways to implement sustainable evaluation practices to ensure that we are reaching our benchmarks for our programs and our members.

# Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia



Year 1: July 2016 – Summer 2017

Year 2: July 2017 – Summer 2018

## Summary of Progress

The Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia (CAGP) is a community-based organization founded in 1979 to support refugees fleeing the Khmer Rouge genocide. For more than 39 years, CAGP has provided cultural, educational, health and social services to Cambodian refugees, immigrants and their families in Philadelphia. With offices in North and South Philadelphia, CAGP operates programs in three areas: Health & Family Stability (case management, health care navigation, parenting, and senior service programs), Education & Youth (out-of-school, cultural, and youth leadership programs), and Civic Engagement, Community Development & Advocacy (immigration, legal defense, and street cleaning programs).

Building on the logic model that we created in year one, we developed more clearly defined outcomes in terms of quantity, quality and impact measures to evaluate our case management program’s effectiveness over time; (1) How many people did we serve? (2) How well did we do? (3) Is anyone better off as a result of our work?

This was an intensive process in defining, assessing, and communicating the following:

- Why we do our work; identifying the results that our strategies are designed to achieve.
- Who we engage in our work; the populations and communities that we serve.
- How our work is designed and delivered to make a difference; the rationale for why our strategies are likely to be effective if they are delivered well.
- How we define success in terms of both quality and impact; our standards of practice and expectations about how the people we serve will benefit.
- What capacity we need to assess progress; the systems and processes we use to gather, analyze, and use data to drive ongoing improvement.

This year, we also took some more steps to gather research and evidence to support our approach and program interventions. We are also in the process of understanding the training, methods, and mindfulness involved in crafting and conducting surveys as measurement instruments to track our outcome measures of client wellbeing and household stability. Another instrument that we are adding to our evaluation toolkit is a customized Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system (Salesforce). This new database will be used to track our updated outcome measures that have been identified and fine-tuned this year.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

We understand more keenly how to build the necessary data collection methods, systems and processes that are needed to track our measures of program success. This includes developing measurement

instruments to track quantity, quality, and impact measures, including client satisfaction surveys, workshop evaluation forms and pre/post-tests, and Client Wellbeing & Household Stability survey forms.

### **What are some lessons learned from this initiative?**

It was difficult at times to shift our perspective on how we view our work and program. The process of identifying the three tier of outcome measures (quantity, quality, and impact) changed our thinking behind our work and how we should improve on how we see outcomes and how that will lead to improved strategies in our program as well.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

Continued support and technical assistance from Scattergood mark our current moment of bringing CAGP to another level of operational, programmatic, and organizational maturity. We have added a newly formed role to the structure of CAGP - the Operations and Finance Officer. In addition to overseeing financial management, fund development, human resource administration, this part-time position will focus on implementation and maintenance of the program evaluation process and our newly customized CRM system.

We are excited for this new structure and evaluation toolkit as it will increase our administrative capacity to revitalize our current organization and allow for additional attention to be directed toward program evaluations and to support our development as a learning organization.

# Diversified Community Services

Year 1: July 2016 – Summer 2017

Year 2: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

Diversified Community Services' focus during BECI started in Year 1 with identifying and grouping our continuum of services into two groups: programs for children & youth, and programs for adults. Using those two groupings, we worked with BECI to establish a logic model for each of the two groups. We completed the children & youth programs logic model in Year 1, and the adult programs logic model in Year 2.

Once the logic models were completed – recognizing that logic models are in fact living documents and will always require updating and revisions – we identified gaps in tools available to measure outputs and outcomes where they existed for any of our programs. And, then we began, and are still in the process of researching and selecting data gathering and measuring instruments that will fill the identified gaps, and that are realistic for our organization to manage.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

This initiative, with the incorporation of logic models, changed our thinking and practice regarding evaluation by allowing us to look at our organization critically and identify areas that needed to be defined. The definition of these areas for us were broken down into two key functional components, Children Programs and Adult/Family Programs, each with corresponding logic models. By dividing the organization into two key functional components we could better articulate, define, and design an operational workflow with the use of logic models that truly highlights our two-generational strategy.

