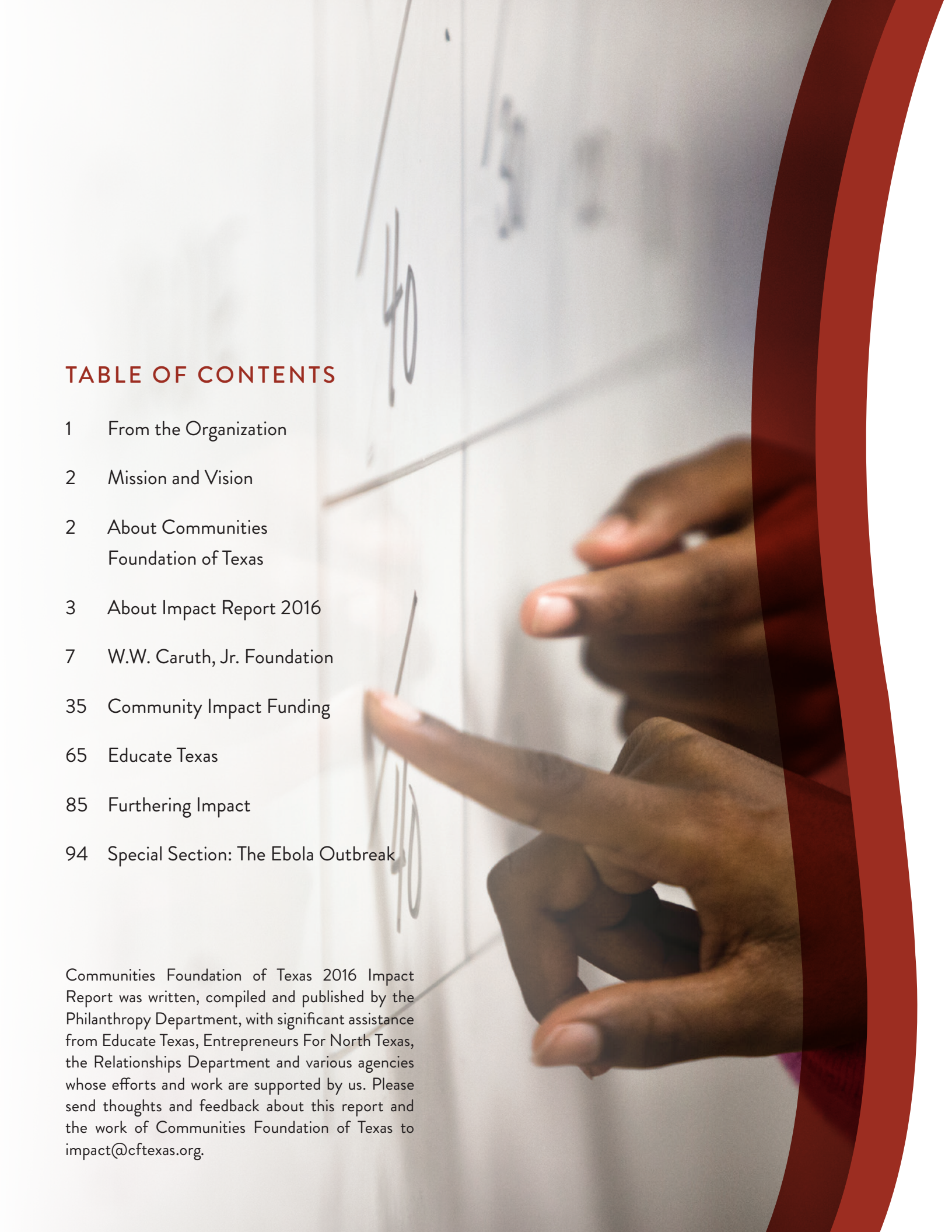
2016

IMPACT REPORT

COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS



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Communities Foundation of Texas 2016 Impact Report was written, compiled and published by the Philanthropy Department, with significant assistance from Educate Texas, Entrepreneurs For North Texas, the Relationships Department and various agencies whose efforts and work are supported by us. Please send thoughts and feedback about this report and the work of Communities Foundation of Texas to impact@cftexas.org.

COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS

June 15, 2016

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Working in the nonprofit sector is not for the faint of heart. Any major societal issue is multi-faceted, and rarely are all of the contributing factors to a problem entirely known, or able to be influenced by a single person or nonprofit working in the trenches. And yet for those courageous enough to try, and tenacious enough to stick doggedly to the task of working little by little to make tomorrow better, there are moments of pay off.

On the days we are finally far enough along to see lives change, we celebrate. On the other days, when at times we either feel like we are treading water or moving backward rather than forward on an issue despite the greatest of intentions, we try to stop and reflect, and figure out what needs to be modified – to assess what we've hopefully done right, what things we've done wrong, and based on that, what may need an overhaul. Our greatest a-ha moments as a foundation occur when we do this in conjunction with grantees and other partners, as we share our experiences with each other and sort through what to keep and what to change. The 2016 Impact Report is the result of those reflections, based on activities and learnings throughout 2015.

As we look back over the past year, we are grateful for so many things. For those that have gone before us who left money to the Communities Foundation of Texas so that it might be used toward the community's most pressing needs; for other funders who partner with us to invest in community change; for the many creative and hardworking staff of nonprofits and schools who dedicate their lives to helping others; and for community members themselves, who at the end of the day do the hardest work of all when they choose to make positive changes in their own lives, and the lives of their families.

As the saying goes, it takes a village. Thank you for the role you play in it along with us, and we look forward to working even closer with you in the coming years.

Onward!

Sarah Cotton Nelson
Chief Philanthropy Officer

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CFTexas.org

OUR VISION: MAKING TOMORROW BETTER

OUR MISSION

Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) stimulates creative solutions to key challenges in our community. We thoughtfully and effectively support our diverse donors and grantees by providing exemplary service and by demonstrating accountability. We improve lives through an unwavering commitment to lasting impact.

OUR VALUES

Enhancing the experience and impact of giving through:

1. Exemplary service
2. Wise stewardship of resources
3. Trusted partnership for community knowledge and collaboration.

We fulfill our mission by:

- Making grants to support community issues in North Texas and, through the generosity of our donors, throughout the world.
- Encouraging individuals, families and businesses to partner with us to fulfill their charitable goals. Our trustees steward more than $1 billion in assets across more than 900 charitable funds.
- Educating the community on pressing needs and the organizations addressing them.
- Convening people to work on community problems.

ABOUT COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION OF TEXAS

Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) was founded in July 1953 as Dallas Community Chest Trust Fund to serve as a safety net for social service agencies in Dallas. The first gift to the Trust Fund came as $10,000 worth of stock from Algur H. Meadows, a successful oil and gas businessman, arts patron and philanthropist whose family fortune was the basis for the creation of the Meadows Foundation in 1948. Soon after, Pearl C. Anderson made the first six-figure gift to the Trust Fund in 1955, when she donated her future interest in a parcel of land in downtown Dallas valued at $325,000. Mrs. Anderson, the widow of a prominent African-American physician and civic leader, strengthened the organization's early commitment to support programs and institutions that help individuals throughout the community. Its name change to Communities Foundation of Texas in 1981 reflected the broader scope of the foundation's intent and impact.

In 1974, W.W. "Will" Caruth, Jr. established the W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation as a supporting organization to CFT, adding a new chapter to the Caruth family's historic legacy of pioneer farming and land acquisition. Through the years, Will Caruth shared much of his fortune with others through CFT and helped the organization improve the Dallas community. His wife, the late Mabel Peters Caruth, continued this tradition with a $34 million bequest to build CFT's current headquarters on Caruth Haven in Dallas.

In 2003, CFT launched the Texas High School Project. The initiative set out to make positive impact on the futures of low-income students, underserved students and low-performing schools throughout the state. It established a robust network of partners, aligning and integrating the efforts of policymakers, practitioners and philanthropic organizations to reach shared goals and use funds efficiently. Now called Educate Texas, the initiative continues to be an innovative alliance of public and private groups that share a common goal:

improving the public education system so that every Texas student is prepared for success in school, the workforce, and life.

CFT is now one of the top 20 community foundations in the nation in terms of assets, gifts received and grants awarded.

ABOUT THE IMPACT REPORT

CFT and our Board of Trustees choose to invest our resources and grant dollars in initiatives that strive to contribute in a measurable way to the greater good of the community. We use multiple approaches: traditional grant-making, where applications are received from nonprofits and funds are granted to support their work in the community; hands-on participative grant-making, which involves teaching and learning about an issue and collaborating with nonprofits to develop funding opportunities; and program implementation, through which the foundation creates, runs, and sometimes advocates for best practices in a given area. This report demonstrates our commitment to these efforts through a review of the progress we're making toward creating lasting impact in each of the key areas in which we operate.

Our Impact in Numbers*

Total Assets:

$1.067 billion

Total Grants Paid:

$102 million

Total Gifts Received:

$98 million

Number of Funds:

950

Cumulative Grants (since inception):

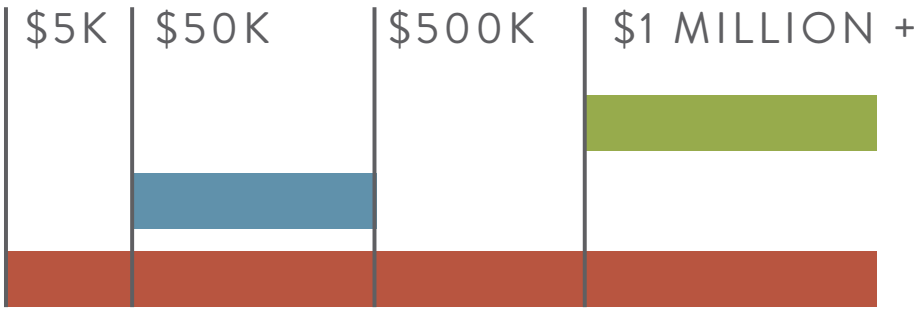
$1.5+ billion

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015

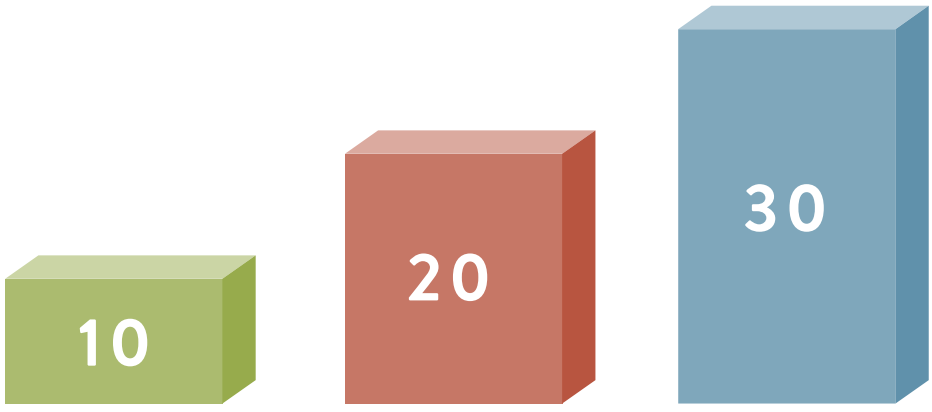
COMPARING
GRANTMAKING APPROACHES

CARUTH EDUCATE TEXAS COMMUNITY IMPACT

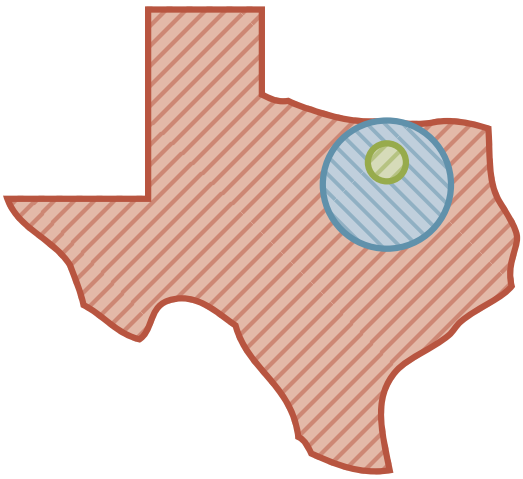
SIZE OF INVESTMENTS



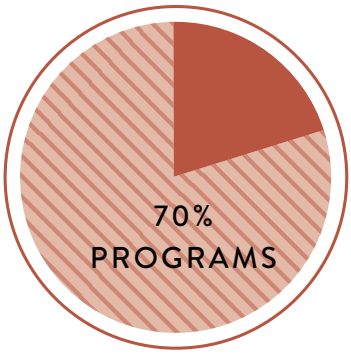
NUMBER OF ACTIVE GRANTEES AT A TIME

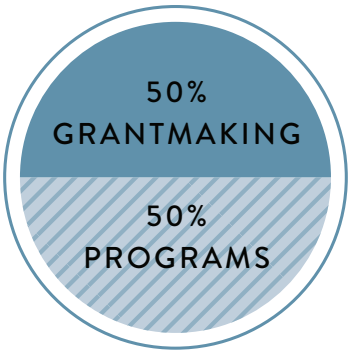


GEOGRAPHY



GRANTMAKING VS PROGRAMS



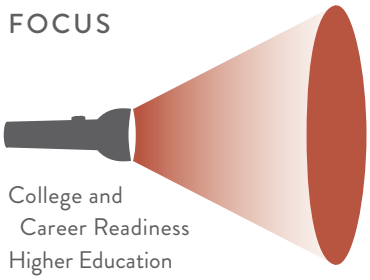


LEVEL OF DEFINED FOCUS

BROAD CATEGORIES

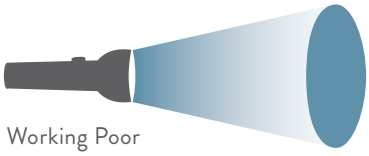
Education
Public Safety
Medical & Scientific
Research

MORE DEFINED FOCUS



College and
Career Readiness
Higher Education
Effective Teaching
Regional Collaboration

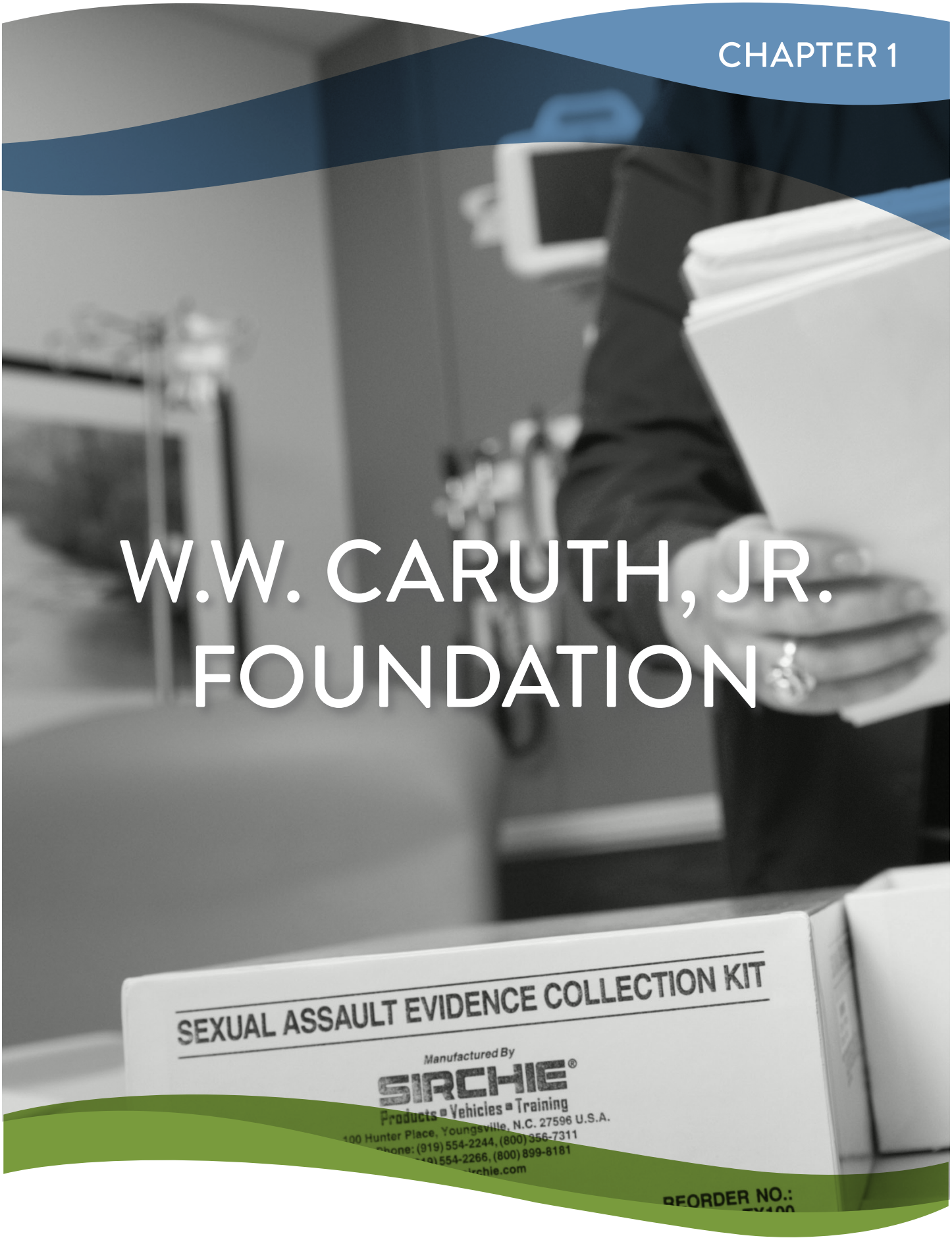
NARROW FOCUS



Working Poor
& At-Risk
Middle School Youth

CHAPTER 1

W.W. CARUTH, JR. FOUNDATION



WHAT IS THE W.W. CARUTH, JR. FOUNDATION?

We award grants to nonprofits that are bold and boundary-breaking in their efforts to solve complex community issues in North Texas. Our grants are often multi-million dollar awards that are the "first money in," or the initial investment in a project. We aim for big bets that require greater risk. We encourage collaborative approaches to projects, as a means for achieving transformational results. We are willing to fund independent impact assessments and to use the results to encourage scaling and sustainability efforts. We believe evaluation is powerful and necessary for inspiration and improvement within our three focus areas.

FOCUS AREAS:

Education

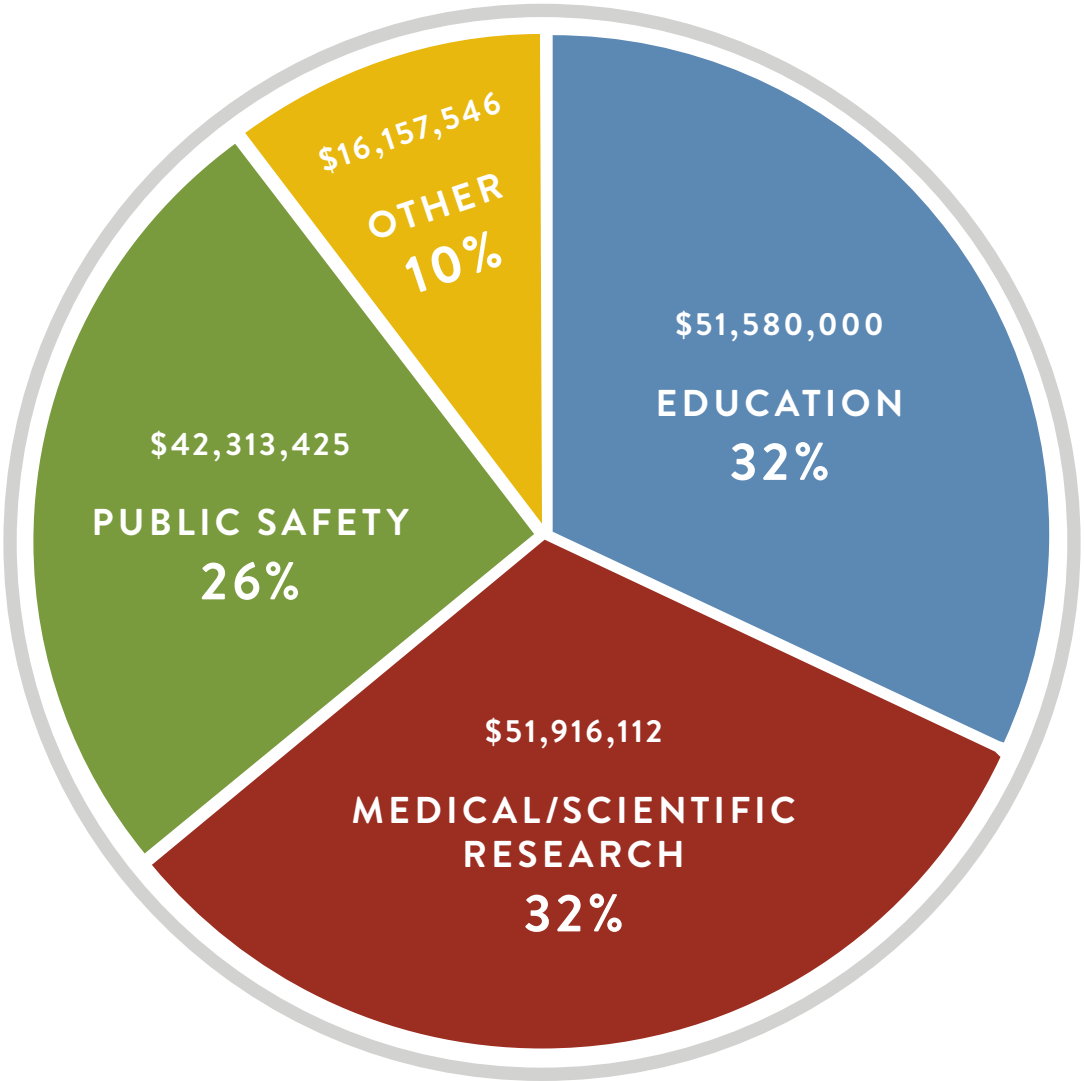
Public Safety

Medical and Scientific Research

CARUTH GRANTMAKING

*A look at how we have funded our focus areas over the life of the W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation.**

EDUCATION
MEDICAL/SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
PUBLIC SAFETY
OTHER



*As of December 2015

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: EDUCATION

We support innovative approaches that seek to solve the complex issues associated with preparing today's students for tomorrow's labor force and economy.

THE HIGHLIGHT

STEM Education

WHY

Education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics—STEM fields—builds the critical thinking skills of students, increases the science literacy of the general population and makes it possible for future generations to contribute to a growing global economy.

THE WORK

2015 marked the start of the final year of a three-year $1.8 million grant we awarded to the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). The grant covered operations and programs of the district's STEM Institute, which was established in 2009. The DCCCD STEM Institute helps high-achieving students in STEM fields earn degrees and prepare for careers in their respective fields through a comprehensive program that provides scholarships, mentoring, career awareness opportunities and other support.

OVERVIEW

DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT FOUNDATION STEM INSTITUTE

Our Challenge

When we awarded funding to the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) Foundation in 2013 for its STEM Institute, several national studies indicated a need for communities to encourage more students to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics—STEM fields—as a career path. The reason for the need: to support a growing global economy. As in other places, Texas and Dallas County faced a projected shortage of workers entering STEM career fields and teaching programs. While the population in our state accounts for more than 8 percent of the United States, only 6.2 percent of all advanced science and engineering degrees awarded in 2007 were earned by Texas students.

To solve this problem, a new model to engage faculty, students, colleges and business communities was needed to build a sustainable pipeline of students to fill STEM jobs. The DCCCD was developing, testing and proving such a model – and was strategically positioned to do so. At the time of the grant award, DCCCD had a confirmed undergraduate STEM enrollment of 5,700 students who were taking advanced math and science courses. More than 90 percent of the STEM I institute's previous scholars had completed a degree, transferred to a four-year college or university or persisted in STEM studies at the district's seven colleges since the institute's inception in 2009.

Our Approach

Beginning in 2013, we awarded $1.8 million over three years to the DCCCD Foundation to strengthen, expand and sustain operations and programs of the district's STEM Institute. More specifically, the funding was used for scholarships, faculty mentors, career awareness programs and other support for students who have declared STEM majors and attend one or more of the district's seven colleges. The primary aim of the institute's programming is to reduce the state's shortage of workers entering STEM career fields and STEM-related teaching positions. It does this by identifying high-achieving STEM students in its colleges, pairing them with trained faculty mentors and enhancing the students' capabilities through capstone experiences and internships. The program also provides strong support and opportunities to the faculty who serve as mentors. The second goal of the institute is to give scholars targeted paths to degree completion and opportunities to transfer to STEM programs at four-year universities, so that the STEM Institute becomes an established pipeline and a national model for comprehensive post-secondary STEM education programs. Finally, the institute focuses on building relationships between DCCCD and the private sector in an effort to promote degree completion and alignment with workforce needs.

Educate Texas, a public-private initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas, also worked closely with the DCCCD STEM Institute to aid in its long-term sustainability, program evaluation and alignment with statewide STEM efforts.

How It Works

Our grant was provided to enhance DCCCD's ability to maximize students' potential to earn associate degrees, transfer to high-quality universities and start STEM-related careers. Once students are selected as STEM scholars, they are placed in mentoring groups made up of six students and a faculty mentor. Scholars complete several required activities with the entire group throughout the academic year and meet regularly one-on-one with their mentors to discuss their education and career path. They are encouraged to participate in optional activities organized by the STEM Institute, such as visits to universities and local companies. Scholars and mentors communicate through a closed social media group and e-mail to learn and share information about STEM opportunities that will enhance and extend their educational and professional experiences.

For each academic year in the grant period, the institute aimed to provide support for 100 STEM scholars. At the end of each academic year, the institute planned to have 40 percent of the scholars transferred and enrolled in, or be in the process of transferring and enrolling, in a four-year university; 35 percent graduating with a STEM degree from DCCCD; and 90 percent of the scholars maintaining a 3.0 grade point average or above.

Results

The STEM Institute has met and, in some cases, surpassed the goals it set to accomplish with the grant funding. For the 2013-2014 academic year, the institute provided support to 138 scholars – 109 of which were directly impacted by Caruth funds. In 2014-2015, 143 students participated in the STEM Institute and 127 of them were directly supported by Caruth funds. For the 2015-2016 year, 122 students are participating in the program and 118 of them are supported by the Caruth grant.

At the end of the 2013-2014 academic year, 54 percent of the scholars transferred and enrolled in a four-year university to pursue a STEM degree; 53 percent graduated from DCCCD; and 96 percent of the scholars maintained a 3.0 grade point average or above. At the end of 2014-2015, 60 percent of the scholars transferred and enrolled in a four-year university; 22 percent graduated from DCCCD; and 100 percent of the scholars maintained a 3.0 grade point average or above. Data for the current academic year will be available in the summer of 2016.

From a qualitative perspective, our funding allowed the STEM Institute to provide programming that benefitted students and faculty and increased its success in these areas. The institute has increased each scholars' skills and

abilities, validated them as members of the larger STEM community and provided mentoring and networking to sustain and guide them as they move forward.

The grant provided scholarships for tuition and books to scholars, who, in turn, must commit to pursuing a degree in a STEM profession; be in good academic standing with a minimum 3.0 grade point average; and maintain a course schedule of at least 12 credit hours to be in the institute. The scholarship support allowed some students to shift from part-time to full-time status to increase their likelihood of successful degree completion. The scholarships also allowed students to focus less on finding enough money for college and more on their studies. Lastly, the scholarship funding allowed them to spend more time engaged in beneficial co-curricular activities, such as seeking internships or research experiences and developing their professional skills for the future.

Our funding also covered scholars' participation in and attendance of institute-specific events each year, including STEM-industry and career-related seminars. One example of such an event is the annual DCCCD STEM Institute Summit, a day-long conference for members of the institute that includes speakers in STEM careers and research.

Lastly, funding provided by Caruth covered costs associated with student mentoring with the Citi STEM Faculty Fellows, a group of highly regarded instructors in their respective fields selected through a competitive process to serve as mentors for scholars. The institute provides dedicated year-round enrichment for continuing professional and academic development of select math and science faculty throughout the community college district.

Lessons Learned

A model that engages students, faculty, colleges and business communities needs to be multi-faceted, including several types of programming and scholarship support, because different students have different needs as they progress in their academic careers. The model needs to be unified under the direction of a person with direct STEM professional and educational experience.

Through deep engagement and validation as members of the STEM community, the STEM Institute positively impacts student success and persistence. It also provides a clear guiding example for students who are not in the institute, showing how successful DCCCD STEM students can be. In addition, it provides a visible way for our community to see the high quality of students and faculty engaged in STEM education at DCCCD, which validates the community college district as a viable pipeline for STEM professionals.

Lasting Impact

With a goal of serving 100 students per academic year, the program is not meant to affect a huge number of students, but rather to make sure that the students who have the highest potential in STEM fields actually remain in STEM disciplines and transfer to complete a four-year degree or higher. STEM scholars show a transfer rate much better than the national average. That is largely due to faculty-to-student mentorship and the support provided by the faculty mentors. The programming and mentorship together help students target their educational and career goals to allow for successful transfer.

DCCCD has been sharing information about the STEM Institute in a variety of venues and it is becoming more well-known as a model program that could be adopted by other community colleges. Through the programming, the scholars have become increasingly aware of the importance of building relationships with the private sector while still in school, and the institute has provided a pathway to help more students begin that process. As a model program that demonstrates the quality of students and educators within the DCCCD, it has also helped to open doors that will provide for a stronger relationship with more private sector partners. Together with those partners, DCCCD can work toward the common goal of degree completion and successful entry into the workforce.

Dallas County Community College District

CASE STUDIES

A FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

STEM Scholar alum earning Ph.D. to teach future scientists

When you hope that a new generation of scientists finds the cure for Ebola or influenza, you may be hoping for the likes of Amanda Crutchfield.

Crutchfield is a 2010 graduate of Richland College, one of the seven colleges in the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). She was a STEM Scholar in the pilot year of the district's STEM Institute. Now, she is conducting X-ray crystallography research on Ebola and influenza as a Ph.D. candidate at Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California. It was her first higher education experience at Richland that sparked her love for science and teaching.

"I got started fairly late in higher education, at 23," Crutchfield said. "All of the professors in the Richland science department made me fall in love with science."

The professors were enthusiastic and interested in teaching and Crutchfield was equally as enthusiastic about learning, so it was a good match, she added.

"My faculty mentor, Dr. Gene Garrett, was amazing," Crutchfield said. "Sometimes professors at four-year universities are just there for the research. Professors at community colleges are there to teach and they're very good at it."

Crutchfield's passion takes flight

Crutchfield was offered a scholarship to the STEM Institute and a job as a student assistant. While in the program, she took night classes, because she was also working. Another opportunity came along in the form of the STEM Bridges program, which partners community college students with four-year institutions to help them transition into STEM bachelor's programs.

"Amanda is likely the single most enthusiastic student I have encountered," said Garrett, a STEM Fellow and Richland chemistry professor. "She exhibited a consistently good, upbeat attitude, was a solid contributor to class discussions, assumed leadership roles in study groups and assisted other students in lab with a PC-based experimental software and data analysis lab package. Her excitement for the sciences and learning is infectious."

Crutchfield worked in Texas Woman's University's biochemistry department while finishing her associate degree. She then earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin with dual majors in biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology.

"One of my professors invited me to be a mentor in UT's Freshman Research Initiative, and that cemented my love of teaching," Crutchfield said. "I can't imagine a better job than being a professor where I get to teach and do research."

> "I can't imagine a better job than being a professor where I get to teach and do research."
>
> – **Amanda Crutchfield,** *Former DCCCD STEM Institute Scholar and Ph.D. Candidate for the Scripps Research Institute*

The profile of Amanda Crutchfield was provided by the Dallas County Community College District Foundation.

ENGINEERING A BRIGHT FUTURE

STEM Scholar wants to design affordable prosthetic limbs

With her Brookhaven College associate degree behind her, STEM scholar Delia Peña is planning on a big future. She wants to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering so that she can create affordable prosthetic limbs for children and veterans.

Though Peña always loved math and science, she hadn't decided on a career direction until a high school classmate underwent extensive physical therapy after a spinal cord injury.

"I went with her a lot to her rehab sessions," Peña said. "It was in the same building as patients and biomedical engineers working with prosthetics, and something just really clicked for me."

Externship changed focus to mechanical engineering

Though Peña originally planned on biomedical engineering, a 10-week STEM-sponsored externship with Sharyland Utilities , which is affiliated with Hunt Consolidated Inc., changed Delia's focus to mechanical engineering. She and her team studied the potential use of drones to inspect power line damage, figuring physical specifications, estimated cost, feasibility and governing laws.

"Once I got into the research of what the drones do, it gave me a lot of perspective on mechanical engineering," Peña said.

Dallas County Community College District

Faculty mentor a major influence

Peña also sang the praises of her faculty mentor, Brookhaven physics professor and STEM Fellow Anahita Sidhwa.

"It's good to know that someone who knows so much about STEM fields is behind me and encouraging me to succeed," Peña said

Said Sidhwa: "Delia is an excellent student – intelligent, conscientious, motivated to succeed and interested in learning at a deeper level."

> "Sure, I want to succeed in my job but I also want to encourage young women and minorities to believe that nothing can stop them."
>
> – **Delia Peña,** *Former DCCCD STEM Scholar*

Having graduated from Brookhaven, Peña now takes transferrable courses there and at North Lake, another one of the seven colleges in the DCCCD, while also working three part-time jobs. She serves as a STEM ambassador, a chemistry and physics tutor to high school students, and as a fitness facility operations member. Her chosen educational and career paths are not easy, she admitted, but she's confident she will succeed, thanks in large part to her experience as a STEM scholar.

"There are lots of opportunities out there, but hardly any are so hands-on, and I'm just so proud to be a part of the STEM Institute," she said.

Planning a high-tech and high-impact career

Peña not only wants a high-tech STEM career, she wants to help others along the way.

"Sure, I want to succeed in my job but I also want to encourage young women and minorities to believe that nothing can stop them," she said. "I want to help make prosthetics more accessible, and I want to do that hands-on - working, fixing and building them."

The profile of Delia Peña was provided by the Dallas County Community College District Foundation.

PUTTING TOGETHER A CHEMISTRY OF WORK

Past STEM Scholar plans for the future based on his research experience

Former STEM Scholar Jeremy Riggs focuses on a future of scientific research and teaching as he works towards a bachelor's degree in chemistry.

Starting his studies at Texas Tech University in fall 2014, Riggs is focused on a future he couldn't have imagined just a few years ago. Interested in chemistry since high school but stretched financially to fund college, he had to work evenings while following a rigorous curriculum during the day. Being a part of the DCCCD STEM Institute not only gave him the opportunity to focus just on his studies, but also provided valuable contacts and experiences that have confirmed his love of chemistry.

"The STEM program was a big motivator for me," Riggs said. "It gave me a push to keep going in my education and career."

Gaining from connections

On his end, Riggs took the mentoring and contact opportunities the STEM Institute provided and ran with them. He was selected to participate in a week-long program at Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York in spring 2014 and earned his associate degree from Mountain View College in May that same year. He spent 10 weeks that summer in an internship at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, just north of the University of California, Berkeley campus.

Dallas County Community College District

"The summer internship definitely cemented the idea that I want to do research after I finish my undergraduate degree," said Riggs, who also received a full scholarship to Texas Tech. "The experience at Berkeley reassured me that what I'd chosen is in fact what I want to do."

> "The STEM Institute gave me a push to keep going in my education and career."
>
> – **Jeremy Riggs,** *Former DCCCD STEM Scholar*

Looking toward the future

Riggs' ambitious future plans include finishing his bachelor's degree, doing graduate work at Berkeley, becoming a college professor, working for a large chemical company and going into research. He's as definite about the STEM Institute's role in his educational advancement as he is in his choice of chemistry as a career.

"For me, the STEM Institute has been good exposure to people and things even outside of the financial support," Riggs said. "Maybe the STEM scholarship on my résumé helped me to get the summer internship, and maybe the internship will help me go on to graduate studies at Berkeley in the future. I can definitely say that my DCCCD STEM scholarship has already done a lot for me."

The profile of Jeremy Riggs was provided by the Dallas County Community College District Foundation.

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: PUBLIC SAFETY

We support initiatives that take a bold, unexpected approach to transforming the community through work in the public safety sector.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Improvement of the interaction between the criminal justice system and mental health treatment

WHY

Creating a reliable method for law enforcement officers to identify mentally ill people who commit non-violent crimes and diverting them to cost-effective treatment centers instead of jails can reduce the burden on the criminal justice system. It can also improve the outcomes for individuals who need treatment rather than incarceration.

THE WORK

In June 2015, we awarded a $1 million planning grant to the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) to support a Smart Justice Project for Dallas County. The goal of the 12-month project was to identify opportunities to improve the way the Dallas County criminal justice system identifies, assesses and diverts people with mental illness who are arrested. The institute launched in 2014 to provide research on best practices and policy recommendations to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health care across Texas.

The establishment of a system-wide Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program across North Texas

WHY

The training that sexual assault nurse examiners receive creates a more comprehensive approach that helps to preserve a victim's dignity and enhances evidence collection for investigations and prosecutions.

THE WORK

In December 2015, the Caruth Foundation awarded a four-year $3.5 million grant to Texas Health Resources, a nonprofit network of hospitals across 16 counties in North Texas, so that the organization could take to scale a previously created sexual assault victim services program. The previous grant was funded by Caruth in 2010, and supported efforts by Texas Health Resources and the Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center to launch a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas. Through this program, SANE nurses complete 80 hours of advanced training in clinical treatment and forensic examination of sexual assault victims.

OVERVIEW

MEADOWS MENTAL HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE SMART JUSTICE PLANNING PROJECT

Our Challenge

In Texas county jails, a quarter of the average daily population of inmates have a diagnosed mental illness, as listed by the state. That means between 12,000 and 16,000 people with mental illnesses in Texas are in jail on any given day. According to research conducted by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI), locking up and housing people with mental illness costs the state $450 million annually. In 2013, housing, booking costs, medication and other treatment services for jailed people with mental illnesses were about $47 million in Dallas County alone. For each person booked into Dallas County jail, the cost is a little more than $300 per booking and $63 per day. The potential for costs to escalate is almost certain, since statistics from the Council of State Governments Justice Center show that once incarcerated, people with mental illness who do not receive appropriate intervention are likely to stay in jail longer and start the cycle of re-offending sooner once released, thus returning them to jail.

Dallas County does not have an integrated crisis walk-in site that is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide an easy entry point for people and families needing short-term mental health crisis prevention. Therefore, when a person who is mentally ill faces a crisis, the police are usually the first to be called. From 2012 to 2015, the number of law enforcement calls with a behaviorial health identifier increased by 17 percent, from 10,319 to 12,141. The response to such a matter is often impacted by the fact that law enforcement officers have a hard time themselves accessing behavioral health services.

Our Approach

In June 2015, we awarded a $1 million grant to the MMHPI to be used in partnership with the Caruth Police Institute, Dallas County Criminal Justice Department, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, Parkland Health and Hospital System, and the Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation. The goal of the work covered by the grant is for MMHPI to use research and data to develop a comprehensive plan that will end the use of the Dallas County Jail to house people with mental illnesses who do not need to be incarcerated. The institute's belief is that creating a data-driven method for the Dallas criminal justice system to better identify, assess, and divert people with mental illnesses away from incarceration can reduce the burden of unmet mental health needs on the corrections system. It can also improve the lives and outcomes of offenders with mental health illnesses—many of whom are arrested for non-violent crimes—because it can connect them to opportunity for proper treatment.

The project has two phases. Phase one, completed during the first six months after the grant was awarded, included an examination of data from multiple sources and looked at the existing capacity, opportunities and barriers to creating an informed, comprehensive plan. This examination included, for example, an evaluation of law enforcement responses to people with mental illnesses and the gaps that need to be addressed in community-based health services to prevent entry into the criminal justice system. In phase two, which started in January 2016, the project partners work together with stakeholders from across the country to draft an implementation plan.

How It Works

Key to the creation of a comprehensive plan is the engagement of local stakeholders, including a commitment from county and local law enforcement leaders and project partners to work together to produce a sustainable plan based on data, assessment and evaluation.

DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CALL RESPONSES 2012-2014

The number of people with mental illness booked into Dallas County jail has increased over the last few years. Here's a look at the number of law enforcement calls with a behavioral health identifier (shown as 46 on the map) as well as those calls that included a request for an ambulance (represented as 46A).

In phase one, researchers conducted an in-depth analysis of case-level criminal justice data of the more than 100,000 people booked into the Dallas County Jail between 2011 and 2014. These records were matched with the Texas Department of Public Safety Computerized Criminal History system, which provides criminal history information for people booked into jail.

Through this match, researchers calculated recidivism rates for people released from the jail. Researchers drew on this and other data that correlate with risk of re-arrest (e.g., age at first arrest, current age, type of offense) to develop a "risk proxy" that estimated the risk of re-arrest that each person booked into the jail presented. This risk proxy made it possible to present like comparisons among different sub-populations.

Researchers also matched those individuals booked into the county jail with the database maintained by NorthSTAR, which manages publicly funded mental health and substance abuse services for people living in its service area. The data did not have specific mental health diagnoses or treatment information, making it possible to "flag" people booked into jail who had a prior contact with the publicly funded behavioral health care system, but without the ability to differentiate them from people who had received services for substance abuse only.

The project team also conducted numerous in-person meetings over a six-month period. MMHPI conducted 58 focus groups with more 400 law enforcement officers from the county and met with mental health care providers to determine system process and capacity gaps. The Council of State Governments Justice Center and MMHPI teams conducted justice system process reviews involving dozens of jail, judicial, and county officials to determine opportunities to improve the ability to screen, assess, and divert people with mental illnesses once they enter the justice system.

Results And Lessons Learned

A detailed summary of the findings from phase one is provided in "A Summary of Phase One Findings of the Smart Justice Plan" on page 21.

Lasting Impact

MMHPI is working in coordination with the Caruth Police Institute (CPI), Dallas Police Department's mental health response leadership team, the Dallas Fire-Rescue Department, and the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority and its providers to address the law enforcement findings and develop policy and training recommendations. This work integrates with current CPI and Dallas Police Department efforts to address officers' call times, public safety, core training, and ongoing policy development.

In addition, Dallas County leaders have established three work groups, each chaired by a judge and each assigned a staff lead to support and assist the judge. These workgroups are already designing improvements in screening, assessment, and pretrial supervision protocols that respond to findings resulting from the analyses described in this report.

As part of phase two of the planning grant, MMHPI is engaging community behavioral health care providers through the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority to develop detailed implementation plans to address each gap that the phase one analysis highlighted. These plans include: recommendations for increased intensive service capacity to serve "super-utilizers"; strategies to finance additional services to improve the diversion of people with behavioral health needs before they are arrested; and a connection to services after someone is released from jail.

By state mandate, NorthSTAR is to be replaced by a new model by January 1, 2017. The new model provides a unique opportunity to not only assist Dallas County in the design of a more effective service-delivery system, but also to provide the momentum to improve jail diversion efforts for people with mental illnesses. A comprehensive system improvement plan should be ready for review by summer 2016.

Portions of this information are from a report previously published by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

A SUMMARY OF PHASE ONE FINDINGS OF THE SMART JUSTICE PLAN

There is universal agreement that the number of people with mental illnesses who are in jail needs to be reduced. The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI), a nonprofit organization established in 2013 to provide nonpartisan policy research that will aid in improving mental health services in Texas, has started this process with a grant from the W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation (highlighted previously in this report). After receiving the grant last year, MMHPI entered phase one of a two-phase plan to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in the Dallas County Jail. Phase one focused on assembling information that will help in the development of a comprehensive implementation plan. MMHPI used a number of resources in their fact-finding mission, mental health and jail utilization data, demographic information, criminal history records, and information from focus groups that included law enforcement officers and mental health care providers. Below is a summary of the findings from phase one, as reported by MMHPI in April 2016.

Existence of super-utilizers

A small subset of adults with behavioral health needs in Dallas are "super-utilizers" of mental health services, called this because they are repeatedly incarcerated and frequently use local emergency rooms, hospitals, homeless services, and other intensive supports as a result of their extreme and inadequately managed treatment needs.

- More than 6,000 people in Dallas (nearly 4,000 of whom live in poverty) are super-utilizers of services.
- Three in four people released from Dallas County Jail who have had prior contact with the publicly funded behavioral health care system and have been assessed as high risk of offending are re-incarcerated within three years of their release.
- On a typical day at the Dallas County Jail, half of the people incarcerated who have had prior contact with the county's publicly funded behavioral health care system have experienced four or more bookings in the jail during the preceding four years.

Demand for and availability of community-based and inpatient behavioral health care services

A large number of people with serious mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders live in Dallas County, many of whom live below the poverty level.

- About 155,000 people living in Dallas have serious behavioral health needs. This includes people with severe cases of addiction and substance use. Most of these people live in poverty.
- Among this group, more than 88,000 adults have serious mental illness. An overlapping group of 81,000 people have substance use disorders that are severe enough to qualify them as a "priority population" by a state definition and making them eligible for substance use treatment services.

The Dallas community has some critical service gaps that should be addressed to improve services, particularly for people with serious mental illnesses.

- There is available community-based behavioral health care service capacity. However, a number of gaps and barriers were identified, most notably in intensive community-based programs for super-utilizers. There is also insufficient mobile crisis support, gaps in the availability of various evidence-based programs, such as supported housing and employment services, and insufficient cultural competence and geographic coverage of community-based programs.
- Dallas County does have notable community-based programs, including several Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams and two intensive teams for people with serious mental illnesses who are involved with the criminal justice system. However, relative to the large numbers of super-utilizers who need ACT or have forensic needs, the availability of intensive programs is insufficient to meet the need. Fewer than one in five super-utilizers with low to moderate forensic needs and fewer than one in ten super-utilizers with high forensic needs have access to adequately intensive supports. Permanent supportive housing gaps compound this lack of treatment capacity.
- Specialty inpatient beds at state hospital facilities are at times in short supply compared with demand, but acute psychiatric inpatient beds are generally available. Inpatient stays are used only for brief stabilization, so when a number of stakeholders cited a "lack of beds" as a system criticism, they were primarily referring to a lack of longer-term, intensive treatment capacity and housing options post-discharge.
- People charged with a misdemeanor who were subsequently ordered to a state hospital for competency restoration waited in the Dallas County Jail from 39 to 60 days, with an average jail stay of 45 days, before being transferred to the hospital. People charged with a felony waited between 50 and 87 days, with an average jail stay of 64 days, before being transferred to the state hospital.

Contact with local law enforcement

A significant number of people with serious behavioral health needs come into contact with the justice system, straining law enforcement resources.

- Law enforcement officers are the primary first responders for people experiencing a mental health crisis. They are the primary providers who detain people who are experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Texas is one of just a few states that do not empower physicians or other health care providers to detain people who pose an imminent risk to themselves and others.
- From 2012 through 2015, the number of mental health calls for service in Dallas County increased by 18 percent, from 10,319 to 12,141; those same calls with a request for an ambulance increased by 59 percent, from 2,176 to 3,452 during the same period.
- Dallas Police Department policies currently require that four officers and a supervisor respond to all mental health.