This initiative also has introduced us to new evaluation techniques, such as coding, which is predominantly used in qualitative studies, that will allow us to gain more accurate insights from our data efforts. Such techniques will enable us to look farther into the future regarding measuring longer term impact of our efforts with our service population.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

When it comes to change, particularly in the way an organization views the flow of services and programs with respect to outcomes as well as evaluation, the process in changing that viewpoint is easier said than done. Nonetheless, there are many other lessons that were learned from this initiative but probably most significant, especially regarding logic models, is the notion of creating a shared understanding. If we consider logic models as a roadmap, metaphorically, it is a communicative tool used in organizational development to conceptualize operations and form cohesion amongst stakeholders. This may well be the most important lesson to extract from this initiative along with that of creating a shared understanding.

## What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?

To sustain our work, Diversified has undertaken a major effort in recognizing that our previous database platform was inadequate in providing us with the data management and output formats needed to best

produce, report, and analyze our outputs and outcomes. Therefore, we have migrated to a more compatible database platform that our research has identified as the best tool for the job and are currently working on getting all our selected programs functioning in the database. In addition, we have a full-time quality assurance specialist, and now a part-time data analyst, whom we hope to make full-time in the near future, available to collect and manage our data to the highest degree.

With that said, we are now writing both new and renewal funding proposals with a much clearer sense of what we can deliver regarding evidence of our work and its impact, along with clear data demonstrating our most recent past performances. We are confident both of these efforts will lead to stronger funding proposals which ideally will generate the income we need to sustain our programs well into the future as well as allow us to improve internally to establish much more efficient organizational operations.

# Hopeworks 'N Camden

Year 1: July 2016 – Summer 2017

Year 2: July 2017 – Summer 2018



## Summary of Progress

In Year 2, Hopeworks continued to refine the lessons learned about evaluating and building our programs. Specifically, we:

- **Refined our logic model to make it truly actionable:** Working with our consultant and lessons learned from the workshop, Hopeworks developed a logic model that truly reflects our program model. Hopeworks had always developed a logic model to meet funding requirements or to discuss our program in depth, but this year’s work allowed us to create a logic model that makes sense to youth, stakeholders, staff, and Board members. In other words, our logic model truly reflects what is happening in the program in a clear, understandable way.
- **Refined our reporting based to make it simpler, easier to understand, and more effective.** In Year 2, Hopeworks used the lessons learned from our logic model to refine our monthly operations update from an eight-page, dense document full of data that was hard to understand to four visual graphs that accurately represent the effectiveness of the program. Workshops on data visualization, and a clearer sense of what our “keystone” metrics works allowed us to simplify our reporting and make it more effective.

## How has this initiative changed your evaluation thinking and practice?

In Year 2, Hopeworks moved from a model in which data was something that management and funders used to a model in which data is a pervasive tool throughout the organization. By simplifying our data collection and enhancing our data visualization, Hopeworks ensured that it, as an organization, does not have “program people” and “data people.” Instead, staff are all actively running reports and dashboard to make sure they are meeting their monthly and quarterly metrics.

As one measure of this change, our Salesforce intern has created over 15 custom reports just in the last 12 months for program staff to use in their day to day monitoring, and, at the request of the academic department, revamped our trainee summary record format. These data measurement changes did not come from management, but came from staff working with the data day to day to enhance their effectiveness.

## What are some lessons learned from this initiative?

In Year 2, the greatest lesson we learned was the value of simplicity in presenting data. Using data visualization and reducing the complexity of the data presented, ironically, meant that the data was used much more extensively. The easier it is for staff and stakeholders to understand the initial data reports, the more likely they are to utilize it, and the greater their appetite for more data and analysis. In many ways, we learned that presenting data in small, visual bites was critical to encouraging staff and stakeholders to increase their use and understanding of the data.

### **What steps has your agency taken to sustain this work?**

Hopeworks sees the value of data evaluation and analysis. This project has truly demonstrated that ongoing work is critical to making sure that our evaluation and analysis matches our effectiveness. Knowing that, in the fast-paced world of nonprofit work, it is all too easy to let good ideas die, Hopeworks has committed to continuous training in data evaluation and analysis to make sure staff at all levels maintain their level of engagement. This year, for example, Hopeworks is excited to participate in the Culture:SHIFT project of the Arts and Business Council for Greater Philadelphia, an opportunity for us to continue to build upon the lessons from this project. In the past, Hopeworks might not have committed the resources to ongoing training in data and analysis. Now, we know it is a critical skill that needs continuous updating for our scale and growth.



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