Law enforcement officers who attempt to connect people with mental illnesses to behavioral health care services report numerous challenges.

- The most common and significant concern that law enforcement officers raised was time spent driving someone with a mental illness to a treatment facility and the time spent waiting at the treatment facility, typically an emergency room, before the person is admitted for treatment.
- A second barrier was frustration with the treatment system, based on the perception that after law enforcement officers left someone in the care of the emergency room, those people were subsequently discharged to the community within hours or days, so that law enforcement found themselves responding to more calls involving the same individual.
- There are more than 20 municipal police departments spread across Dallas County. Law enforcement officers and treatment providers explained that many of these departments have policies and procedures for responding to people with mental illnesses that are distinct from the policies and procedures that police officers working for the City of Dallas use.
- Law enforcement officers expressed concern about the liability they incur when they respond to a mental health call for service and the officer is unable to connect that person to a treatment provider. Transporting that person to jail is perceived to be the option that creates the least liability for these officers.
- Law enforcement officers also described the need for more training and improved approaches to information sharing. For example, when dispatched on a mental health call for service, responding officers do not have access to the person's history of interaction with law enforcement.
- Mental health care providers also described an interest in receiving training on approaches to treatment that address criminogenic risk factors that contribute to the likelihood someone will reoffend. These providers were also apprehensive about sharing any information about a person's prior involvement in the behavioral health care system because of confidentiality laws.

Law enforcement officers find it easier to take a person in need of acute psychiatric care to a municipal jail than to transport the person to a psychiatric facility.

- There are 25 detention sites spread across Dallas County that offer ready access to the jail. In contrast, there are only three hospitals designated as primary psychiatric diversion drop-off sites for law enforcement.
- Just one of the three psychiatric diversion drop-off sites is located in the southern sector of Dallas County, and it only serves youth.

Jail

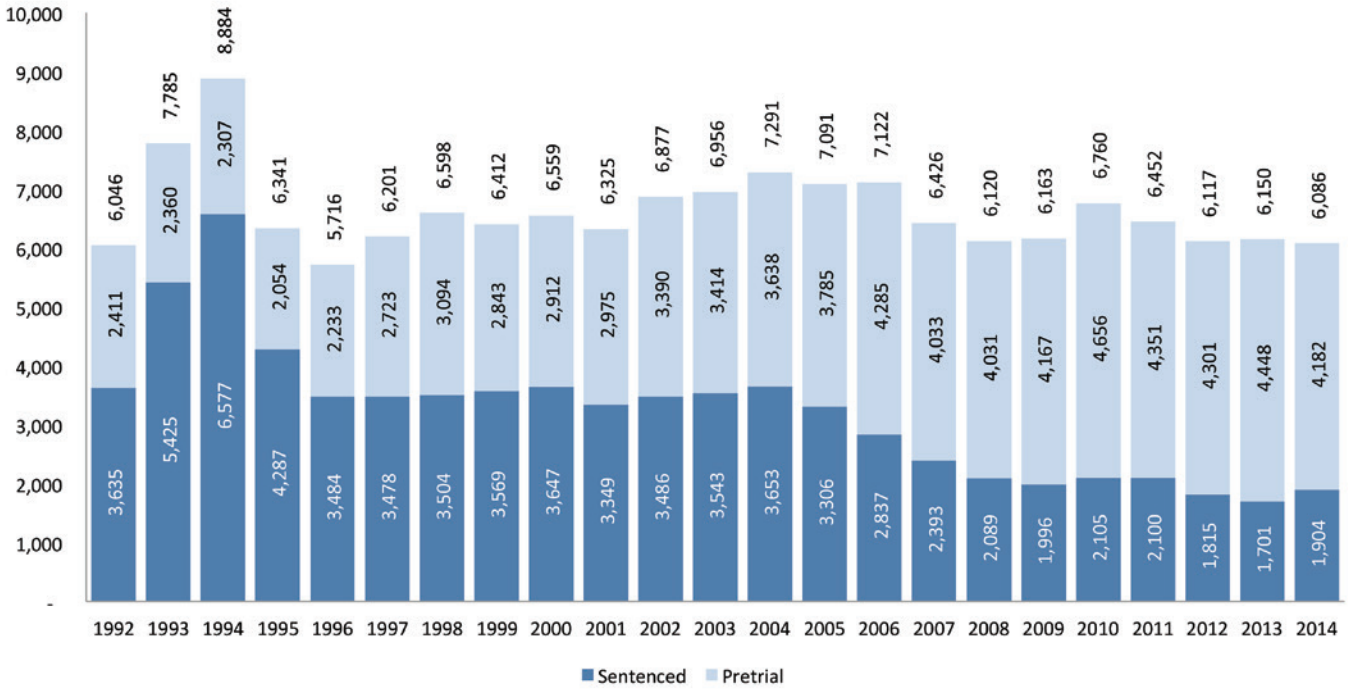
The Dallas County Jail acts as the main treatment provider for people with mental illnesses who are involved with the criminal justice system.

- Parkland, which provides health care services to people booked into the Dallas County Jail, reported that more than 26,000 unduplicated people received psychiatric medications at the jail in 2015. In the same year, 21 percent of the jail population—or 1,221 of the 5,685 people housed in the jail on any given day—received mental health treatment from Parkland.
- In 2015, 25 percent of all people booked into jail - 16,986 of the 69,185 bookings - had prior contact with the behavioral health system managed by NorthSTAR, a system that manages the publicly funded mental health and substance abuse services for people living in its service area.

People who have had prior contact with the publicly funded behavioral health care system stay in jail longer than people who have not had contact with the system.

- Although the average monthly population in the Dallas County Jail was considerably lower in 2014, at

Figure 1: Average Monthly Jail Population by Status, 1992–2014



6,086, than it was in 1994, at 8,884, the number of people in jail awaiting trial nearly doubled, from 2,307 in 1994 to 4,182 in 2014 (see figure 1).

- Of the large urban counties in Texas, Dallas has the highest rate of pretrial detention.
- People released from jail while still awaiting trial had a comparable risk of recidivism regardless of whether they had prior contact with the behavioral health care system. But it typically took longer for someone who had prior contact with the system to be released from jail than someone who had not had prior contact with the system. For example, 59 percent of people with no prior contact with the system were released from jail within 24 hours of being booked into jail, as opposed to 37 percent of people who had prior contact with the system; 21 percent of those with prior contact stayed in jail longer than a week compared to 13 percent without prior contact (see figure 2).
- State law enacted in 1993 requires that when someone booked into jail screens positive for mental illness, that person must also receive a mental health assessment. This law also requires the results of that assessment be presented in a timely way to the magistrate, who upon determining that the person does not present a risk to public safety, should facilitate the release of that person from jail to community-based treatment. In Dallas County, however, as is the case in many other counties across the state, mental health assessment information collected at the jail by medical staff is generally not shared with the magistrate.

Dallas County does not have a method to supervise people with mental illnesses on pretrial release to monitor their compliance with treatment requirements.

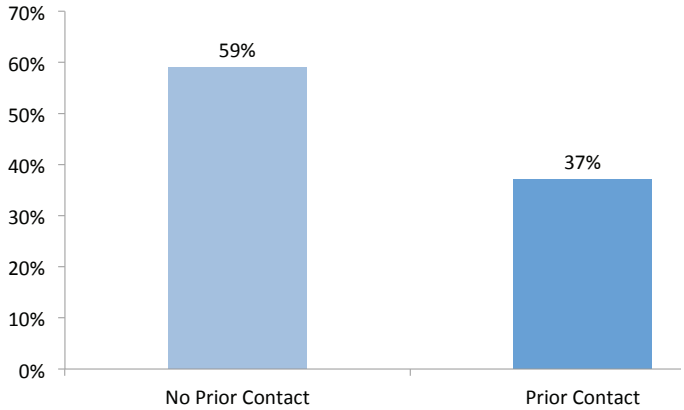
- People with behavioral health needs released from the jail while awaiting trial are typically required to call in twice a month to confirm their compliance with conditions of their release. There is no process in place to supervise these defendants in the community or to ensure their connection to treatment.

Recidivism rates for people released from jail who have had contact with the publicly funded behavioral health care system are considerably higher than for people who have not had contact with this system.

- The three-year rearrest rate for people without prior contact with the behavioral health system was 43 percent, compared to 58 percent for those who had contact with the system.
- Among adults who were at low risk of reoffending, 11 percent who had not had a prior contact with the behavioral health care system were rearrested within one year of release, compared to 19 percent of those who did have prior contact with the system.
- Of people classified as medium risk of reoffending who had not had contact with the behavioral health care system, 23 percent were rearrested within one year of release, compared to 33 percent for those who did have prior contact with the system; and of people classified as high risk of reoffending, 38 percent who had not had contact with the behavioral health care system were rearrested versus 50 percent who did have prior contact with the system.

Dallas County leadership has taken steps to connect more people booked into jail to community-based treatment, but the impact of these efforts on recidivism has not yet been measured.

Figure 2: Percentage of Pretrial Releases within 24 hrs, by Contact with the Behavioral Health System



- Dallas County has taken various steps, including assigning dedicated prosecutors and defense attorneys, establishing specialty courts, using federal funds to improve linkages between the jail and community programs, and launching a countywide reentry initiative.
- Dallas County has leveraged federal funds to establish the Crisis Services Project. This project uses innovative data systems and a network of service providers to: identify people with a history of receiving behavioral health services upon jail admission, provide clinical assessments, develop individual treatment plans, and coordinate release into the community with a warm hand-off to a community-based service provider. The Crisis Services Project also provides transitional housing, intensive community-based services, and extended substance use treatment. The project served 5,529 defendants in 2015.
- A key component of the Crisis Services Project is a Post Acute Transition Services program operated by Transicare. This transition program begins with the engagement of people with mental health needs while they are still in jail, facilitates a connection to community-based treatment, and follows them until stable in the community. Numbers served are small, however, with Transicare serving 349 people in 2015, including 62 people discharged from the state hospital system directly into the community instead of returning to jail.
- Dallas has funded prosecutors in the District Attorney's office and defense attorneys and case managers in the Public Defender's office who are dedicated to defendants with behavioral health needs. There is not enough dedicated staff to serve this population, and improved processes are needed to both identify defendants who require a specialized attorney and to involve those attorneys from the start of the case.

PERSPECTIVE

PROJECT LOOKS TO CREATE A SHIFT IN THINKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Andrew Keller, President and Chief Executive Officer, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

The intersection of mental health treatment and the criminal justice system is a hot topic right now. Nationally, the Stepping Up initiative is focusing attention on how to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails. Numerous news reports of mass shootings have led people to think and talk about the impact of mental illness on our communities.

"The awareness of mental health issues has never been where it is right now," said Andrew Keller, president and chief executive officer of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.

Given this, the institute's work to research and develop a comprehensive plan to reduce—and eventually, eliminate—the use of the Dallas County Jail to house people with mental illness who do not need to be incarcerated is incredibly timely. Here's more from Keller about the plan, which is being funded by the Caruth Foundation.

Observations from phase one: "We had to first figure out what the issue was. If you ask people who work in an area associated with the justice system and mental health issues, most will say we need more hospital beds for those who are mentally ill. But now, people don't go to the hospital for months or years. In most cases, someone who is mentally ill is in the hospital for four days. We've learned that on any given day, we are not using all of the hospital beds we have. So the issue is not beds. The issue is how to help people we call super-utilizers, those who are coming back probably three or more times. They fall into two groups. One group is made up of what we call people with low criminogenic risk, which means they are more likely to present in a psychiatric emergency room or if they do come into law enforcement, it is because they are forwardly psychotic and not because they have a propensity to break the law. The other group is the high criminogenic risk group who are psychotic, depressed, mentally ill and often have a substance use problem, and who have gotten used to breaking the law, and do so on purpose to get picked up, maybe on a cold night to get shelter or when they are facing some other housing need. The first group needs intensive services primarily. The second group needs intensive services too, but also supervision and interventions that teach them about the consequences of going to jail and why it's not a good idea to use jail as a shelter. In those two groups, we currently have the capacity on any given day to appropriately treat one in four of the low criminogenic group. For the high criminogenic group, we can treat one in 10."

The needs of mental health treatment today: "The main way to treat mental illness is not to put someone in a hospital forever. That just doesn't happen anymore. So, if a mentally ill person goes to the hospital, they are going to be there for four days until they are stable. Then, they are going to be put back on the street. The appropriate treatment for someone who may be a super-utilizer, who is either of low or high criminogenic risk, is to have an intensive treatment team that can track them down, make sure they get the medication they need, engage them, and offer some rehabilitation to help them try to learn to work again and live independently. Those teams need to be really assertive and encouraging. They can't force anyone into treatment, but they can heavily encourage them. I'll use the example of a guy we had in a treatment program who was homeless. When we met him, we had to take him a sandwich in the park for 41 days in a row. By the 42nd day, he came into the clinic. But the 41 days with him were critical because we had to establish trust. We needed him to trust us enough to go into the clinic and he did. Then, within a year, he was living in his own place and back in contact with his daughter. We made tremendous progress after that first 41 days. That's the kind of intervention that's needed today, but right now, there is very limited capacity among those who can actually do that. We don't need to do that with everyone. There are about 88,000 adults in Dallas County with severe mental illness, of whom about 55,000 are in poverty. We don't need this for all of them. We do need this for the roughly 3,000 of them who are super-utilizers."

Systemic changes needed for progress: "One thing we could change right now is the state rule that requires mental health clinicians to get permission from the person who is ill before intensive treatment teams can work with them. Someone who is mentally ill is not going to do that. The person may not even know they are ill in a way they can articulate. The whole design of these treatment teams is to do what's called assertive engagement, but the state has this rule that you have to get a person's permission before you assertively engage him or her. The rule is unintentionally hindering, perhaps coming out of a desire to limit dollars and ration them for people who are ready for change, but the rule doesn't always let us serve the people who are most impaired."

The importance of the work: "Our vision is for Texas to be the national leader in the treatment of mental illness. As long as the state institution or government institution that is most known for mental health treatment is the jail, we can't get out of this. That stigmatizes mental health. People joke all the time about the largest mental health hospital in Texas being Harris County Jail. But if you ask someone what the most famous governmental institution for cancer is, they will say the government doesn't treat cancer. It doesn't occur to them that the MD Anderson Cancer Center is part of the University of Texas, which is a state-funded entity. We need to shift so that when we think of mental illness, we think of a place that is the MD Anderson for the brain, which we don't have yet. We need a respected system tied to a respected university that people think of, so that when a person's child is mentally ill, that person knows where to go. That's the shift we need to make. But in order to get there, we've got to deal with our problem of jailing those who are mentally ill first."

OVERVIEW

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS

Our Challenge

One in five women and one in 71 men in the U.S. will be raped at some point in their lives, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Yet, the center reports, rape is the most under-reported crime in the country, with 63 percent of adult sexual assaults not reported to police. Of incidents that are reported, the vast majority will not be prosecuted.

In response to this problem, communities across the country are using an intervention model called the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. SANE programs offer nurses specific training to provide comprehensive medical and psychological care for sexual assault victims and to collect expert forensic evidence for the legal community. The programs have been shown to help preserve a victim's dignity, reduce psychological trauma and enhance evidence collection so that investigations and prosecutions are more effective.

In 2010, there were about 600 SANE programs across the country, according to the International Association of Forensic Nurses. At that time, Dallas was the largest city in the nation without a SANE program.

Our Approach

That same year, the Caruth Foundation awarded a $2 million grant to Texas Health Resources and the Dallas Area Rape Crisis Center to support development of Dallas County's first comprehensive sexual assault victim's services program. The grant funded the launch of a SANE program at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital.

Results of the SANE program have been promising, with an increase in both sexual assault indictments and prosecutions in Dallas County since the program was implemented. In December 2015, we awarded a second grant—$3.5 million over four years—to support the expansion of the program to 16 counties in North Texas. Over the next five years, Texas Health Resources will implement the SANE program in emergency departments at its 13 hospitals across North Texas, which serve a population of six million people.

Texas Health currently provides comprehensive SANE services for adults at two of its hospitals, Texas Health Presbyterian Dallas and Texas Health Fort Worth as well as a SANE program at Texas Health Kaufman that primarily serves pediatric patients. During the next five years, the Texas Health SANE Program will expand to Texas Health hospitals in Arlington, Denton, and Stephenville, while existing SANE services at Dallas, Fort Worth, Kaufman and Plano will further develop their programs. Additionally, mobile services will be available at six locations: Allen, Alliance, Azle, Cleburne, HEB and Southwest Fort Worth.

How It Works

Through the program, nurses will become SANE-certified by completing up to 160 hours of rigorous classroom and clinical training so they learn to 1) provide compassion and sensitivity to victims of sexual violence, 2) conduct comprehensive medical forensic examinations, 3) collect evidence if indicated by history and examination findings, 4) provide effective courtroom testimony and 5) coordinate sexual assault advocacy. The goal is to train, certify and deploy 72 SANE nurses and achieve a 90 percent retention rate for nurses holding their positions in the program at least two years. In addition, Texas Health Resources is aiming to increase the number of annual SANE exams conducted in its facilities by 20 percent each year.

Results And Lessons Learned

We won't know results from the system-wide expansion of the SANE program in North Texas for a couple of years. However, after the implementation of the program at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in 2010,

the number of sexual assault indictments in Dallas County increased from 70 in 2012 to 126 in 2014. The number of prosecutions in sexual assault cases in Dallas County also increased, from 35 in 2012 to 73 in 2014.

Lasting Impact

We recognize the need to help sexual assault victims as soon as possible after an assault, so they can begin the healing process. In addition, we recognize that hospitals can play an important role in the collection of physical evidence to aid in the prosecution of sexual assault cases. A system-wide SANE program will bring transformative change and improvement to forensic evidence collection and healing for sexual assault victims.

Along with the immediate goals of certifying and retaining SANE nurses and increasing the use of SANE exams, Texas Health Resources believes that scaling the program across its network of hospitals will increase the reporting of sexual assault incidents across North Texas and decrease the number of victims seeking services outside local jurisdictions and, ultimately, improve judicial outcomes—arrests, indictments, prosecutions and convictions—for victims.

Texas Health Resources

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

We support initiatives that are frontier-advancing in the medical and scientific research space.

THE HIGHLIGHT

Depression Research

WHY

Although depression affects 25 percent of women and 10 percent of men at some point in their lifetimes, substantial gaps exist in current research on the biology of depressive disorders. Current treatment models are based on a trial-and-error approach and medications are effective for less than half of those who suffer from depression. In addition, depressive illness has shown to have high rates of relapse. Clearly, additional research is needed to inform the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of depression and depression-related illnesses.

THE WORK

In June 2015, we awarded a five-year, $5 million grant to the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center's Center for Depression Research and Clinical Care. The grant will fund the Dallas Early Recognition and Prevention Study, which will follow a cohort of teens and young adults with the hope of identifying specific biological, chemical and environmental factors that trigger the onset of depression. The goal of the research is to develop interventions to prevent and treat those at high-risk for depression before symptoms of the disease manifest.

OVERVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER DEPRESSION RESEARCH

Our Challenge

Depression affects one in four women and one in 10 men at some point in their lives, but research that explains the biological causes of depressive disorders is lacking. As a result, health care providers have a difficult time determining intervention and treatment options for depression, bipolar disorder, and other related disorders. They also have few ways, if any, to determine a person's risk of developing any of these disorders. Despite the availability of more than 30 antidepressants and 10 bipolar treatments, medications are only effective for roughly half of those who take them short-term. The efficacy level is even lower for those who take medications long-term. There are high rates of relapse for both groups.

UT Southwestern Medical Center has made research and treatment of depression key priorities by establishing the Center for Depression and Mood Management. To bring light to potential causes of depression, the center is performing longitudinal research to identify biological and environmental characteristics of depression that will inform the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of depressive disorders.

Our Approach

In June 2015, we awarded a five-year, $5 million grant to support the first phase of the research. Over the next five years, the center will focus on uncovering the scientific underpinnings of depression. Our funding will specifically support what the center is calling the Dallas Early Recognition and Prevention study (DERP). This effort will follow adolescents and young adults who are

considered at risk of depression, but who do not have any expressed symptoms. The study aims to identify specific characteristics that indicate particular biological conditions as well as stressors, support systems, lifestyle factors and other measurable characteristics during key developmental periods in children and adolescents. The goal is to evaluate and quantify the characteristics that lead to the onset of depressive disorders.

How It Works

While the complete study is planned to last 20 years and include 2,000 people ages 10 to 24, the first, five-year phase that Caruth is supporting will include 500 participants. Those selected to participate in the study have not had a diagnosis of depression, but will be considered at high risk for developing depression due to a family history of depression or mental illness, early life trauma, poor academic performance, social withdrawal, and/or substance abuse. Data collection will include a comprehensive selection of biomaterial and psychological data, as well as cognitive and behavioral testing.

Anticipated Results

Since this research has just begun, it is too early to have results. Researchers expect results from the first phase of the study to provide the basis for the development of an algorithm that will predict depression in youth, which does not currently exist. In addition, by tracking a cohort pre-disposed for depression over a long period of time, the center plans to discover how a person's genetic, neurological and psychological makeup is related and evolves. If all goes as planned, the research should achieve 40 percent predictive ability in identifying youth at-risk of depression.

Lasting Impact

Long-term, the translation of the research has the potential to impact nearly one million people in the Dallas-Fort Worth area who have been diagnosed with a mental illness. The center will translate the research findings into clinical applications by using patient data to identify what factors predict the development of depression. This matters because such information can provide health care providers with the tools needed to make better informed decisions related to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of depressive disorders. This will allow medical professionals to shift from responding reactively to such a diagnosis to helping a person proactively manage his/her risk factors and symptoms in order to prevent onset.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY IMPACT FUNDING

WHAT IS COMMUNITY IMPACT FUNDING?

Guided by Communities Foundation of Texas' trustees and executive leaders, and implemented through the foundation's philanthropy department, we award grants from our discretionary funds to select, support and concentrate on issues in which the foundation can make a meaningful, positive change and touch the entire North Texas region.

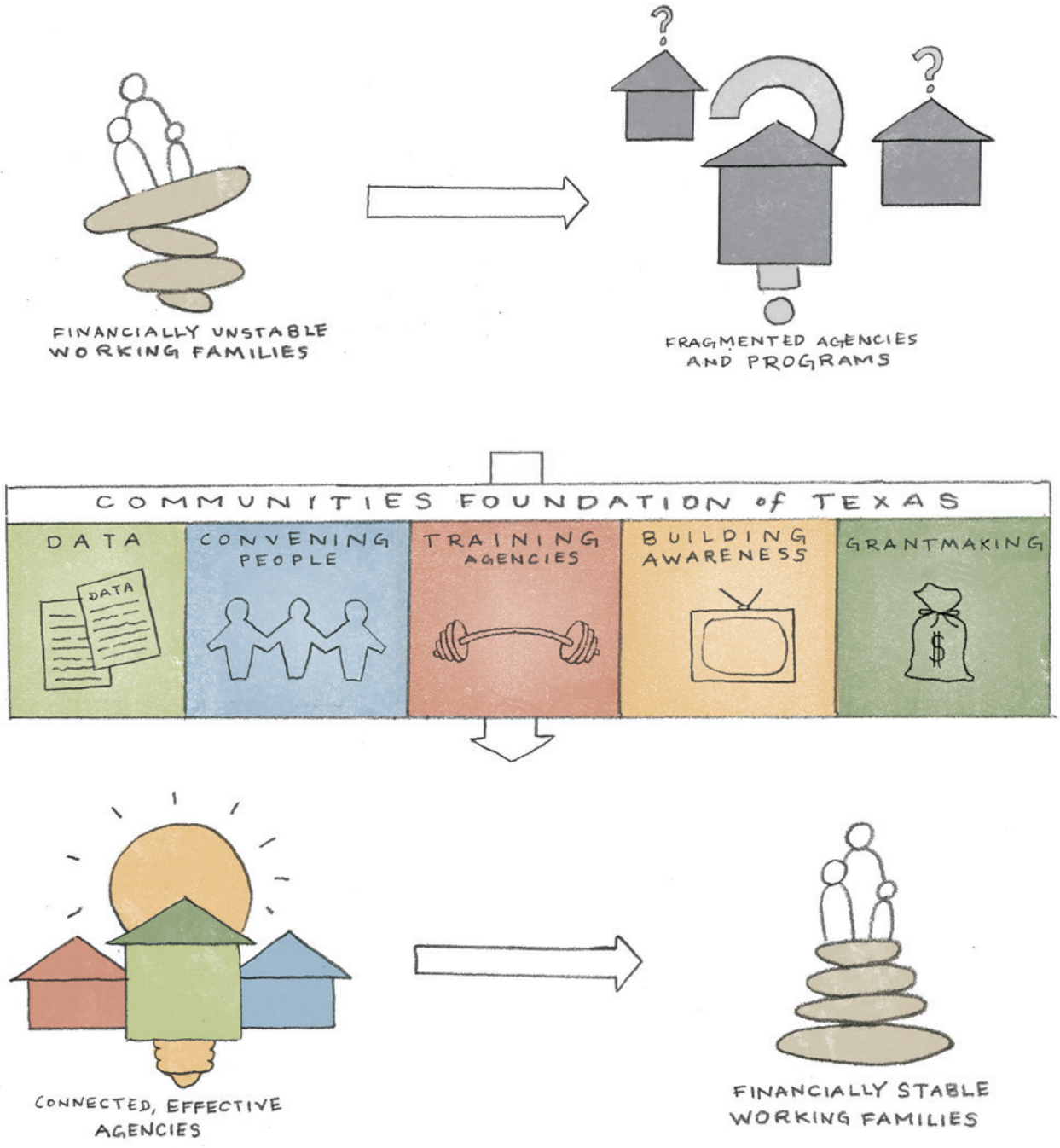
FOCUS AREAS:

Economic Security for the Working Poor

Middle School At-Risk Youth

COMPONENTS OF THE FOCUS ON ECONOMIC STABILITY FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Following the release of the Dallas 2012 Asset & Opportunity Profile, CFT began to convene and align nonprofit and foundation partners to help better serve low-income working families. Below is a diagram of how CFT's strategies and approaches are intended to support the forward movement of these families and the agencies that serve them.



O&H Brand Design

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR THE WORKING POOR

We work to improve the economic security and stability of low-income families in North Texas.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

Data Driven Decision-Making and the Working Families Sucess Model

WHY

A 2012 study published by the Corporation for Enterprise Development revealed that one in three North Texans could not live for three months at the federal poverty level should they lose their main source of income.

THE WORK

We have dedicated our efforts to two initiatives: the Data Driven Decision-Making Institute (D3) and the Working Families Success Network. Through D3, we provided training and capacity-building support to 46 local nonprofit agencies that serve low-income working individuals and families. We trained participating agencies to use data to enhance their programming and services to create deeper impact for their clients in sustainable ways. With the Working Families Success Network, we provided training, technical assistance and in-depth coaching for 18 agencies based on a nationally-recognized service delivery model that provides key services and financial supports for clients, with a focus on integrating employment services, income support and financial coaching.

OVERVIEW

DATA DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING INSTITUTE

Our Challenge

A February 2012 study examining Dallas and its 12-county North Texas region revealed that 39 percent of the city's households were living in or at risk of asset poverty. The study, called the Dallas Assets & Opportunity Profile and produced by the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED), also found that 68 percent of Dallas residents had subprime credit scores, and more than half of low-income residents did not have health insurance, placing them at financial risk in the event of a medical crisis.

To learn more, we turned to local nonprofit agencies serving people in poverty or at risk of falling into poverty and asked what was most needed to better serve "the working poor" – households earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty line with at least one member of the household who spent a minimum of 27 weeks in the labor force working or looking for work within the previous year. The nonprofits responded with two answers: data – quality information to shed light on the needs of this particular population; and capacity – people and resources to ponder the data, assign meaning to it and create new strategies less about aiding a family or individual's crisis and more about creating sustainable, financial security.

Our Approach

To help nonprofits understand the contemporary issues facing low-income families, as well as how they can use data to drive decisions about services, clients and funding needs, we created the Data Driven Decision-Making Institute (D3). This was a nine month intensive program that provided targeted learning opportunities for participating agencies' leadership and program staff.

D3 successfully ran from 2012 through its conclusion in 2015, having touched most of the interested agencies serving low-income working families.

How It Worked

D3 was offered to 46 nonprofits across three cohorts for as many years. Participants were selected through a competitive grant process and received a general operating grant award of $10,000. D3 used data from the Assets & Opportunity Profile, snd other data sources to equip nonprofits with tools and insight to assess, strengthen and build programs that would have a greater impact on financial- and poverty-related issues.

Each D3 cohort participated in targeted learning opportunities for personnel at all levels of the participating agencies, including leadership and program staff. The objectives for D3 participants were to:

- develop a shared understanding of the current issues and areas of need for low-income families, based on available data
- implement and expand the use of data in strategic decision-making as part of each agency's program development
- expand the agencies' networks of resources and support, including doing so through the process of sharing best practices through participation in a learning community.

For nine months, each cohort participated in a series of workshops focused on using and applying data. In addition, each agency had access to up to 40 hours of one-on-one coaching outside of class time focused on the use and evaluation of data. Monthly workshops also included time for networking and relationship building between agencies. All agencies participated in at least one collaborative group project and were given the opportunity to present their projects to a group of local funders and community leaders for funding consideration.

Results

As part of helping us understand the long-term impact of D3, staff members from several of the agencies that participated in each of the D3 cohorts were interviewed. Those we spoke with consistently called D3 a game changer. "It made a change in my life, and it made me more valuable as a team member," said Jane Waters, director of operations for Healing Hands, a community-based medical and dental clinic and a member of the D3 class of 2013. "I'm so truly grateful."

As a result of participation in D3, several agencies hired new staff or provided professional development for their current staff with a primary focus on data and evaluation. Agencies also invested in systems for reporting and measuring outcomes of their work and implemented evaluation tools to provide a better understanding of their clients' perspectives on their programs. Below are some of the key findings and outcomes gathered from three cohorts:

- 98.3 percent of the participating agencies' executive directors reported that D3 not only impacted their staff members who participated, but also served to inform their organizations as a whole because participants returned with best practices and information to enhance current data practices.
- As an outcome of the relationships formed in the second year of D3 (2013-2014), an external learning cohort started convening, led by Irving Cares, Volunteers of America Texas and Grapevine Relief and Community Exchange. This learning cohort was joined by other agencies not in D3, further spreading lessons learned in D3 across the social service community.
- 100 percent of the participating agencies' executive directors reported that D3 supported additional training needs for the agency in developing logic models, storytelling skills and creating a culture of evaluation.
- Agencies reported that D3 gave them an opportunity to expand their networks within the sector with agencies that are able to provide additional support and services to their clients.

- From the first to the second year, 17 agencies advanced D3 projects. Examples include Interfaith Housing Coalition's moved into a $10 million campaign, of which $2.1 million was secured before the end of 2015. Dallas Habitat for Humanity and Richardson Adult Literacy Center each reported being better prepared and more confident in the data they used to support their United Way multi-year grant applications. Agencies reported increased funding from donors to support their data collection, analysis or expanded program delivery efforts. Agencies also reported $250,000 in new support from various foundations less than a year after the conclusion of D3. Healing Hands Ministries' chief executive officer reported significant agency expansion, including in the areas of services, funding sources and staff.

Lessons Learned

Now that D3 has come to an end for agencies serving low-income working families, we know the following:

- The agencies that had the most success following D3 have four key characteristics: strong, fully engaged leadership that works to implement key concepts to the full organization; strategic focus on data collection and analysis; commitment to organizational change and creating a culture of outcomes measurement and analysis; and organizational stability in staffing and finances.
- Agencies have demonstrated a commitment to developing a deeper understanding of the client and gaining better insight into the needs of the client from the client. Across all three cohorts, agencies have a basic understanding of the working poor population they serve, and seek to understand client needs outside of their agencies' basic service delivery areas.
- D3 agencies desired ongoing learning and networking opportunities with peer D3 agencies. Agencies see value in participating in a learning community that can bring agencies together to share current best practices, provide opportunities to brainstorm current challenges faced by agencies serving the working poor population and foster a strong network of agencies serving similar communities.
- D3 served as a catalyst in helping smaller agencies to grow a stronger network of potential partners that can provide additional services to their current clients, thus providing more impactful services to the community.

Lasting Impact

The implementation of D3 led to changes across the non-profit sector. Agencies are better informed and positioned to foster a culture of evaluation. D3 agencies and their partner agencies are more committed to investing in data collection and analysis, making impact on the delivery of their services.

Based on D3 agencies' validation of the learning community as a valuable tool, learning groups have been established for our Working Families Success Network agencies, in addition to a forthcoming communal website to facilitate collaboration and an exchange of ideas.

Finally, word of the positive changes that have come from D3 Institute participation has spread to agencies serving other distinct areas, such as arts and education. Based on this interest, we will be piloting a new D3cohort focused on nonprofits in fall 2016.

CASE STUDIES

D3 AGENCIES EXPERIENCE GROWTH IN CONFIDENCE, LEADERSHIP AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT

The agencies that participated in the Data Driven Decision-Making Institute came away from the experience with three rewards: confidence, a collaborative approach to the work, and the opportunity to develop deeper connections within the local nonprofit community. Here, in their own words, staff members from three of the agencies provide thoughts on the results of their experiences within D3, and how D3 expanded their abilities to empower clients.

Confidence: Richardson Adult Literacy Center

The Richardson Adult Literacy Center (RALC)'s D3 experience offers proof of the ancient Greek quote, "from a small seed, a mighty trunk may grow." When the agency that provides English as a Second Language instruction for adults was selected to participate in D3, it had a staff of two, an annual budget of $40,000, and an active student count of about 75 people. "What I tried to portray in our D3 application to CFT was that yes, we are small, but we can use what we're going to learn to have an impact now, because we don't have the bureaucracy or the size of a large established nonprofit to work through how we get staff on board, change processes and all of those things," said Katie Patterson, Executive Director for RALC. "We can implement like a small sports car, with quick turns and fast acceleration." And quickly accelerate the agency did. Its budget is now $180,000 and growing, the staff size has increased to four, and it assists more than 600 people a year. Here's more from Patterson.

Learning with big leaguers: "I remember being at the first D3 gathering and being in a room with nonprofits such as the YMCA of Dallas, Wilkinson Center and International Rescue Committee — organizations that I

Richardson Adult Literacy Center

had heard of and knew were well-established. Here we were with them, side by side. It was me and a part-time program coordinator. At the time, that was our entire staff. We were introducing ourselves and our organization to the others, and it hit me how small we were. But I was optimistic and felt like we could definitely do more than anyone expected of us."

The poetry of logic: "In 2012, I attended a United Way seminar about a new three-year grant cycle and quickly realized we were not ready to apply for United Way funding at that time. Still, I wanted to gather the information, because it was my goal that the next time the application window opened, we would be ready. Part of what was talked about at the United Way seminar was logic modeling. The presenters spoke about them as if everyone in the room knew what a logic model was, but that was a completely foreign concept to me. So, when we focused on logic models in D3, that was an a-ha moment. We got a chance to actually sit down, create our logic models and talk to each other about the elements of each one. RALC used the time to create a logic model for our STAR Program, English as a Second Language for Adults. Now, fast forward to 2015, when we submitted our United Way grant application that included the logic model we created in D3. Since we'd already gone through the process of creating it, I knew I could be confident in what we had developed. It was so exciting to click that 'submit' button on the application, because it had been three years in the works."

Collaboration: VMLC

VMLC's mission is to help adults and children improve their English literacy and life skills, but its staff members have always thought far beyond merely helping clients read better. "We've always wanted to know if once their literacy and life skills are stronger, what the tangible results are for their families," said Sarah Papert, Executive Director for VMLC, an acronym for Vickery Meadow Learning Center. "Are they able to get a better job? Are they able to help their children with homework, be a better parent or become more involved in the community?" D3 provided an opportunity for the agency to learn how to find answers to such questions by giving the agency tools to measure and capture data so it can better serve its clients. VMLC's services include working with the nonprofit community as a whole for referrals to other support services. "We recognize that our students generally need a wide variety of social support services, and instead of us trying to provide all of those services ourselves, we want to connect students to other existing services," Papert said. "To have this intentional time together during D3 on a regular basis was valuable, because we rely on our nonprofit community networks for our referrals." Here's more from Papert.

Building capacity to do more: "A big part of D3 was getting us to think about how we can do a better job of collecting data and using it in a meaningful way. Ultimately, that led to us create a new staff position, our student outcomes manager. This person wears two hats. One is the outcome management aspect, where she oversees all of the data, making sure that it's collected, consistent and accurate, and that we're able to analyze it to learn what's going on with our students. The other hat she wears is more of a case worker. She does a lot of one-on-one and small group meetings with our students. In the past, nobody did that as their sole focus. In the past we traded this responsibility around, so we weren't able to have the intentional follow up with our students that our student outcomes manager is now able to provide. The timing was good for us to add this position, because as we've steadily grown in the number of people we're serving, we've had to think carefully about the depth of the services we provide. The student outcomes manager has also gotten certified to do health and human service screenings. Previously, we would relied on an outside entity

to come on site to do the screenings for the day, but we found it hard for the students. It requires a trust relationship between the screener and the student, because of the level of detail in the questions involved in the screenings that couldn't be built with a person coming in for one day. Now, the student outcomes manager can directly follow up with the students as needed. D3 helped us make the case for the position because we were better able to articulate the point that it's not just that we're helping people improve their literacy skills, but that we're equipping them to be able to do the other things they want to accomplish. The end result is helping people move out of poverty. In January 2015, VMLC extended its reach to a third site in Dallas through a merger with another nonprofit organization, ELM, which stands for English Language Ministry. ELM was merged into VMLC and is now the ELM-East Dallas campus of VMLC. The merger with ELM helped expand our capacity. For ELM, the merger was attractive because they could see how well organized we were in being able to collect data and communicate the outcomes and impact on the students and their families."

Working with clients to set goals: "We have always assessed the students on their literacy level when they come into the program so that we can place them in an appropriate class and then, we assess them again at the end of the school year to see the literacy gains they have made. We have also asked our students about the life skills they have acquired through end-of-year surveys, asking them, for example, if they have gotten a raise or a new job since entering the program, if they were able to attend a parent teacher conference with their child, or become more involved in the community as a result of what they've learned. Since D3, we've become more intentional about how we talk to the students about life skills and the goals they have for

learning English when they enter the program. This can be challenging with English language learners, because they understand they need to learn English, but it is often hard for them to articulate why they want to learn English. Generally students have similar reasons for learning English, so we now have them talk about their goals in a class setting. The idea is that if they're all working on similar goals, they can support each other in the journey of accomplishing their goals together. And ultimately, we can better fulfill our mission of changing lives through literacy."

Connectedness: Sharing Life Community Outreach

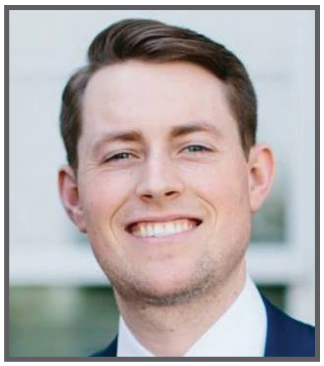
Teresa Jackson is one of the most humble people you'll ever meet. So when she summarizes the difference D3 has made in the existence of Sharing Life Community Outreach, forgive her for sounding conceited. "I'll just tell you like I tell everybody else," said Jackson, who paused and glanced downward before making the next statement. "We're a big deal these days." Jackson, who founded the agency in 1999 and now serves as its chief executive officer, said this with a much larger air of modest awe than hubris. Truth be told, she can't believe how far the organization that offers food, clothing and resources for other life essentials has come since the days when she was handing out cans of tuna from the trunk of her car. "Nobody is more surprised by this than I am. I thought we would do to the best of our ability and be important to the people who came here," Jackson said. "I had no idea that we would become such a force in the nonprofit community, and it's because of what D3 did for us. It was the perfect launching pad for us to take off and realize some of the things that I had only dreamed of for us or, better yet, didn't even know to dream about." Sharing Life went on from D3 to participate in the Working Families Success cohort, which is also featured in this report. Here's more from Jackson.

Making connections: "There had been talk for the last two years that the North Texas Food Bank was going to be restructuring its distribution system. It was called a hub-and-spoke model that used a network of partner agencies as spokes to redistribute food from the hub, which is the North Texas Food Bank. As North Texas Food Bank was building the plan, their representatives asked if we were interested in becoming a hub. My initial answer was no, because I didn't think we were ready for such a partnership. It was exciting and intriguing, but it was a huge endeavor that I thought was too big for our small staff to take on. As we were rocking along through D3, we were sitting in a meeting one day and I had an a-ha moment about the North Texas Food Bank partnership. I thought, 'Yes, we can do this.' I had to remember that Sharing Life went from zero when I started it several years ago to the well-respected, effective agency that it is today. So, why can't we continue to grow by being a hub in the food bank's system? As a result of my change in thinking and the confidence that I gained through D3, we became one of the first hubs in the North Texas Food Bank's expanded network. Leaders often think that they have to have the answer to every problem and the full amount of knowledge in their own brain to be effective, but I learned through D3 that it's ok to not know everything. The best leaders are the ones that know when to call in people with expertise and allow them to help in areas where the leaders have no knowledge."

PERSPECTIVE

D3 HARNESSES THE POWER OF DATA

Galen Smith, Director of Community Financial Stability at United Way of Metropolitan Dallas



United Way of Metropolitan Dallas had good intentions when it offered training to help nonprofit agencies understand outputs (activities, services, methods and approaches) versus outcomes (results and impact) from 2010 to 2012. The goal was to help nonprofits prepare stronger grant requests for funders, but it was often met with dread by most involved, said Galen Smith, Director of Community Financial Stability at United Way of Metropolitan Dallas.

"We would run into a lot of issues of applicants submitting outcomes that were actually outputs, so we would ask them to go deeper," Smith said. "It was a difficult transition to get nonprofits to think about how the work they were doing was changing someone's life and how they could show that."

This is not a judgment of the nonprofits, Smith added. The nonprofits were conditioned to frame their work through client stories and the number of bodies that walked through their doors, often at the request of funders who wanted to know how their investment was being used.

Fast forward to 2014, when United Way decided to adopt a set of common data measures that would allow funders and agencies to identify needs of low-income working people, measure efficacy of programs and communicate more effectively with each other.

"I had these memories of the previous trainings and how difficult it was to talk about outputs versus outcomes, and now we were going to talk about common measures?" Smith said. "The thought was terrifying."

But the common measures change came after the second cohort of D3, which had a curriculum that included training on outcomes, logic models and common data needs.

"I went around to every one of the 38 nonprofits in our financial stability portfolio - many of whom were D3 participants - to have a conversation about common measurements and every one of them was excited about the idea," Smith said. "They understood the value of coming together around data and so much leg work had already been done before I sat down with them."

Here's more from Smith about the impact that D3 had on the North Texas nonprofit community.

Q: What was the key challenge in the nonprofit community regarding the use of data prior to D3?

Smith: We talk now about topics such as outcomes as if using them is just obvious, but D3's look at rigorously measuring program impact was kind of a new thing among local nonprofits. There was a fear of

measurement and a hesitancy to invest and dive deep into understanding results. Also, the reality in the nonprofit sector is that it is very funder driven. If funders aren't asking for measures of impact, then local nonprofits wouldn't invest in the internal capacity needed for data measurement and evaluation. Having Communities Foundation of Texas be a leader to come forward and create a safe space for nonprofits to learn from experts and learn best practices in data collection helped to demystify data collection and outcomes. Before D3, outcomes and measurements were scary things.

Q: Why was that?

Smith: There is the concern that your impact may not be as good as you think it is. The question was often, what happens if we collect a bunch of data and we find out we're not effective or we are not as effective as we thought we were? Are we going to lose funding? It really requires you to peel the onion back and test some things out. Also, it's difficult to collect data in the financial security space, because you are dealing with a challenging population and capturing information from someone long after they have received help from the nonprofit. Much of the issue came down to follow up and the infrastructure needed to measure long-term outcomes. It takes a lot of time to reach out to someone three months or six months later to see if they still have that job, or if they got a raise. Programs can measure outputs very well – how many classes they have, how many they did last month, or how many surveys were completed at the end of the class. But there is uncertainty and fatigue in the idea of diving deeper. D3 brought agencies together, got people comfortable talking about data and excited to think of data as an opportunity and not just some onerous requirement of a funder.

> "We're all more effective if we tackle these things together and data lets us do that."
>
> –Galen Smith

Q: How was that discomfort affecting local nonprofits' abilities to get funding?

Smith: United Way moved to a completely open grants process in 2011 and a big component of that was a rigorous focus on outcomes. The programs that invested early in the capacity to measure outcomes did better in terms of the funding they received. Those who didn't make that investment had weak measurements or outcomes data in their proposals and did not do very well. The struggle from our perspective as a funder is we don't want to give money to the best proposal writers. We want to give funding to the best and most effective programs. So the tension we see is if someone has an unbelievable program, but they just don't measure it very well, that's unfortunate, because you want to give money where it is most effective. D3 helped solve this because it was a capacity building program that specifically helped nonprofits determine the best practices for measuring their work.

Q: What has been the lasting impact of D3 on the nonprofit community?

Smith: We are at a point of moving beyond measuring individual impact per agency. We are noticing a trend toward measuring the effectiveness of collaboration and looking for ways to change neighborhoods

and communities. In this space, Communities Foundation of Texas is doing something innovative again with the Working Families Success Model program. That and D3 are helping move the local nonprofit sector to be about more than individual agencies measuring their own impact so that they can get more funding. The conversation is evolving into one focused on how we help individual clients reach critical milestones. Once that becomes the focus, especially from a data perspective, it becomes so much easier to build the collaborations and networks around those families. D3 is helping to move us all from "your agency" versus "another agency". D3 opened the door for the providers to come together and think about common problems.

Q: What does that do for the larger community?

Smith: It gives communities and families a much better chance of being successful, financially stable and healthy. That data is baring out that it's extremely challenging for some families to get to a point of financial stability. It takes a lot more than one service or one agency. It truly takes a village. If you lack that data piece, you really stand a low likelihood of being able to surround the families that you want to see succeed in an effective or efficient way. Data is unlocking what funders can do as well. We're all more effective if we tackle these things together and data lets us do that.

OVERVIEW

WORKING FAMILIES SUCCESS MODEL

Our Challenge

Programming to address the economic stability of low-income working families is often siloed and focused on short-term, emergency assistance. To help clients achieve lasting economic outcomes, services need to be integrated to support the holistic needs of clients, setting them up with a goal of working toward long-term financial growth and sustainability. In 2012, Communities Foundation of Texas set out to find evidence and data-driven programs that were helping low-income families live financially stable lives. One of the best practices that emerged was a model for integrated service delivery based on work developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in the early part of the century. We studied the model and set a plan to bring this capability to North Texas, along with a strategy to equip nonprofits with knowledge and information so they could successfully implement the model, and ultimately lead clients to realize increased, sustainable economic well-being.

Our Approach

In 2014, we used what we learned from the Casey Foundation to pilot the Working Families Success (WFS) program. The Casey model integrates employment, financial coaching and supportive services in an intentional, focused approach and has been implemented in more than 70 locations and 30 cities across the nation since it was launched over 11 years ago. When we started, we initially envisioned a single cohort of a handful of agencies that would go through an intense learning program that would help them to launch a Working Families Success Center. However, as the application and interview process progressed throughout Spring 2014, the idea as originally conceived evolved and we created a larger tent of learning for more agencies. The final learning program had two separate and distinct cohort tracks:

- Green cohort — This was a cohort for those agencies that already provided services in more than one of the model's three focus areas – employment, income support and financial coaching – and who were well-positioned to become a Working Families Success Center within a 12-18 months.
- Blue cohort — This cohort was established for those agencies with a strong foundation and experience in at least one of the three focus areas, and who we thought had potential to become a Working Families Success Center in two to three years and would benefit from learning how to expand their financial capability services for clients.

Ten agencies were selected for the initial green cohort and attended monthly technical assistance training and coaching to support their plans for implementing the model. Participating agencies included: Catholic Charities Dallas, Catholic Charities Fort Worth, CitySquare, Interfaith Housing Coalition, International Rescue Committee, Housing Crisis Center, Jewish Family Service, Metrocrest Services, Tarrant County Reentry Coalition (led by Cornerstone Assistance Network), and the Women's Center of Tarrant County.

As a part of the technical assistance provided to the green cohort, training opportunities on financial services and in-depth financial coaching skills were provided to front-line staff, as well as training for leadership in managing organizational change to support the agencies in planning and managing their implementation approach. Each agency then conducted a prototype on pieces of the WFS model to provide learning and insight to support large scale implementation.

Eight agencies were selected for the blue cohort. The goal was to advance their capacity to offer financial services to clients. The blue cohort received technical assistance training and support for front-line staff, and also conducted a prototype that allowed them to pilot and experiment with enhancing financial capacity within their agencies.

How It Works

The WFS model provides a framework for delivering key services and financial supports to low-income families using an integrated approach specifically designed to make it easier for low-income families to obtain critically needed work-support services. WFS is built on the concept that offering integrated services in an intentional and thoughtful way helps clients overcome barriers and advance economically.

The model includes a "bundled" set of three core elements: employment services, income support and financial coaching. The WFS model is not a stand-alone program. Rather, it is an approach that is overlaid into a nonprofit's existing programs, staffing structure and client base. Services are bundled and sequenced together. Rather than offering one component in isolation, it requires providers to intentionally integrate the three key areas in a seamless way for the client, and depends on the development of strong, long-term relationships with clients. One-on-one coaching is provided as an integral component of service delivery and is used to help clients set goals, develop plans and change behavior. Data on the clients and their outcomes is routinely collected and analyzed and used regularly to make decisions to improve program effectiveness and adjust operations to further support a client's long-term success.

Since 2014, the selected agencies have been receiving significant program guidance and training and have formed a learning cohort - not only to support each other, but also to share best practices and key learnings that can be used to further expand the implementation of this model in the North Texas community. The selected agencies in the green cohort were asked to make a multi-year commitment to participate in the learning cohort, as well as to collect and report on a base set of common outcomes and metrics.

Results And Lessons Learned

In 2015, we gave members of the green cohort the opportunity to begin implementing the WFS model on

their own schedule by asking the agencies to submit a detailed implementation plan that demonstrated how each of them would bring the model to scale. Seven of the 10 agencies submitted implementation plans in 2015, and were approved and granted $75,000 for technical assistance. Since then, seven agencies have begun to implement their WFS-based work, with two additional agencies working on plans for 2016 implementation.

One of the lessons we learned during this process was that nonprofits needed coaching and training on how to write implementation plans. Since nonprofits are accustomed to writing grants or fulfilling requests for proposals, the initial drafts of implementations plans often read like a grant proposal. The WFS model is nuanced and complicated, and since we were asking them to change their service and delivery model in a permanent way, we wanted implementation plans to include their thoughts, assumptions and plans on how they would move from their current state of service delivery to the Working Families model. This meant thinking of the implication of the shift on budgets, staffing and the incorporation and integration of services. As we worked with the agencies through the implementation planning process, we determined that it was better to help them slow down and get the details right than to rush to implement a model within a certain time frame without all the planning completed.

We also learned that there is a certain evolution that the agencies go through as they begin to implement the WFS model. For example, one of the first things agencies dealt with was resistance from their staff, which often included staff turnover. To assist with this, we introduced the agencies to a process called the Change Cycle, which guides people and organizations through organizational change. We also witnessed the agencies struggle with defining messaging and marketing in order to recruit clients to their new service and delivery models. We spent time in cohort sessions focusing on client engagement strategies and approaches, encouraging prototyping and testing as a method to find approaches that work with their specific client population.

As a majority of the members of the green cohort began to implement the model, we refined and developed our core set of standard outcomes. As agencies move into their first full year of implementation, all WFS agencies are required to collect and report on the same outcomes, so that we can see how we are progressing as a cohort and we can benchmark our outcomes against the other networks that have implemented this approach, including Casey locations and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which is a national community development organization that supports similar centers.

In addition to supporting the green cohort with their implementation plans, we brought in an organization called the Financial Clinic to work with the blue cohort to specifically consult and coach the blue cohort agencies to include and expand their financial capacity services without changing their existing structure.

In September 2015, we invited the eight members of the blue cohort to apply for one-year grants to support building their capacity to expand financial services programs for clients within the agencies' existing program service and delivery structures. Six of the agencies applied for the grants, which ranged from $11,000 to $25,000. Each is now implementing the ir proposed programs that range from integrating financial coaching into existing employment programs to expanding workforce services to enhancing existing financial coaching and education delivery.

What has been noticeable about the agencies in the blue cohort is how the training and information they received through their cohort gatherings has been applied to their existing services. The agencies connected with what they learned and were able to find ways to build it into current programming seamlessly.

An outcome of working with the Financial Clinic was a further learning and funding opportunity provided to selected members of the green and blue cohorts. JP Morgan Chase, who was in process of making a $1 million grant to the Financial Clinic to support agencies across the U.S. with expanding their financial capability services, carved out $200,000 of the ir total funding available to support eight of the WFS cohort

members with additional coaching and consulting services. This grant is significant because it brought in another funding source for our agencies that not only provided them with a tool that supported our efforts to help them build capacity, but demonstrated how the funding and work that CFT is doing also supports the philanthropic efforts of our peer foundations in the North Texas region.

Anticipated Impact

The green cohort meets monthly and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Agencies are moving to becoming a network that includes peer support and learning beyond what we can teach them.

One of our long-term goals is for other funders to fund this work and to have our fellow foundations come alongside us, to help all of us in leveraging our funds, as well as support the goal of improving economic stability and opportunity across our region. In late 2015, the Dallas Women's Foundation expressed an interest in providing the implementation funding for one of the green cohort agencies, the Women's Center of Tarrant County. This agency fit with the Dallas Women's Foundation the foundation's focus on women and girls, and offered the Dallas Women's Foundation the opportunity to provide support within Tarrant County, a long-term goal for them. In October 2015, in cooperation with CFT staff, the Dallas Women's Foundation granted $75,000 to the Women's Center of Tarrant County to support their first year implementation of the WFS model.

We hope to fund this grant for three years throughout the implementation phase of the Women's Center of Tarrant County's project," said Lauren Blitzer, economic security director for the Dallas Women's Foundation. "We are excited to be funding a service delivery model with a proven impact at an organization that is focused on addressing the unique needs of women and girls.

WORKING FAMILY SUCCESS MODEL

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Skill assessment
- Job training
- Certification programs
- Job search and placement assistance

INCOME SUPPORT

- Benefit screening / application assistance
- Temporary financial assistance
- Housing assistance
- Tax prep

FINANCIAL COACHING

- Financial education
- One-on-one counseling
- Access to financial products / services
- Support on tracking credit, spending

CASE STUDY

LEADERS FROM THREE AGENCIES TALK ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKING FAMILIES SUCCESS PROGRAM

Camilla Zimbal, *Senior Director of Financial Stability Programs*

Metrocrest Services

When Metrocrest Services joined the green cohort for the Working Families Success (WFS) program, the agency was already using a one-stop shop approach to offering services to the clients it serves in Carrollton, Farmers Branch, Addison, Coppell and a portion of Dallas that is in Denton County. The agency offers crisis assistance and programs that lead to self-sufficiency and foster independence, and its staff wanted clients to have access to everything they needed in one place – from help with rent and food stamps to GED preparation and job search support.

"We discovered years before that bundling services was beneficial to our clients, so they wouldn't have to drive all over the place to get help," said Camilla Zimbal, senior director of financial stability programs for Metrocrest.

But what Metrocrest didn't have, Zimbal said, was an approach that used common metrics for measuring success and was integrated internally and with other nonprofits that helped many of the same clients.

"One of the things you see in a social service agency is a lot of piecemeal work, with a program here and a program there and another program over here, so I felt that if we solidified our team efforts with those programs, we could provide better services to the clients and have a better collective impact," Zimbal said. "Also, one agency would measure something this way and another agency would measure it another way, and we were all trying to figure out how to get funding to serve our clients based on two different ways of doing business. That just didn't seem like the best way to make an impact."

So, when CFT launched WFS, Zimbal said she jumped all over it, because the program was in line with the agency's mission and it works on making deep, positive change in the areas that keep low-income people from realizing sustainable financial stability.

Metrocrest began implementing a plan to become a Working Families Success Center in February 2015. At the core of the plan is the team concept Zimbal mentioned earlier. Prior to implementation, the agency offered a number of different programs that functioned in silos and sent clients in multiple directions, depending on the crisis they were experiencing. The first thing the agency did as part of implementation was to create a flow chart for the client experience that put every person who walked through Metrocrest's doors seeking assistance on the same pathway. The various programs merged philosophically to become one

team and the staff's daily routine changed, so that they began to meet daily to discuss clients. The goal was to make sure that all involved were working to solve the client's immediate needs and any others that could help the client reach stabililty.

"We all worked together on the same message and the same goal," Zimbal said.

While the implementation is going well, it wasn't smooth sailing from the beginning. Members of the agency's staff learned that not only did they need to share information with each other, but they needed to offer more details to clients at the outset of the relationship. To remedy this, the agency added a step that required all clients to attend a WFS orientation. The goal was for the clients to understand that Metrocrest wasn't simply going to pay a client's rent, but was going to be fully engaged in helping the client improve their life long-term. The agency also changed its intake forms and the style of conversation it has with clients at the beginning of each relationship.

"Once we began to get clients engaged, we saw that they wanted to do it, but they didn't know for sure what efforts it would take to the next step," Zimbal said. "So we felt that we had to talk about building long-term relationships and ways to engage them further so they would understand it's a journey and not a process."

Another lesson the agency learned through the process of implementation: its employment program wasn't tightly connected to the overall WFS message. As a result, the agency built a new program called Competitive Edge, a week of intense job-focused training geared toward helping clients secure sustainable employment – one that is full-time with a livable wage and benefits. The program features guest speakers, financial exercises and job search guidance for clients who are unemployed or underemployed. It ends with Hiring Day, a day-long event that includes on-site interviews by hiring companies. The program has helped move clients from jobs in which they earned $7 an hour with constantly changing work schedules and no benefits to employment with career-advancing potential, benefits and annual salaries of up to $65,000.

The changes that Metrocrest has made have totally transformed its client culture. Clients, many of whom had been seeking assistance at Metrocrest for several years, now know that staff members aren't simply going to address their most immediate challenge. Instead, staff members are going to engage in a conversation about the client's whole life.

"I saw a client the other day talking to an intake staff member, someone who has been coming here over and over again since I came to Metrocrest 11 years ago, and her conversation with the front desk attendant was delightful to hear," Zimbal said. "She talked about all of the things she has done to stabilized herself and she was proud to share it with us."

Perhaps the WFS tool that has made the biggest difference for the agency – and reiterates the change in client culture – is the coaching approach to client interaction. Through the WFS program, the agencies learned that coaching first helps agencies meet clients where they are and then opens the door for a long-term relationship. This is different from the traditional case management approach that nonprofit agencies often use, which tends to focus on fixing an immediate problem instead of resolving an issue in a sustainable way.

"When people come in here in crisis, they come to get their rent paid or get their electricity paid, and we want to help them with those problems. But if we can actually coach them and work with them in a way that builds a relationship, maybe they will come back to work on some goals and work toward a journey of

success," Zimbal said. "Rather than being a case worker who just tells the client, 'you need to do this and you need to do that,' which may make them defensive, the coaching approach offers the type of message that we want to give our clients, which is 'we are here to help you and this is a partnership.' "

The case management approach is a hard habit to break, Zimbal said, as it has been standard operating procedure for nonprofit agencies and the staff members they hire for so long. The culture of the nonprofit sector, especially those in crisis management, is for the client to come in, get their crisis met and walk out, and come back when the next crisis strikes.

"When a social worker graduates from college, they have this idea that they are going to go out and change the world and make all these changes in people's lives," Zimbal said. "But people have to make changes in their own lives – you can't do it for them – and that can be a hard lesson for case managers to learn."

Despite the agency's intitial struggles, once Metrocrest staff members transitioned from case management to coaching, they loved it. They saw that the process shifted a lot of direct responsibility from them and made it more enjoyable to work with clients.

"The relationship was no longer about getting forms filled out and getting checks written," Zimbal said. It was about getting to know the client and learning where the client wanted to go."

Teresa Jackson, *Chief Executive Officer, Sharing Life Community Outreach*

Sharing Life Community Outreach

Like other agencies in the Working Families Success (WFS) program, Sharing Life Community Outreach learned the power of providing financial coaching, the logic of helping people get jobs earning a living wage, and the way to provide income support as is a bridge to a sustainable life for clients.

WFS also gave Sharing Life a couple of intangible tools, the first one being courage.

Sharing Life, which started as an agency that provided assistance with basic necessities, joined the WFS blue cohort at a time when it was piloting a nurse aide program with El Centro College, a campus in the Dallas County Community College district. The original eight-week program was one course focused on basic patient care and designed to give clients the training needed to qualify for the state's Nurse Aide Certification, so they could get a job quickly. Through its participation in WFS, Sharing Life advanced the pilot to what is now a five-track medical education program that helps clients who frequently need financial assistance get an education and the skills needed to break that cycle and achieve self-sufficiency. The program is now in its fourth year and serves about 80 to 100 students a year.

"Part of our learning experience in WFS gave us the courage to bring on those other tracks and say we can handle that," said Teresa Jackson, chief executive officer for Sharing Life. "It informed me with stats and hard facts of what I thought intuitively, which is that people need and want a program that helps them create goals and dreams that are attainable."

The medical education program fills a definite need in Sharing Life's client community. The Mesquite-based agency's service area includes two zip codes in Dallas County with the highest increase in poverty in the last five years.

"We knew we had a client base that desperately needed to have training or retraining to provide them with living wage jobs and a pathway to education," Jackson said. "We also knew that our clients wanted those things, but issues of life kept getting in the way for them. They are literally living from catastrophe to catastrophe and moment by moment just trying to feed, clothe and house themselves and their families."

The medical education program addresses many of these challenges, because it is relatively short – the standard time in the program is about a year – and is free to clients who qualify. Potential candidates for the program are required to fill out an application, and, if selected, go through an interview process conducted through El Centro's Continuing Education department. Those who qualify then choose one of five entry level health occupations as a course of study: nurse aide certification, phlebotomy, electrocardiogram (EKG) technology, community health and, ultimately, patient care technology. The program is set up so that one course of study is a building block to the next one. For example, students who complete nurse aide certification, phlebotomy, and electrocardiogram (EKG) technology are then eligible to pursue patient care technology, which is training that garners the highest paying jobs of all the courses.

Paired with the wrap around services that Sharing Life provides, the medical education program helped the agency offer two of the three key elements of the WFS model: employment services and income support. But the program lacked the third component of financial coaching, which participation in the WFS program helped Sharing Life implement. Clients in the medical education program are now required to participate in financial coaching as part of their studies. This was necessary, Jackson said, so the clients would see the financial coaching portion as an element that is just as valuable at the rest of their studies.

"When people don't have enough money, they often don't see the value of taking a financial literacy coaching class, because they think they don't have anything to manage," Jackson said. "We made it mandatory and once they sat down one-on-one with a coach and the educators, they could see that it was real, usable information about them, their financial goals and their dreams."

Financial coaching in the program is specific and personal. The students and the financial coach lay out a clear and exact financial profile that includes everything, from a list of the student's expenses to an outline of the student's financial goals and dreams. The sessions include conversations about what the clients want for themselves and their families long-term, and discussions about how they can spend the money they do have in better ways.

Jackson said although the medical education program doesn't cost the students' money, it requires payment from them in other ways.

"They have to show up and be honest with us when they fall into a situation that would keep them from attending class or make them want to drop out so that we can help them work through the problem, and they have to attend financial capabilities and coaching," Jackson said. "That's how they pay, with commitment."

When students face a challenge that may cause them to want to quit the program, financial coaching comes into play outside of the classroom as well. For example, if a student says he or she wants to drop out because

they are having challenges with paying for childcare, rent or transportation, the student sits down with the program's financial coach so that first, Sharing Life can help resolve the immediate crisis and second, the student can learn financial management skills in the process.

"We tell them at orientation, 'Give us the chance to solve the problem with you. Don't make the decision to quit without telling us first, because while a problem may seem insurmountable, we may have a solution,'" Jackson said. "We don't want to lose them because of something that is solvable. The investment in their future is too valuable."

As part of its WFS implementation plan, Sharing Life obtained grants funding specifically to help students in the medical health program. Sharing Life uses the grant funds to offer students a plan with shared responsibility between them and the agency. When a student presents a problem, the financial coach – who is already familiar with each student's financial profile because of their participation in the program - walks the student through his or her options and looks for ways that allow the student to pay for a portion of the need while Sharing Life covers the other portion. The grants are from BBVA Compass Bank and the Baron and Blue Foundation, two funding relationships that Jackson said were a direct result of Sharing Life's participation in WFS – which points to credibility, another intangible tool Sharing Life gained from WFS.

"There are certain funders and donors that are not comfortable with emergency services, so [the medical education] program is sustainable and includes outcomes and hard data to show how someone who was not working at all got a job or how a person moved from a minimum wage situation to one earning double that amount," Jackson said. "That is the stuff people like and feel confident giving to. It gives us greater credibility and respect."

Participating in WFS was one of the best investments of time and effort that Sharing Life has made, because it led to the agency making great investments in its clients through the medical education program, Jackson said.

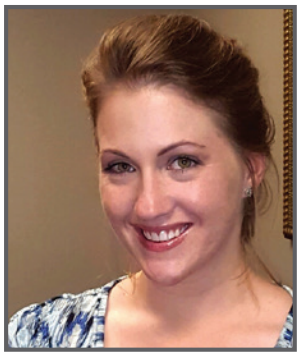
"As the CEO of Sharing Life, I never want to see anybody going hungry or living in their cars. It's heartbreaking and still makes me cry, and yes, it's the reason I started Sharing Life, so I'm still deeply passionate about those things after 17 years," Jackson said. "But there is no program we have here that is a better investment of the funds that donors give us than our integrated service delivery program. Nothing compares to it, because it has a ripple effect that changes lives."

The Women's Center of Tarrant County

If the Employment Solutions team at The Women's Center of Tarrant County had a motto for its clients to follow, it would be: get a great job, here's how you can do it and it's driven by you.

Employment Solutions, a new name for the department that grew out of the agency's Working Families Success (WFS) experience, works to increase the financial well-being of women, men and families through stable jobs and increased financial capability.

Terri Rios, *Director of Employment Solutions*



Celena Fannin, *Workforce Services Coordinator, for The Women's Center of Tarrant County*

"Our general approach to employment is that it is client-centered and client-driven," said Celena Fannin, the agency's workforce services coordinator. "Our ultimate goal is to partner with that client to help them identify their best pathway to employment."

But while the agency has always put clients first, it previously took more of an eat-your-spinach approach to much of its work – telling clients what they needed instead of allowing the client to figure out their needs and goals for themselves. Clients in need of employment select one of three tracks: rapid employment for clients who need a job right away using the skills they have; career services training, for those interested in beefing up their employment skills to advance their career; and workforce solutions for clients who face barriers to employment, such as a lack of childcare or limited literacy skills. Previously, each of these tracks was a separate program. Clients were placed in one track or another based on a short conversation, usually over the phone, and the decision was made by someone on staff.

"In the past, the programs functioned in silos, so when an individual would call, we would maybe ask them a couple of questions to make a determination of what direction they should go and make the decision for them," Fannin said. "It was 'you sound like you need training, so come to this meeting,' or 'you sound like you need a job, so go here.'"

In addition, Fannin said, everyone on staff was doing the same work, but doing it in their own corners. And while it was working – people were getting jobs – it wasn't allowing the client to be accountable for themselves nor was it setting them up for stability.

Using what the agency learned in WFS, it has changed its approach. Now, when a client comes in, the agency works to give them as much information as possible. That starts with the information session that happens each Tuesday and includes clients and the staff members of all three employment solutions tracks. The two-hour meeting includes: a presentation of the agency's coaching-style assistance model; an opportunity for clients to work through a financial priorities chart and stability wheel; and one-on-one meetings with the various coaches on staff. In addition, the staff and clients use the time to help the client identify their own needs and work through the challenges they may face in a search for employment.

"Now that we have this new information session, we are seeing that people are coming in for one thing, but determining on their own that they may need something different," Rios said. "So, they may come in thinking they need a job right away, but then learn that they really don't have the skills to get the kind of job they need, so they need to be in the career services track instead of the rapid employment track."

The process has really allowed the staff to step back and allow the client to take the initiative, Rios continued. In addition, the clients are feeling so empowered that they are spreading the word about the agency and its work to others.

"We haven't had to do any marketing at all," Fannin said. "The clients are doing the marketing for us, because they are talking to other people about the services they are getting."

Rios admitted that she was initially uncertain about what participating in WFS could do for the agency. She wasn't quite sure how the integrated approach to service delivery would work for their department. In addition, she felt as if some of the work around financial stability and coaching was already being done in the agency's career services track. But as the cohort moved forward, she was able to see how the model could be beneficial for the department and its clients as she talked with other agencies in the cohort and visited other nonprofits that were already using integrated service delivery for employment services, such as SER Houston.

"It wasn't until I understood how the whole model is an overlay for the entire department," Rios said. "I kept compartmentalizing it and thinking, well, we are doing this in career development, but we really weren't doing it in the other two programs. The epiphany was we can make this work for our whole department."

And that, Rios and Fannin agreed, was not easy. The team spent four months renovating their department into what it is now, a challenge because they had to get buy-in from the entire staff that had to learn an entirely new way of working. The lessons Rios and Fannin learned in the change management training proved to be beneficial in this process.

The other element of WFS that Rios and Fannin found beneficial was the introduction and exposure to other agencies who were either preparing to do the same work or had already started implementation.

"Introducing us to these partners was huge," Fannin said. "Without the access to them, it would have taken us a lot more trial and error for implementation."

Implementing the model has changed the conversation the staff has about clients.

"Because we are all more connected with the work, we have more of an avenue to share client success stories, because we have all interacted with the client in some way," Fannin said. "In the past, the client interacted with one person, but now, everyone experiences them and is part of their success."

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: MIDDLE SCHOOL AT-RISK YOUTH

THE HIGHLIGHT

Since 2009, we have focused on improving the academic success of at-risk middle school students in high-need urban schools.

WHY

Studies indicate students' experiences in middle school play a critical role in both the students' high school retention and graduation rates as well as their success at the postsecondary level. Additional studies indicate that a consistent presence of outstanding school leadership has proven to be one middle school intervention that undergirds students for success.

THE WORK

We've partnered with various agencies to address two goals: to build a pipeline of exceptional middle school teachers and leaders; and to enhance the quality of professional development throughout the careers of middle school teachers and leaders already in the teaching profession.

OVERVIEW

TEACH FOR AMERICA MIDDLE SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PLAN AND TEACHING TRUST EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR TEAMS

Our Challenge

The case for the funding and support we provided individually to Teach for America and Teaching Trust is similar: since a student's middle school experience is often a predictor of success in high school and beyond, middle schools need capacity that can be maintained over time, outstanding leadership and highly effective classroom instruction. This is especially true for middle schools in areas of high poverty. Research shows that more students fail ninth grade more than any other grade, with most of these students dropping out after repeating the ninth grade, according to information published by the National High School Center in 2012. In one study published by the National Middle School Association in 2009, middle school students who either failed math or reading, attended school less than 80 percent of the time, or received an unsatisfactory behavior grade in a core course were found to have less than a 25 percent chance of graduating from high school on time. Yet, additional research from the Southern Regional Education Board indicates that middle schools with strong leaders – both administrators and teachers – actively combat many of the typical middle school challenges.

Our Approach

In 2010, we made a decision to support programs that develop best practices, skills and competencies among teachers and school leaders, including data-informed

teaching and leading, and the integration of research and technology-based methods into the curriculum. We focused on efforts that would increase the quantity and quality of teachers and school leaders coming into and staying in the profession as key levers of overall retention and graduation rates. More specifically, we support programs that:

- identify educators who have the potential to serve in teaching and leadership roles in high-need urban middle schools
- create ongoing development opportunities for teachers to improve their pedagogical skills
- provide ongoing skills and competenecy development opportunities for teachers, principals, assistant principals and academic leaders to improve and enhance their teaching and leadership skills.

In this section, we look at the work of two agencies: Teach For America (TFA) and Teaching Trust, both of which received funding and support through our Middle School Teacher and School Leader Professional Development Grants. The theory behind our reasoning for providing these grants is that improving middle school environments will ultimately increase overall student performance and graduation rates.

TFA's Middle School Partnership Plan: How It Works

In June 2012, TFA launched the Middle School Partnership Plan (MSPP) with the goal of expanding its impact beyond its TFA corps members' classrooms in order to create whole-school change. The program was piloted through a partnership with the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) and kicked off at Ann Richards Middle School, a campus that opened in the fall of the same year. Through the partnership, TFA placed a high concentration of its corps members at the school—about one quarter of the school's teaching total positions—in addition to providing extensive professional development to school leadership and non-TFA teachers using the organization's proven practices and tools. With our funding, TFA provided up to 40 hours of high quality training, programming, and ongoing support to the entire school leadership/administrative team and teaching staff throughout the school year. This included access to TFA's Student Academic Achievement Tracker software and online resource bank of curriculum materials, along with its video library of teaching tools.

The 2014-2015 school year marked year three of the partnership, which has expanded with the help of additional funding from the Meadows Foundation to include two additional schools: L.V. Stockard Middle School and Raul Quintanilla Sr. Middle School.

TFA Results And Lessons Learned

The top priority goal of the partnership was to improve academic achievement for all students in the partner schools. To measure its progress, TFA looked at DISD's School Effectiveness Indices (SEI), which is the tool the district uses to determine how schools compare with one another. In the 2014-2015 school year, Richards and Stockard's SEI scores remained in the average range with both campuses ending the year with distinctions of being in top 25 percent in student progress.

TFA launched the partnership with a plan to provide the basic elements of its programming and materials to all teachers throughout a middle school. Since that time, the organization has refined its approach and began year three with an aim to deepen its impact and expand its presence in its partner schools. A key strategy for deepening impact was placing TFA alumni alongside TFA corps members in order to increase the number of educators on each campus who had already bought in to core TFA methods and practice and could model them for non-TFA educators. It placed 10 TFA corps members with 10 alumni TFA educators at Richards. Ten corps members and eight alumni, including an assistant principal, were part of the program at Stockard. Nine corps members were in classrooms at Quintanilla, alongside two alumni TFA educators.

As it has since the program's launch, TFA continued to encourage middle school leadership to provide professional development and training beyond its TFA-

led classrooms so that improved academic outcomes were realized school-wide. The trends that emerged from its professional development and training efforts in year three were as follows.

- Members of TFA-DFW's Teacher Leadership Development staff, also known as TFA coaches, were asked to train DISD instructional coaches and served as the highest point of leverage for TFA best practices and techniques to be applied school wide. This created the greatest opportunity for partnership and teacher impact. As part of this strategy, TFA also added a Director of Coaching Partnerships position, with responsibilities that had previously been embedded in other jobs.
- School leaders were interested in leveraging TFA to train and coach new teachers — either new to the profession or to the school. TFA coaches worked directly with these teachers and collected data on their classrooms, shared this with school leadership, aligned on next steps, adjusted, and repeated this cycle until improvement was demonstrated.
- The schools have shared that having TFA coaches on campus to bounce ideas off of and problem-solve in the moment strengthens the partnership and streamlines work. As such, TFA staff members were deeply integrated in the regular operations of each school, attending weekly leadership meetings, participating in teacher academies, conducting regular meetings with the principal, and working directly with department leaders.

Other lessons learned through the partnership include the following:

- TFA's support model at each middle school must be unique and based on the relationships with each principal and the specific needs of the school. To customize the approach for different schools, TFA has increased classroom management training for schools serving students who come from different neighborhoods. It is also aligning the language it uses to that of DISD, and staying aware of what is happening with each school's culture.
- Maintaining strong relationships and documenting progress, even through a leadership transition, are key. As a result of a change in leadership at Richards and Stockard, TFA needed to reestablish relationships with each school's succeeding leaders to maintain the program's stability and troubleshoot challenges that came with a loss of institutional knowledge and the understanding of how the partnership works.
- Establishing clear guidelines for partnership at the outset promotes accountability. TFA will continue to prioritize sitting down with school leadership at the outset to align on the support model TFA should provide throughout the school year.
- A school in disarray for any reason does not provide a good environment for partnership nor can TFA serve as the organization that brings order to such a campus.

TFA Lasting Impact

Results and lessons learned from the MSPP led TFA to see that its training is useful to educators outside of the organization's corps members. The organization is offering more comprehensive support beyond the core program and is "stacking resources" at certain schools by working with organizations with similar interests such as Education Opens Doors and Teaching Trust. TFA also launched the first local Teach For America DFW Summer Institute, with the goal of strengthening its teacher training model and extending best practices to non-TFA educators. Through the program, TFA is extending its professional development and training to DISD personnel responsible for teacher coaching. The organization plans to grow these efforts further, so there is potential to impact more educators and create opportunities for thousands of students.

Teaching Trust Executive Education Program For Teams: How It Works

In 2013, Teaching Trust launched a multiphase professional development program called the Executive Education Program for Teams. The program, in which educators participate for one year,

was designed to serve existing principals and their school leadership teams. The goal of the program is to provide high quality professional development to existing school teams in order to improve the culture of learning, teacher effectiveness, and student achievement on their campuses. The program includes a series of workshops connected by action learning projects to embed the training on school campuses, with accountability through a monthly consultation with Teaching Trust staff. Content topics include Building a High Aspirations Culture, Using Data to Drive Performance, and Supervising and Evaluating Effective Instruction.

We provided grant funds to support the planning and design of the program in 2012–2013, and funds to support piloting the program with an inaugural cohort of 12 school leadership teams (including five middle school teams) from DISD during the 2013–2014 school year. Teaching Trust ended that year with 11 teams, because of a leadership change at one of the middle schools (that school was rolled forward into the 2014-2015 school year and included in the second cohort of 10 DISD schools). For the 2015-2016 school year, the cohort is made up of 16 teams with four middle schools (one in Uplift).

Teaching Trust Results And Lessons Learned

Program effectiveness and outcomes for the program are measured through student achievement gains and surveys used to assess school culture and program quality. Teaching Trust's goal is for 90 percent of participating teams to demonstrate year-over-year positive gains that exceed those of comparable schools in reading and math, and for 90 percent of participating teams to achieve top-quartile results on surveys administered at the end of each program year.

In the area of student achievement among schools with Teaching Trust Teams in the 2013-14 cohort, 56 percent ranked in the top quartile for math gains in the state on 2015-16 student assessments. This is one percentage point higher than the previous year. As well, 44 percent of schools with 2013-14 cohort Teams ranked in the top quartile for reading gains in the state in 2015-16, which is eight percentage points higher than the previous year. In addition, 89 percent of the Teams schools exceeded DISD gains in both math and reading that year, a gain of 16 and seven percentage points respectively over the previous year. Lastly, 89 percent of the Teams schools also exceeded the state's gains in math and reading, a gain of seven and 16 percentage points respectively.

In its efforts to create a culture of excellence, schools with leaders in a Teaching Trust Executive Ed for Teams cohort showed solid growth in various areas on the DISD School Climate survey at the end of the 2014-2015 year. In response to the statement, "my school has an effective leadership team," the percent of teachers with a positive response at schools with a Teaching Trust Team increased by 20.4 percentage points versus the prior school year. The percent of teachers with a positive response to "morale at my school has improved this year" increased by 24.9 percentage points. And while the district as a whole showed an improvement in overall culture of 3 percentage points in 2014-15 versus the prior school year, Teaching Trust Teams' schools reported a 13.7 percentage point increase.

In the area of program quality, Teaching Trust surveyed members of the participating leadership teams at the end of the most recent year, 2015-2016, and found that 95 percent of them agreed or strongly agreed that the Teams program is high quality; 93 percent felt that the coaching and feedback they received contributed to their schools' success.

As Teaching Trust has continued to improve the program, the organization has learned lessons in the following areas:

- Teaching Trust was highly focused on helping the leadership teams set goals around both student academic achievement and school culture. The organization added deeper training on goal setting that includes work around planning, measuring and intervening against goals.
- The organization added training content that focused on team development so that the entire team shares responsibility and accountability for leading the

school, as opposed to following what is commonly known as the "hero model" when everything falls on the shoulders of the principal.

- A second year of coaching was added so that school leadership teams have continued support as they implement the strategies and practices learned in the first year of training.

Teaching Trust Expected Impact

The grant from CFT allowed Teaching Trust to realize early data, proof points and practices that will help them reach their goal of developing leaders who establish a culture of excellence on 50 campuses by 2020.

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATE TEXAS

WHAT IS EDUCATE TEXAS?

As a public-private initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas, we work to strengthen the state's public and higher education systems so that every Texas student is prepared for educational and workforce success.

FOCUS AREAS

College and Career Readiness

Effective Teaching

Higher Education

Regional Collaboration

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

We partner with state agencies and school districts to scale proven strategies such as early college high schools and Texas science, technology, engineering and math (T-STEM) academies, and pilot new programs, such as blended learning and career and technical early college high schools.

THE HIGHLIGHT

A district-wide STEM education model

WHY

Texas' classrooms and schools must adapt to the needs of 21st century students, specifically those who are low-income and underserved, who will need to be prepared to join a global workforce. Research shows that 65 percent of adults will require a postsecondary credential to be gainfully employed in 2020, and currently, only 20 percent of Texas students earn a postsecondary degree 11 years after beginning eighth grade.

THE WORK

The Texas Instruments (TI) Foundation awarded $7 million to the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) over five years to transform its district to one that introduces, engages and inspires students of all grade levels to develop the broad knowledge and skills within the science, technology, engineering and math disciplines. LISD serves more than 7,000 students in a suburban town 15 miles southwest of Dallas in Lancaster, Texas. As of the 2015-2016 school year, 86 percent of the district's students were considered economically disadvantaged and 96 percent were African-American and Hispanic. Educate Texas provided the strategic assistance to frame the overall initiative as well as ongoing technical and financial assistance to support LISD. The shared goal was to see LISD serve as a demonstration for STEM education statewide and showcase how students can achieve success in their postsecondary pursuits when provided rigorous supports and structure for learning.

OVERVIEW

DISTRICT-WIDE STEM IN THE LANCASTER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our Challenge

Research shows that Texas high school students rank significantly higher for college and career readiness when they receive an education focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The boost can be magnified when STEM education begins in the sixth grade, giving students a head start to achieve more by graduation. So, in 2011, Educate Texas asked three critical questions: what if STEM and problem-based learning were infused into every grade level of a school district? What if we transformed a community so that it actively supported student success? Lastly, what if we developed a strategy that demonstrated how the state's other districts could use this model?

Our Approach

We set out to answer these questions through a partnership with the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) and the Texas Instruments (TI) Foundation. Using strategies from our blueprint that brought STEM to single campuses at the secondary level, these partners created a district-wide model for STEM education that was to be implemented over five years beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year. The model has the potential to change the futures of Texas students, specifically those who are low-income and under-represented in colleges and STEM careers. Our role in this partnership was to provide strategic assistance for framing the overall initiative and technical and financial assistance to support LISD for the TI grant.

How It Works

Students at LISD's 11 campuses take classes in core content areas that include problem-based learning embedded in every subject. The goal is for them to become collaborative critical thinkers and creative problems solvers. The initiative focuses on increasing students' chances for college and career readiness by reinventing the way they learn. It also emphasizes pioneering classroom practices and enhanced professional development for teachers, through such programs as a STEM master's program partnership with the University of North Texas at Dallas. The program requires all secondary math and science teachers in LISD to enter the program and receive targeted instruction focused on STEM. The initiative's goals are to boost academic rigor, strengthen the district's leadership capacity, build relationships with industry experts and the business community to prepare students for a global marketplace, and create best practices that can be applied in other school systems.

Results

The percentage of LISD elementary students indicating they have an interest in a STEM career and/or taking math and science courses has increased over time. Nearly half of the district's elementary students want to pursue STEM careers and 68 percent of elementary students show interest in taking math and science classes even when they are not required. Middle and high school students were asked how strongly they agreed with a series of statements on their future plans and goals. Both middle and high school students show modest increases of interest over time in STEM careers, taking additional science and math courses, and using math and science skills after high school. These changes in student perception are confirmed by a growing number of Lancaster middle schoolers taking Algebra 1, which grew by 78 percent from 2012 to 2015. The district also saw changes in the eighth grade science performance. Compared to area peers, LISD has the highest performance and growth (35 percent/18 percent). LISD's growth in eighth grade science from 2012-2015 puts the district in the 95th percentile for all districts with student populations of 1,000 or more students.

Finally, community confidence in LISD appears to have also increased, as demonstrated by Lancaster voters approving a $125 million bond and the LISD superintendent being nominated for National Superintendent of the Year in 2014.

Lasting Impact

Three years into a five-year implementation, it's too early to know the full impact of the efforts. Since a key goal is to help students graduate from high school ready for college and careers, a cohort of LISD students would have to complete its K-12 education in the district, with a significant number of them pursuing careers in STEM fields to know if the model works. However, we have learned that the STEM blueprint is scalable. The initiative highlighted how school systems, school boards and communities can accelerate opportunities for students by developing a STEM culture.

CASE STUDY

SOLVING FOR THE FUTURE

District-wide STEM provides innovation to prep students for 21st century careers

A white-black-and-orange roadster sat idle near the entrance to G.W. Carver Sixth Grade STEM Learning Center in the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) on the first day of the 2015-16 school year.

District officials roll out the roofless two-seater for special occasions as a point of pride. The car was "Built by Kids," as the imprint on its rear bumper cover reads, a year earlier in the district's STEM Summer Bridge Camp. About 50 middle and high school students converted a 2002 Subaru into a supercar – a vehicle recognized for speed, performance and design. The students worked on its chassis and body, riveted its bolts and axles, programmed its diagnostic system, installed its engine and transmission, and increased its speed potential from 140 to 200 miles per hour.

Certainly, the car is curvy and cool, but it's also a great feat in the district's efforts to create a STEM-for-all culture.

"Now, when we say that all students can learn STEM, we have a visual to show that they can, because the students who did this are the students who are often considered under the broad and vague label of at-risk," said Kyndra Johnson, director of STEM and curriculum innovation for LISD. "But they built a car. From a box of pieces. That's electrical wiring. That's paint and body. That's everything."

Lancaster Independent School District

With Educate Texas as a coach and thought-partner, LISD accepted the call in 2011 to become the state's first district to implement STEM district-wide. The goal was to redefine what "going to school" looked like for the district's students, so they would graduate ready for college and careers and were aware of options related to jobs of the future.

"Parents told us they wanted to make sure when their kids graduated, they had choices and opportunities," said Michael McFarland, superintendent for LISD. "We began to look ahead to the year 2020… if you look at all of the statistics, the choices and opportunities will be related to science, technology, engineering and math in some form or fashion."

When LISD launched its STEM plan in the 2012-13 school year with funding from the Foundation, it was driving deep change in its district and in the state's established STEM education model. Prior to partnering with LISD and the TI Foundation, Educate Texas worked with the Texas Education Agency to develop the T-STEM (short for Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) blueprint for establishing STEM tenets at the campus level. Educate Texas saw the blueprint as an innovative way to improve secondary schooling and create a sustainable workforce that was local, well-educated and adept with STEM disciplines. The focus on STEM aims to align the education system with economic development interests and, Educate Texas asserts, it enables Texas employers to fill jobs from the local workforce instead of looking elsewhere.

The blueprint's archetype is single campuses, or T-STEM academies, at the secondary level to which students are admitted through a lottery-based application process. But in 2011, Educate Texas kicked its efforts up a notch and requested proposals from two school districts in cities southwest of Dallas for extending STEM across an entire district. Drawing on evidence and lessons from its years of work with the

> "For us, being a STEM district means creating a fundamentally different approach to teaching and learning, with particular attention to science and mathematics, but not limited to those disciplines. So we challenged ourselves to think outside of the box about what would give our students self-sustaining success, and to also look at the audience we serve, recognize the experiences they are lacking and meet them where they are."
>
> –**Kyndra Johnson,** *Director of STEM and curriculum innovation for Lancaster Independent School District*

academies, Educate Texas set out to work on two fronts: creating a new district-wide model that could be replicated elsewhere and making sure the model preserved cohesiveness within a district, providing stability that is particularly important for students who are low income and under-represented in higher education and STEM careers.

"The incredibly fast-changing demographics of the state's student population are a critical driver for why we are looking at moving from providing STEM opportunities to 400 kids at an academy level, to seeing how we can do it for all students," said George Tang, chief operating officer for Educate Texas. "We know that STEM academies are game-changing in terms of not only high school graduation rates, but also dual credit attainment, college readiness scores and access rates, and persistence from first year to second year in postsecondary environments …so the idea that we can just isolate STEM to a small part of a school system has to change. It really has to be a resource and a platform for all."

A district-wide STEM model is more holistic than the academy model, because the foundations of STEM exposure and experiences build as students progress through their academic careers.

"One of the things we've learned from T-STEM academies with a high school model is that they were having to work twice as hard to get students ready, because the work didn't start until ninth grade," said Reo Pruiett, T-STEM initiative program officer for Educate Texas. "What we know from our own data is that if you start with sixth grade and offer early interventions and opportunities to accelerate students for the next three years, you open up their schedules when they reach ninth grade so they are able to take advantage of dual credit opportunities, advanced placement courses and extra-curricular activities."

For example, if students can take Algebra I early in their educational careers, they will be prepared to take advantage of a number of options when they reach high school, from taking an additional math class and enrolling in college courses while still pursuing a high school diploma, to participating in the school-sponsored engineering club.

As a result, Pruiett continued, the evidence-based assumption for the district-wide approach was that if the schools in one district collaborate to build students' STEM exposure even earlier than the sixth grade, the district should be able to push the students further.

The TI Foundation agreed to fund the initiative if Educate Texas found the district to do it. Educate Texas provided each of the two districts with a coach to help them write the proposals and $10,000 for any needs related to thinking through the design of their implementation plan. The goal was to find a district with stable leadership and innovative strategies for improving academic performance.

"We were looking for a school district that was trying to solve a problem, because STEM is about problem-based learning," said Pruiett, referring to an active, student-centered teaching method that positions students to solve open-ended problems. "So, if your district had an innovative strategy, how would that strategy be a solution to something in the district?"

LISD answered that question with clarity, Pruiett said. The district demonstrated mission-driven leadership with its team approach to writing the proposal and presenting it for the interview. Its team members spoke with authority and of a hunger for the opportunity to change the trajectory of their students' academic experience.

That may be because the district was already in a STEM mindset, said Ty Jones, president of the LISD school board. Prior to his election in 2011, Jones was a math coordinator for the district. In 2008, he and other district administrators were looking for ways to improve math and science test scores and began thinking about a STEM plan at the high school level. A couple of years later, the administrators began attending Educate Texas' presentations about T-STEM academies. The administrators were not interested in the school-within-a-school academy model, but liked the tenets of the T-STEM blueprint.

"We were already trying to figure out a way to encapsulate those concepts and make math and science more appealing to our students at the high school level," Jones said. "Starting at the middle school level, as the district-wide approach has done, and expanding it in both directions has been pivotal to its success."

Adds Johnson: "For us, being a STEM district means creating a fundamentally different approach to teaching and learning, with particular attention paid to science and mathematics, but not limited to those disciplines. So we challenged ourselves to think outside of the box about what would give our students self-sustaining success and to also look at the audience we serve, recognize the experiences they are lacking and meet them where they are."

PERSPECTIVE

THE X FACTOR

Partnership proves to be a significant variable in the creation of a STEM district

Three years into a five-year plan to transform the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) into an all-STEM district, the initiative has demonstrated the possibilities that can come from a partnership that aligns proven practices, resources and leadership. Here, the initiative's partners offer thoughts on the initiative.

Ann Pomykal, former Executive Director, the Texas Instruments Foundation

"The Texas Instruments (TI) Foundation partnered with Educate Texas and the Lancaster school district because it has always been committed to education at the highest level of improvement. The foundation has a long-term vision for improving education and a passion for change. We have a specific interest in STEM education, not only because it's important to our business, but because we believe it's important for all children of current and of future generations to understand and know how to handle the STEM disciplines. STEM is much broader than the subjects it encompasses. It's not just about who will be the next engineer. It's about all fields and all careers. You have to build STEM into the entire education cycle, so that when a student graduates either college-ready or business-ready, they know that technology is part of how they will be doing business. STEM doesn't just need to be woven into the criteria of education. STEM is education today.

Moving forward, sustainability and replication are critical. Our hope is that years into the future, we will look back and see that Lancaster was the catalyst for positive change. Through the success thus far of this initiative, we know that replication can now take place in any district, but the district must have strong leadership and a solid commitment to change, not only for the student, but for the entire district. The dollar investment matters, but what is equally as important is to now look at what we've proven, to learn what will work in a STEM district."

Dr. Michael McFarland, Superintendent, the Lancaster Independent School District

"In a district that looks like ours, the biggest challenges are managing what's really happening along with dealing with what people think is happening. It's our responsibility to show people the great work that's

occurring, but it is a blessing to have great organizations such as Educate Texas and the TI Foundation who are willing to go beyond the surface and see Lancaster's potential. Both organizations were willing to look beyond the demographics and beyond what was in the media to identify the nuggets of promise that existed in Lancaster. That's important, because districts can't operate alone to transform schools. Internally, we have to have the capacity, but we also need external partners, investments and reinforcements to be able to move the organization forward.

Our partnership with TI and Educate Texas helped us create a STEM master's degree program at the University of North Texas at Dallas. All of our secondary math and science teachers are required to have a master's degree in math, science or STEM, and all of our secondary teachers and quite a few of our elementary teachers have opted into the program. Studies have shown that a master's degree in education may not have impact, but a master's degree in the content area actually helps teachers do a better job in teaching such subjects as calculus, algebra and other related courses. As a result of the program, we have no openings for math teaching positions. We also now have STEM partners in the form of companies, organizations, engineers, doctors and the like who are part of our efforts to collaborate with higher education institutions, industry and businesses that serve as resources for us."

George Tang, Chief Operating Officer, Educate Texas

"The partnership between Educate Texas, LISD and the TI Foundation had multiple moving parts. First, there are the direct one-to-one relationships, whether it's Educate Texas and TI or TI with Lancaster or Educate Texas with Lancaster. Each of these relationships had a specific definition and role. For us with TI, it was about finding a corporate partner that had a commitment to STEM and was willing to press the boundaries of how a successful program could be translated to an entire system. This partnership reinforced the power of philanthropy to address a significant community issue by scaling proven practices. For us and Lancaster, it was about partnering with the district to understand the vision Lancaster wanted to take forward and determining how Educate Texas could best support and provide guidance, counsel and resources to ensure that the vision succeeded. And I think the partnership that has emerged and is incredibly powerful is that of the TI Foundation and Lancaster, where there is a commitment from a corporation that had no direct linkage to the Lancaster community, but has locked up arm-in-arm with the district to say, 'We know this is of critical importance, not just because we have committed financial dollars, but because it's critical for the students in this community to have the opportunity to be productive participants in this larger ecosystem.' These three individual partnerships have grown through trust, understanding, and commitment to each other. While each partnership is highly important to the success of the work, it is the strength of these three partnerships that has led to gains for the district and students."

WORK TO WATCH IN THE FOCUS AREA OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING

In this focus area, we seek out initiatives that will better prepare, recruit, develop, evaluate, compensate and retain teachers. Through national and state studies, we found that the quality of classroom teachers is the single most important school-based factor in student achievement. To advance these efforts, we partner with state agencies and school districts to build awareness of and implement innovative practices that improve the quality of classroom teaching. We engage with the Texas Legislature to identify and develop key policies to support effective teaching. This focus grew out of the Texas Teaching Commission, a 2011-2012 convening of stakeholders from education, policy, business and philanthropy sectors that examined the state's teacher continuum holistically.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

At the end of 2015, we decided to build on the approach and lessons learned from the Texas Teaching Commission by forming the Teacher Preparation Collaborative. The commission offered a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the teaching continuum – the process of recruiting, preparing, hiring, inducting, evaluating, developing, compensating and retaining teachers. Specifically, as related to teacher preparation, the commission recommended that all preparation programs be held to the same high-quality outcomes-based standards. It also recommended that all programs 1) provide practical experiences that prepare candidates to meet these standards; 2) contribute to K-12 student learning immediately upon placement in initial teaching assignments; and 3) provide transitional support for new teachers during their first three years in the classroom. Lastly, the commission recommended that preparation programs review the performance of their graduates in the classroom and use the findings to refine and improve the programs and provide additional support to individual graduates.

The Teacher Preparation Collaborative will follow up on these recommendations. Like the commission, the collaborative will convene stakeholders committed to improving teacher preparation so that teachers are equipped to lead Texas students and provide them with a 21st century education. The 15-member collaborative, made up of a mix of teachers, principals and education administrators from around the state, will provide a platform for practitioners and policy makers to focus on teacher preparation and highlight best practices and policies that Texas can adopt to make real change for current and future Texas teachers. Specifically, the collaborative will examine best practices and policies in higher education and at the district, state, national levels; review research on effective teacher preparation practices; share positive changes that some teacher preparation programs have made; and make practical recommendations that can be implemented for both the policy and practice of teacher preparation.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT

The Teacher Preparation Collaborative will gather national and state data, best practices, and policies that result in recommendations for the legislature, state agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, and alternative certification programs. It will build a Texas network that facilitates the sharing of strategies that can improve the 230 teacher preparation programs in the state. The collaborative will build support for legislative reforms and state regulatory action by educating and engaging stakeholders and working collaboratively to build awareness in the education, policy, and business communities. Lastly, it will develop strategies and options for philanthropic partners to support implementation of new systems and programs at all levels that align with the collaborative's recommendations. A final report of recommendations will be released by the end of 2016.

PERSPECTIVE

STRATEGIC CONVERSATION WILL TAKE TEACHERS' HARD WORK TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Jim Nelson, Chair of the Teacher Preparation Collaborative and former Texas Education Agency Commissioner

Teacher quality is the most important school-based variable in student achievement. Yet school systems lack the resources to research and develop models of support for educators to help students achieve. For the next year, we are leading a conversation about teacher preparation and development by convening stakeholders from across the state's education arena for the Teacher Preparation Collaborative. Here are thoughts about the state's education system and the vision of the collaborative from Jim Nelson, chair of the collaborative and former Texas Education Agency commissioner.

On the need for quality instruction: "The research overwhelmingly points to quality teachers as the catalyst to do more for students than anything else. You can have all kinds of great things in schools, but without quality instruction, you have nothing. If we don't do a better job of ensuring that our state's classrooms have competent, qualified teachers, then we will have a hard time making strides in our educational system."

On the mission of the collaborative: "The collaborative will look at what's happening now in the area of teacher preparation and what's being done well that we can build upon for the future. It will be centered on policy impact, but we also want to see what we can do outside of that arena. So, we are involving university leaders, K-12 superintendents and principals, and teachers who can bring the practitioner's point of view about the current state of classroom teaching. … We are starting to move away from this idea of a person getting a teacher certificate, going into a classroom and we simply say 'good luck to you.' We wouldn't do that in other professions. Managing a classroom and delivering instruction to meet the needs of a diverse student population is hard work. The collaborative will bring preparation for this hard work to the next level."

On Educate Texas' role in the work: "We wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't for Educate Texas' leadership. The collaborative is building on work already done and lessons previously learned by Educate Texas. It began with a conversation around the teaching profession and we all came to appreciate how complicated and important it is that we discover what steps are needed to improve schools, classrooms and the environments of educators. The teacher preparation piece is so critical to a comprehensive look at our education system. Through the collaborative, we will have conversations around mentoring and how everyone can work more closely together."

THE STATE OF TEACHING

IN THE LONE STAR STATE

EVERYTHING IS BIGGER IN TEXAS, INCLUDING OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM

MORE THAN **300,000** TEACHERS + OVER **1,000** SCHOOL DISTRICTS + **5.4 MILLION STUDENTS**

TEACHERS ARE ONE OF OUR BIGGEST INVESTMENTS

27,000 NEW TEACHERS entered Texas classrooms in 2014.

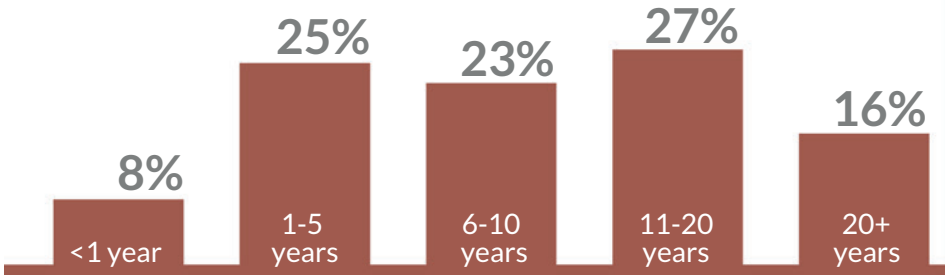
How are we training, supporting, and developing these new teachers?

46% were certified at Texas colleges & universities

54% have alternative certification

*There are 230 teacher certification programs in Texas.

Most Texas teachers have more than 5 YEARS of experience.



AVERAGE new teacher's salary in 2013 **$43,480**

Are Texas' salaries competitive, and can we attract & retain top candidates?

TEXAS IS INCREASINGLY DIVERSE

Our workforce doesn't reflect our changing population.

How do we prepare and develop all teachers to understand the diversity in our classrooms?

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR THE TEACHER PREPARATION COLLABORATIVE

PHASE I – RESEARCH AND CONVENING

Phase I will include monthly facilitated discussions to address critical teacher preparation issues and to review research and policies, including consultation with experts from the field. During this time, the collaborative will:

Determine the teacher preparation areas to be included in the collaborative's scope, potentially including but not limited to:

- Transforming the Clinical Experience
- Demonstration of Quality Indicators
- Defining Shared Responsibilities
- Data-Driven Decision-Making

Conduct a thorough review of literature, existing state and national best practices, and regulatory and statutory teacher preparation policies.

Engage representatives from innovative programs to explore their policies and efforts.

Align with state agencies to understand and inform their teacher preparation initiatives.

Propose strategies to the legislature, state agencies, school districts, higher education institutions, and alternative certification programs during the 2017 and 2019 Texas legislative sessions.

PHASE II – COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH:

In Phase II, the collaborative will engage target audiences and begin to build support for its recommendations. Intended target audiences include education stakeholders, legislative staff, state agencies, and teacher preparation programs. Phase II will:

Disseminate a comprehensive "State of Texas Teacher Preparation" report.

Activate these recommendations with key stakeholders.

Promote findings on key preparation practices that are achieving breakthrough results.

Brief key legislative and state agency staff on the recommendations and implications.

Host public events with members of the collaborative serving to promote the recommendations.

WORK TO WATCH IN THE FOCUS AREA OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Since research shows that only 20 percent of Texas students earn a postsecondary degree 11 years after beginning eighth grade, Educate Texas partners with state agencies and higher education institutions to design and implement high-impact programs. Our goal is to increase the number of students enrolling and persisting in postsecondary environments to complete two-year, four-year or technical degrees. We also build networks of key stakeholders that can inform policies that improve postsecondary completion rates.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

We have launched the Texas Regional STEM Degree Accelerator program. The program has assembled five regional teams – including Dallas/North Texas, El Paso, Houston, South Texas, and West Texas – who are working to ensure that up to 100,000 students earn STEM degrees and certificates that meet regionally-identified workforce needs. This is important, because Texas is projected to have 9 percent of the nation's future opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), the second highest percentage in the country. The program aligns with priorities for education and the workforce as outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission.

Regional teams are accomplishing this work by examining data and identifying STEM pathways that are critical to their regions. The teams are engaging faculty and employers to redesign STEM courses so they are aligned with the workforce, and providing professional development for faculty to support improved and innovative methods of teaching and learning.

The Dallas/North Texas regional team, led by the Dallas County Community College District, will focus on developing effective classroom instruction and expanding online STEM resources. Its two major activities will be to:

- establish cross institutional professional learning communities, comprised of high school, community college and university educators, industry professionals and pedagogy experts
- develop an online career portal, known as STEM INSIGHT, to enable users to track real-time, day-to-day shifts in professions, salaries and other professional opportunities through the Dallas County Community College District Labor Market Intelligence Center.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT

The two major outcomes for the Dallas/North Texas regional team will be to increase student persistence and success in STEM degree career paths by ensuring that teaching practices are engaging and to ensure that institutional policies and systems support retention and completion of STEM pathways. These efforts are particularly focused on students who are historically underrepresented in higher education. Through this project, the regional team hopes to train 105 college faculty and 20 high school teachers, and serve more than 20,000 college students and 14,000 high school students in the program.

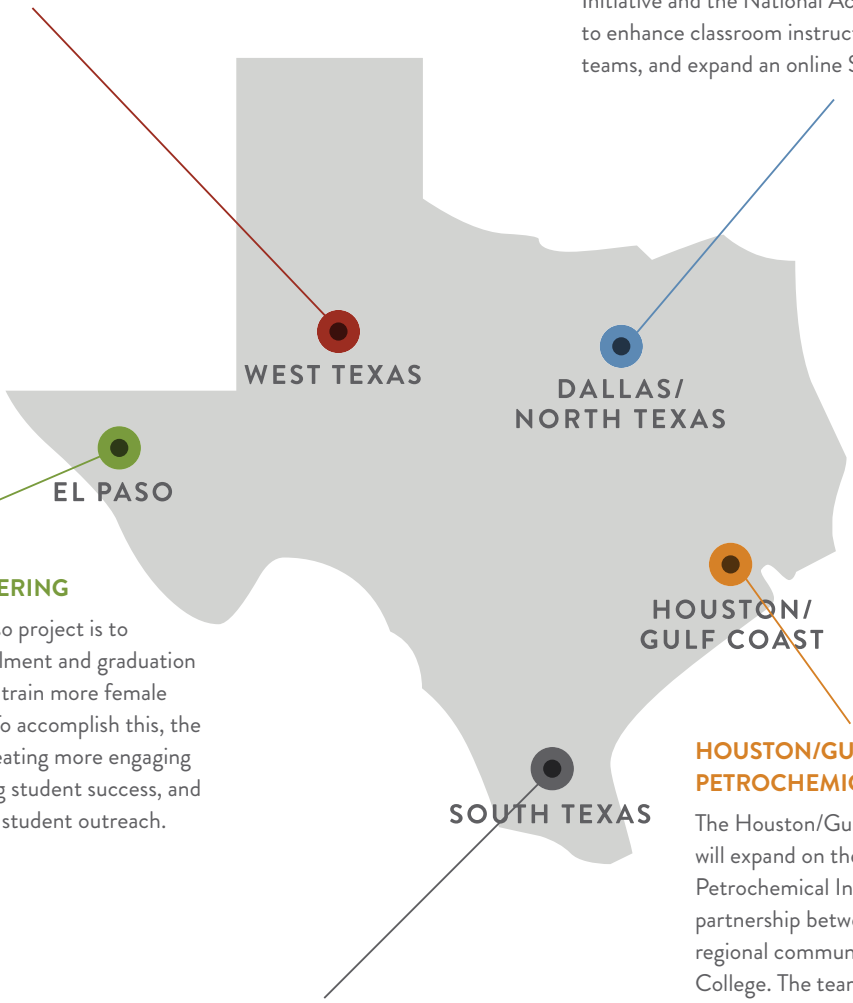
REGIONAL STEM PATHWAYS

WEST TEXAS: ENERGY

Rural schools face significant challenges as they attempt to prepare students for college and careers. The goal of the West Texas regional team is to increase student success and persistence in the math courses required to pursue STEM careers. The team will use AVID training and the New Mathways Project to redesign and align gateway courses, provide professional development for faculty, and provide critical interventions and support for STEM students.

DALLAS/NORTH TEXAS: COMPUTER SCIENCE/INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

By 2018, 71% of STEM jobs in Dallas/North Texas will be in computing.* The Dallas regional team will partner with National Math and Science Initiative and the National Academy Foundation to enhance classroom instruction, develop faculty teams, and expand an online STEM career portal.



EL PASO: ENGINEERING

The goal of the El Paso project is to increase female enrollment and graduation in engineering and to train more female engineering faculty. To accomplish this, the team will focus on creating more engaging classrooms, increasing student success, and conducting strategic student outreach.

HOUSTON/GULF COAST: PETROCHEMICAL

The Houston/Gulf Coast regional team will expand on the Community College Petrochemical Initiative (CCPI), a partnership between industry and nine regional community colleges, led by Lee College. The team is partnering with the New Mathways Project developed by the Charles A. Dana Center at UT Austin to strengthen math curriculum, teaching, and student support.

SOUTH TEXAS: HEALTHCARE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The South Texas regional team's two pathways – healthcare and information technology – will be strengthened through interventions designed to support students by: aligning classroom practices, fostering engagement and learning among faculty, sharing best practices among institutions, and integrating workforce data.

** MyCollegeOptions and STEMconnector/ASTRA. (2013). Where Are the STEM Students? What Are Their Career Interests? Where Are the STEM Jobs?*

IN SUMMARY

FOCUS AREA: REGIONAL COLLABORATION

We create alignment between K-12, higher education and workforce pipelines to improve students' college readiness, postsecondary success and achievement of career opportunities and success. We work with communities across the state to measure progress against key milestones to postsecondary success, identify effective strategies for improving student outcomes, and ensure resources are directed toward scaling evidence-based practices that address community needs.

THE HIGHLIGHT

In most Texas communities, 80 percent of all K-12 students stay within their local communities after high school graduation. With workforce projections suggesting that at least 60 percent of students must earn a postsecondary degree or credential to be employed, communities are recognizing their future competitiveness is highly dependent on the success of its students.

WHY

To accelerate student success, community stakeholders must be aware of the most critical educational needs, understand the strategies that are improving student outcomes, and support the expansion of these practices to more students.

THE WORK

In 2015, we supported the development and launch of the Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education. We were initially asked by the Partnership to help it build capacity toward its goal of increasing the number of Smith County residents with postsecondary degrees, credentials and professional certifications. We worked with the Partnership to help solidify its vision, goals and strategies, and helped it launch the initiative in the community.

OVERVIEW

TYLER AREA PARTNERSHIP 4 EDUCATION

Our Challenge

We faced two challenges with the Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education (TAP4E) initiative.

The first challenge grew out of the Tyler community's desire to accelerate the local economy by increasing the education level and subsequent employment of its residents. Studies indicate that the economic growth and quality of life for a region depend heavily on the educational attainment of the region's residents. More specifically, regions with a high number of residents who have earned college degrees or other postsecondary credentials tend to thrive. Yet, only 35 percent of those 25 and older who live in Smith County, where Tyler is located, hold an associate's degree or higher. As a result, the community faces a projected shortage of residents who can fill local jobs.

The second challenge grew out of the relationship Educate Texas formed with stakeholders in the Tyler area. Our focus with our regional collaboration strategies is to create deep alignment between K-12, higher education and workforce pipelines to improve students' postsecondary attendance, completion and subsequent career success. Previously, we have taken the lead on such initiatives by identifying a community and going to them with a strategy to improve student outcomes. In this case, however, Tyler invited us to share ideas about how to move forward.

In 2012, the Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Tyler established the Tyler Area Business Education Council with the goal of improving education outcomes to support local business and economic development. The council was made up of area leaders from civic, education, business, nonprofit, philanthropy

and faith-based sectors. Two years later, local leaders sought Educate Texas' help because of our reputation as a leader in improving postsecondary readiness and access for students in underserved communities, and our track record for organizing collaborative strategies. Through this process, the group formally became the Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education. This provided new territory for us, as we functioned as one of more than 40 other partners with Tyler in a consulting relationship. It tested the theory of our ability to create and sustain a model for this type of relationship to be used for future work with other communities and partners.

Our Approach

When a community invites us in, we begin building the relationship by working to understand the assets that are already in place and the readiness of the community to take on the work. Then, we seek out data to understand what the baseline of the work should be for their community and help prioritize the goals of an initiative and the metrics they want to track. Next, we help them set up action networks to address those priorities and share best practices from our work across the state. Our overall goal in Tyler was to help the community set up their own local backbone organization to sustain the work for the TAP4E initiative. We are currently in the process of documenting readiness assessment protocols for TAP4E.

How It Works

The strategic plan calls for TAP4E to leverage data, community expertise and collaboration as it builds an aligned pipeline. To do this, it set up a three-part organizational structure. The governing body of TAP4E is the Leadership Council, which drives the intitiative and manages the operations of TAP4E. Next, is the Data Support Council, which compiles and analyzes data. Finally, there are Community Action Networks that align with each of TAP4E's focus areas. Co-chairs of each network are represented on the Leadership Council that includes community leaders from the business, education, nonprofit, civic and faith-based sectors.

As part of our relationship with TAP4E, we helped organizers develop the Leadership Council. We supported TAP4E's efforts with data collection and analysis, research, a demonstration of best practices, meeting facilitation support, strategy and shared metrics development, thought partnership and capacity building. We brought our funding expertise to the table by advising the organizers of regional, statewide and national funders and supported the initiative's communication and proposal development to seek funding. We played a large role in providing information about collective impact efforts around the country.

Results And Lessons Learned

Most of the work so far has been focused on assessment and evaluation of Smith County's current educational environment. A lot has been learned in a short time frame. This approach has identified early childhood as the most critical area of need to improve education attainment.

Of the 76 private early childhood centers in Smith County, only 17 percent of them have quality ratings that exceed the state's minimum licensing standards. Just eight of the centers have earned the Texas Rising Star designation, meaning they agree to serve Texas Workforce Commission subsidized children and voluntarily meet requirements that exceed the state's minimum licensing standards for child care facilities. With this assessment in mind, TAP4E has learned that it needs to:

- promote the importance of state and national accreditations for early childhood environments
- assist with early childhood center director and teacher training by developing new training programs or promoting existing ones, providing rewards and recognition for complete of training and fostering partnerships between public and private centers to share best practices and resources
- provide Smith County families with tools to evaluate pre-K programs and determine if their children are kindergarten ready, such as a readiness checklist and a universal progress report

COLLECTIVE IMPACT:

The result of organizations from different sectors agreeing to solve a specific social problem using a common agenda, aligning their efforts, and using common measures of success.

Source: FSG

- Increase kindergarten readiness of all Smith County 4-year-olds by determining common measures of readiness and launching a campaign that stresses the importance of a pre-K education.

Regarding the middle to high school transition focus area, TAP4E has learned that grades, attendance patterns and engagement at the middle school level are some of the strongest predictors of high school graduation and college-going rates. As a result, TAP4E has identified three key standardized test measures – seventh grade writing, eighth grade math and science, and eighth grade reading and social studies – that will be tracked to ensure that Smith County students are ready for high school and beyond. That data will be used to create environments and tools that ensure a successful middle to high school transition.

For the final two focus areas that examine college readiness and postsecondary success, the action networks are working together to collect and track information about academic indicators of college readiness, such as standardized test scores, enrollment in advanced placement or dual credit courses and pre-college test scores. The networks are also coordinating county-wide participation in the National Student Clearinghouse, a data service that allows high schools to measure college enrollment and success of graduates.

Anticipated Impact

The goal of the ongoing TAP4E initiative is to increase the number of Smith County residents earning a postsecondary credential to 60 percent by 2025. In 2014-2015, Smith County high schools and higher education institutions awarded nearly 4,000 industry certifications or degrees. To meet the 2025 goal, an additional 2,000 credentials and degrees need to be awarded over the next 10 years. To do this, TAP4E is using a "cradle to career" approach through four key focus areas (thus, the use of the number "4" in its name). The areas are best described as actions that ensure students: 1) enter kindergarten ready to learn; 2) transition successfully from middle school to high school; 3) graduate from high school college-ready; and 4) complete a postsecondary credential and secure gainful employment.

The long-term goals of the work being done through TAP4E are to:

- increase quality ratings of Smith County childcare center from 10 percent to 48 percent of centers securing Texas Rising Star or national accreditation by 2020
- increase the percentage of early childhood teachers with postsecondary education from 15 percent to 30 percent by 2020
- distribute a kindergarten readiness checklist to all early childhood centers, community officials, faith-based organizations, chambers of commerce, health clinics, libraries and recreation centers by 2017
- raise the percentage of students that receive an advanced score on standardized tests for three areas – seventh grade writing, eighth grade math and science and eighth grade reading and social studies – which will indicate that more students are well prepared for success in the next grade
- have 74 percent of Smith County students graduate high school college ready and 70 percent of the

graduates enrolled in a postsecondary education program within six months of graduation by 2025

- award 7,850 certificates and degrees from Smith County high schools and higher education institutions by 2025.

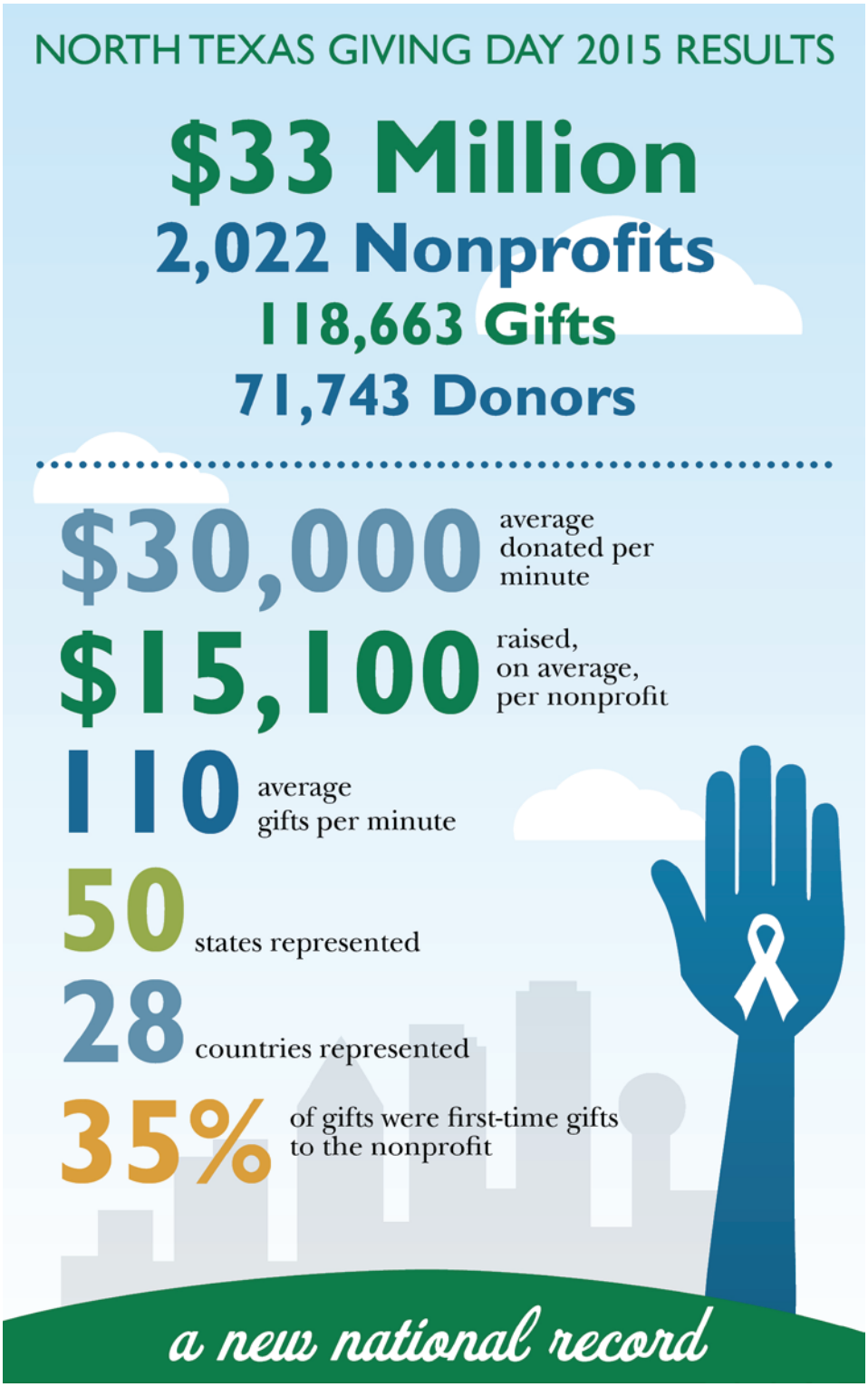
Portions of this information are excerpts from the Smith County 2015 Education Report, published by the Tyler Area Partnership 4 Education.

CHAPTER 4

FURTHERING IMPACT

WHAT IS NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY?

Communities Foundation of Texas established North Texas Giving Day in 2009 in partnership with the Center for Nonprofit Management and the Dallas Foundation. Our goal for the annual event is to increase giving to the region's nonprofits by motivating people to give to one or more vetted charities using a particular website on a single day. In seven single-day events held since 2009, $119 million has been raised for area nonprofits on North Texas Giving Day.


NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY 2015 RESULTS
$33 Million
2,022 Nonprofits
118,663 Gifts
71,743 Donors
$30,000 average donated per minute
$15,100 raised, on average, per nonprofit
110 average gifts per minute
50 states represented
28 countries represented
35% of gifts were first-time gifts to the nonprofit
a new national record

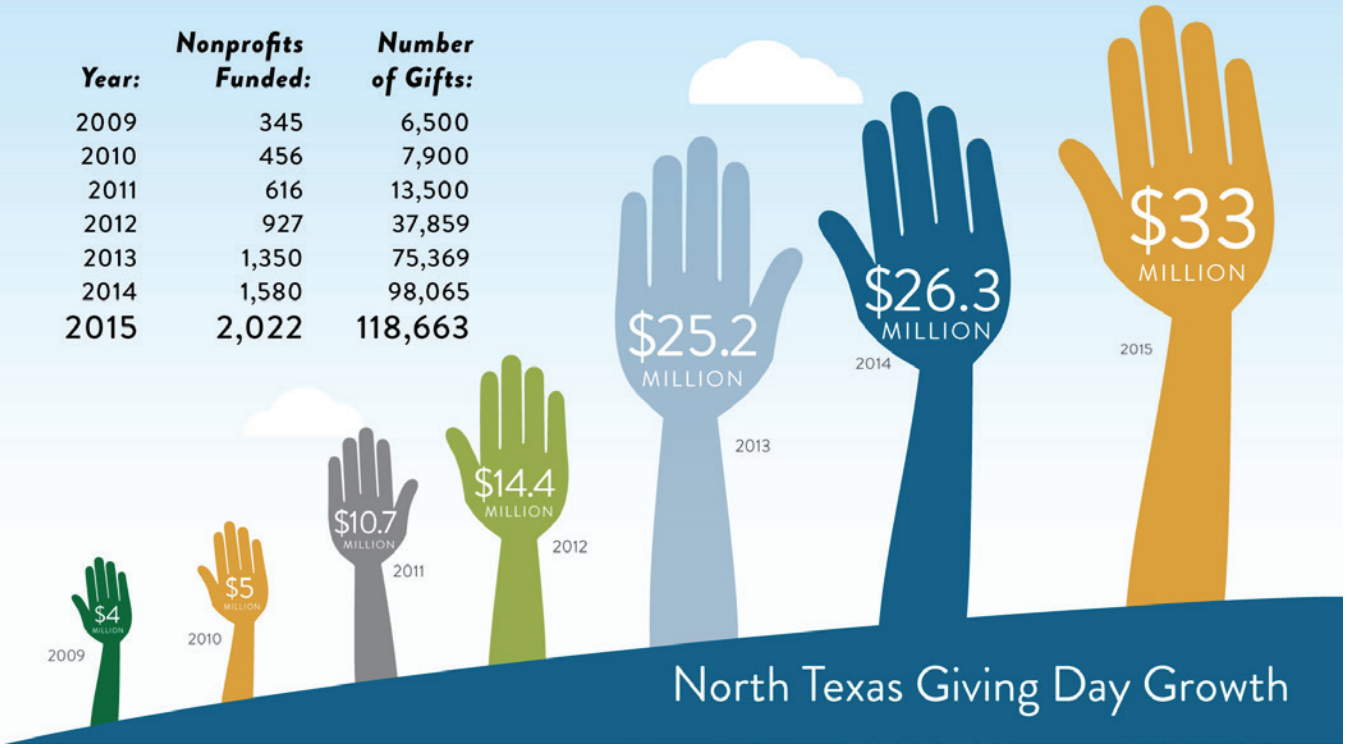
North Texas Giving Day Sets National Record Once Again

The seventh annual North Texas Giving Day held in 2015 raised the largest amount in the event's history, and the largest amount for a single "Giving Day" in the nation. The staggering number of more than 118,000 donations (nearly 110 gifts per minute) exceeded the previous year's total of 98,000. In 2015, 2,022 nonprofits benefitted versus 1,580 in 2014. Donations again poured in from all 50 states, seven territories and 28 countries. Thirty-five percent of donations were from first-time givers to their chosen charity.

Nonprofit organizations and supporters participated in the 18-hour day of fundraising with community-wide events held at donation stations in Dallas, Arlington, Denton, Fort Worth and McKinney and featuring music, theater, dancing, children's activities and more.

The day of giving was filled with heartwarming stories and great results. A once homeless client and his wife from Arlington Life Shelter, which provides shelter and support services for homeless people, made a gift to the organization that once helped him. Union, a nonprofit coffee shop that oversees Capes 4 Kids DFW, participated for the first year and will now be able to deliver more super hero capes to children fighting chronic illnesses. And at Interfaith Family Services, the team beat their goal by almost double, enabling them to provide housing, counseling and job search support to more families in crisis.

Year:	Nonprofits Funded:	Number of Gifts:
2009	345	6,500
2010	456	7,900
2011	616	13,500
2012	927	37,859
2013	1,350	75,369
2014	1,580	98,065
2015	2,022	118,663



CASE STUDY

CAPE-MAKING CRUSADERS

First-time participation in Giving Day brings local coffee shop $23k for Capes 4 Kids program

Photo: Volunteers for Union, a nonprofit coffee shop, lead a cape-making station at the Dallas Kids Give donation station at NorthPark on North Texas Giving Day. Union participated in North Texas Giving Day for the first time in 2015.

Shortly after Union, a nonprofit coffee shop in Dallas, decided to participate in last year's North Texas Giving Day, a donor offered to match the first $10,000 raised.

As a result, Union's first-time participation in the annual giving event brought in $23,650 from 155 donors.

Union's goal was to raise money for Capes 4 Kids DFW, a volunteer-based program that makes superhero-like capes once a month and delivers them to Dallas children who are hospitalized or have long-term illnesses and disabilities. The aim of the program is to inspire the children to focus on fighting their illnesses. Union launched the program in 2014.

"Participating in North Texas Giving Day raised awareness in more of our customers that we are a nonprofit," said Union founder Michael Baughman. "It turned a lot of our customers into donors."

In addition to standard promotional efforts like emails and letters, Union gave all of their North Texas Giving Day donors temporary naming rights to things in their building — windows, tables, bathroom stalls — for three days.

"After someone donated, they'd stop by Union to see what was named after them," Baughman said. "It added a lot of fun and energy to the whole thing."

> "Beyond the money raised, North Texas Giving Day inspires a culture of generosity in North Texas that has an impact beyond just giving day."
>
> – **Michael Baughman,** *Founder, Union*

CASE STUDY

THE GAME CHANGERS

Interfaith Family Services improves on previous North Texas Giving Day success by raising $195K

Photo: Interfaith Family Services

With each year that passes, Interfaith Family Services sees increasing success with its participation in North Texas Giving Day.

The agency, which provides housing and services to help homeless people build sustainable lives, has participated in the annual event since 2009, the year it began.

Photo: Interfaith Family Services

"For a long time, Interfaith had been a 'best kept secret,' but that changed with our participation in North Texas Giving Day," said Kimberly Williams, chief executive officer for Interfaith. "As our visibility and annual contributions have grown, so has our impact, because the funds raised have given us the capacity to improve our programs."

To get the word out about their fundraising needs for North Texas Giving Day 2015, Interfaith notified every current donor of the agency's goal of $100,000 via postcards, refrigerator magnets, letters calls, and a four-week video campaign published through social media. Thanks to its "Be a game changer!" campaign theme, the agency raised almost twice as much money as expected. Its 2015 total was $195,217 from 128 donors.

"North Texas Giving Day has transformed year-end from a time dreaded by most nonprofits to a time of excitement and hope," Williams said. "It has also reminded the community that it is truly 'more blessed to give then receive,' and in doing so, it provides a sense of hopefulness and community that has been a great blessing in Dallas."

Photos: Top: Interfaith Family Services had fun with their "Be a Game Changer" theme on North Texas Giving Day in 2015. The agency, which provides services to help homeless people build sustainable lives, hosted a tailgate party, wore staff jerseys and created baseball cards for staff members. Bottom: Interfaith Family Services Chief Executive Officer and North Texas Giving Day "Head Coach" Kimberly Williams looks tough on her baseball card.

WHAT IS ENTREPRENEURS FOR NORTH TEXAS?

We are a Communities Foundation of Texas program that provides, plans and organizes opportunities for engagement and networking for small and midsize companies that want to maximize their volunteer and philanthropic giving efforts. We serve the North Texas business community and provide a network of companies with resources to assist them in developing a culture of corporate citizenship. The network of companies includes private equity investors, venture capitalists and a wide range of professional service providers.

In 2015, EFNT organized volunteer and in-kind support for 55 Dallas-Fort Worth area charitable organizations. EFNT's 91 member company employees provided 8,500 hours of volunteer service, valued at over $210,000.

PERSPECTIVE

EFNT MEMBERSHIP PROVIDES VALUABLE BENEFIT TO FIRM'S EMPLOYEES

Melissa Hawkins, *Client Service Manager, SFMG Wealth Advisors*

SFMG Wealth Advisors is a financial planning and wealth management firm that became an Entrepreneurs For North Texas (EFNT) member organization in 2014. "When we initially joined EFNT, we really had no idea how much its program would end up influencing our firm's approach to community involvement," said Kevin Margolis, a managing director with SFMG. "We have gone from having no formal approach to volunteerism for the company to having a professional, purposeful strategy for becoming very involved in our community. Our involvement with EFNT has become a valuable employee benefit." Here's more about the company's EFNT experience from Melissa Hawkins, who leads the firm's community involvement efforts.

Q. Since joining EFNT, what activities has SFMG participated in?

Hawkins: We have participated in many rewarding and fun activities during our membership. Some of our favorites are The Stewpot, Junior Achievement AVID Finance Program, Hunger Busters, North Texas Food Bank, Senior Care Health and Rehab, and our very favorite, Freedom Day. Our first Freedom Day was in 2014 and for the first time ever, we closed our firm so that all of our employees could participate. Our team was assigned to restorative work on the Fisher House, which provides low cost lodging to veterans and military families receiving treatment at military medical centers. Our crew painted, weeded flower beds, mulched, sweated and worked together as a team in a much different environment than we usually experienced in the office. Not only were we able to do something to benefit our veterans, but we also participated in one of the best teambuilding experiences to date. Because our first Freedom Day embodied the spirit of our firm culture, we decided not only to continue to participate in future Freedom Day events going forward, but to also sponsor the 2015 Freedom Day event.

Q: When SFMG sponsor the 2015 Freedom Day, you took a big leadership role in the planning of the event. What did that experience mean to you personally and professionally?

Hawkins: Serving on the Steering Committee for Freedom Day 2015 was an amazing experience. Professionally, I had never been involved in project management on such a large scale before and I witnessed the importance of teamwork and collaboration at every encounter. I was impressed by the guidance and leadership EFNT's staff provided. During my time on the steering committee, I had the privilege of working alongside an amazing group of dynamic individuals including veterans, distinguished leaders in the community, and good corporate citizens. I distinctly remember the opening ceremony on September 11, 2015. As I stood listening in solemn reverence, I was very sad but I also felt overwhelming pride. I was not only proud of my firm and my fellow coworkers, but I also felt a great sense of pride in my community.

I was humbled that so many others would come together and give their time and talents to honor those whose lives were changed by the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

Photo: SFMG Wealth Advisors

Q. How is SFMG better off because of its membership in EFNT, and how are you better off?

Hawkins: One of our core values as a firm is to "Positively Impact Our Community." EFNT does a wonderful job of scheduling a wide range of local volunteer opportunities so that a member can simply select an activity based on personal interest. The ability to choose a project really enhances the volunteer experience. Our firm now has a comprehensive community involvement mission every year, we adopted a paid voluntary time off policy, and our entire staff is passionate about giving back. Through EFNT, I am able to serve the community where I work and live. Along the way, I have been introduced to dynamic people and have made some wonderful friendships and memories that will last my lifetime.

OVERVIEW

EBOLA OUTBREAK IN DALLAS

On Sept. 20, 2014, Thomas Eric Duncan arrived in Dallas from his native Monrovia, Liberia, to reunite with his girlfriend, Louise Troh, whom he had not seen for 16 years. That same month, Liberia became the country hardest hit by the Ebola virus with the highest cumulative number of reported cases: nearly 2,000 infections were reported, with more than 1,000 of those cases ending in death, according to a report from the World Health Organization (WHO). In Monrovia, the spread of the virus overwhelmed the city and its medical community. The growing number of Ebola patients outpaced the city's number of available hospital beds. "Taxis filled with entire families, of whom some members were almost certainly infected with Ebola, constantly crisscrossed and circled the city, searching for a treatment bed," wrote the writer of the WHO report. "They found none."

A few days before travelling to Dallas, Duncan helped carry a pregnant, Ebola-infected woman to a Monrovia hospital. Then, on Sept. 24 - four days after he arrived in Dallas - Duncan began to feel sick. After a series of events that occurred over the following six days, Duncan was admitted into Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital and tested positive for Ebola. He was the first person diagnosed in the United States with the virus. Duncan remained in the hospital until Oct. 8, 2014, when he died. He was 45.

Duncan's diagnosis marked the beginning of the U.S. outbreak of Ebola. Two nurses who treated Duncan at the hospital, Nina Pham and Amber Joy Vinson, tested positive for Ebola following his death. Both women survived and are now Ebola-free. At the time of Duncan's diagnosis, health officials determined that more than 100 people may have come into contact with Duncan or one of his family members before he was hospitalized. This number included a dozen and a half people who had direct contact with Duncan, such as Troh, who never became infected.

Our Challenge

When Duncan came to visit Troh, she lived in one of a hundred apartment complexes in Northeast Dallas' Vickery Meadow neighborhood, a high-density, low-income community with a large population of immigrants from places such as Mexico, Burma, and Duncan's Liberia. Troh, also born in Liberia, is one of the more than 25,000 people who live in Vickery Meadow, where more than 27 languages are spoken by its residents. Troh lived in her apartment with two of her sons and two nephews. Two of Troh's daughters – one who has four children and the other who has two – each lived in nearby Vickery Meadow apartments. Another daughter, who also lives nearby, picked Duncan up from the airport and brought him to Vickery Meadow. All of these family members and other friends came in contact with Duncan once he arrived in Dallas. While it was unclear if further contact happened once Duncan started showing Ebola symptoms, health officials interviewed them about their interaction with Duncan and monitored them all as a precaution. Duncan also came into contact with several ambulance workers who transported him to the hospital as well as hospital health care workers and staff members, all of whom were interviewed, monitored and, in the case of the two nurses, diagnosed and treated for the virus.

The list of those who interacted with or had contact with Duncan brought about a key challenge during North Texas' Ebola public health emergency. Once the level of contact between Duncan and each person was established, social services assistance was needed for those who were quarantined for 21 days, the incubation period for the virus. This included counseling and emotional support, financial resources and advocacy. And buried within this challenge were other additional social service-related issues that began to emerge. Since some who may have had direct or indirect contact with Duncan were members of the Vickery Meadow community who didn't speak English, there was a need for bilingual case workers. There was also the question

of what kind of support a social service agency could provide that did not jeopardize the safety of its workers, since it involved people at-risk for developing an infectious virus. Then, there was the need for extreme confidentiality, because of the stigma associated with Ebola and the media outlets' thirst for opportunities to talk to anyone associated with Duncan. Lastly, there was the need for readily available financial resources to help with non-clinical needs.

Our Approach and How it Worked

Once public health officials began to speak about others in North Texas who may have been infected with Ebola, Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) reached out to Jewish Family Services of Greater Dallas (JFS). The agency provides mental health and social services to children and adults, including families in the Vickery Meadow neighborhood. JFS also provides limited emergency financial assistance in crisis situations. In addition, members of the staff are bilingual. JFS was capable of providing support counselling and case management to those affected by the Ebola outbreak. But was it safe for them to do so? "Obviously, we had a lot of questions surrounding Ebola, just like everyone else, because so much was unknown about the virus and there was a mix of messages about the infection and its prevalence," said Michael Fleisher, chief executive officer for JFS. "The first thing we wanted to do was to make sure the health of our staff members would not be compromised."

Fleisher worked with Yolanda Swope, a clinical counselor and clinical staff supervisor at JFS with a degree in internal medicine, to develop a plan to assist with the Ebola public health emergency. They decided JFS' work would be kept extremely confidential so as not to alarm those seeking assistance from the agency for other reasons. The main plan would be for JFS to provide counseling by phone to those under quarantine, with a team that was available by phone 24 hours a day. Under this plan, JFS served 43 people: family and friends of Duncan, people who rode with him in the ambulance to the hospital, the two nurses who contracted the virus and those who came in contact with them, and hospital health care workers and staff members who needed emotional support. JFS also collected items needed for some of those quarantined, such as food, toiletries and other basic needs, and passed the items on to those who delivered items to the individuals on a daily basis.

JFS broke the plan into the following four steps.

- JFS established a communication system between its licensed clinical staff members and those who were quarantined. That system included clinical staff members calling those who were quarantined twice a day for temperature and symptom checks. The isolated people called JFS throughout the day as well just to talk, sometimes as late as 2 a.m. "They were scared," Swope said. "Many of them thought they were going to die."

- JFS assessed each person's daily living situation to learn about their basic needs and help them maintain human dignity. As part of the assessment, JFS learned that many of those quarantined had specific nutritional needs or diets or wanted immune-system boosting foods or supplements to assuage their fears about the virus. In addition, many of them had employers who would not pay them while they were away from work for 21 days. This had a trickle-down effect, as it left some of the people unable to pay for rent, utilities and other obligations. At least two of those affected were displaced from their homes, because they needed to be in complete isolation. To help in this area, JFS received assistance from CFT and the Dallas Foundation. The two organizations agreed to provide financial resources to those affected by the crisis. "This help was crucial, because it allowed them to go about their daily business as much as possible without more to worry about beyond what they were experiencing with Ebola," Fleisher said. "Without this help, there would have been extra layers of checks and balances to use the resources of JFS that would have delayed our opportunity to help. The speed at which we could provide this assistance helped us facilitate relationships with them and made a meaningful impact on many levels."

- JFS served as an advocate for those who were being monitored. The agency helped them work with their employers about the time off that was needed, as well as the school systems of the children who were to be kept home. Advocacy work continued through the reintegration process once the quarantines were lifted. For example, some of the school children had lost all of their clothing for school, so JFS assisted in getting their clothing replaced. Some of the adults recognized this as a good time to seek a new job, so JFS helped them with employment service needs.
- After the quarantines ended, JFS followed up with the individuals to make sure they were moving forward smoothly. They wanted to make sure there were no on-going clinical or non-clinical issues. This was also when JFS staff members got a chance to meet many of the individuals face-to-face for the first time. "It was interesting, because we knew them all so well, even though our contact had all been by phone," Swope said. "There were lots of hugs."

Reflections and Lessons Learned

A crisis is a crisis. While the spread of the Ebola virus came with many unknowns, it was an emergency situation with social services needs to be met. The opportunity for CFT to reach out to its network and find a capable agency to meet these needs was a standard response to a crisis. The ability of JFS to respond with its wrap-around services in a way that addressed the crisis was expected procedure.

However, Fleisher said, JFS had to approach this crisis differently. He compared the work to that which was done when North Texas took in thousands of people displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. "Once again, we used a wrap-around approach to help coordinate services and needs, so our responsiveness was similar, but the way we tailored it needed to be different. With Katrina, we worked with a large number of evacuees in an ongoing way, but we could work face-to-face with each of them as needed, and we didn't need to be available to them by phone 24/7."

And, Fleisher said, the immediate response to financial assistance from CFT and the Dallas Foundation cannot be underestimated. "That immediate partnership and trust freed us up to do what we do best and eliminated some of the steps that often go along with financial services," he said. Swope added: "Things went well because there was a group of leaders who took the risk and put up the money."

For the future, Fleisher would recommend the following: "In a public health crisis, there needs to be a formal forum that brings the key players together frequently, and for as long as necessary, with a clear ability to distribute important information from their discussions to the public and the media. Public information needs to be quickly translated into appropriate languages. If we were to face a quarantine or monitoring situation of any kind, we need a plan for how to house and meet the practical and emotional needs of those affected. There also needs to be clarity of leadership – not necessarily who is in charge, but who needs to lead the efforts associated with the crisis."

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