

Project Sussex Kids: Sussex County Council for Young Children
Familias Hispanas Subcommittee Meeting
Project Self-Sufficiency
Tuesday, May 12, 2015; 1:00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE:

Deborah Berry-Toon, Executive Director of Project Self-Sufficiency
Lis Schuman, Chair of Familias Hispanas Subcommittee, Project Self-Sufficiency
Bob Kleinschmidt, Pastor Sparta Evangelical Free Church
Pam Madzy, Migrant Ministry of the Diocese of Paterson
Veronica Paris, Bilingual Advocate/Counselor, DASI
Sandra Hernández, parent, PSS participant (Ogdensburg)
Paul Pouliot, SEFC, instructor at SCCC
Kathy Perez, SEFC, parent
Mirian Suchy, SEFC
Viviana Cabrera, SEFC, parent, former participant of PSS
Jorge Cintrón, SEFC

MINUTES:

Introductions

Overview of grant and goals of Project Sussex Kids (Deb)

Observations (attendees of meeting):

- Kathy – Hispanic families often have multiple children who struggle in the same areas – Why? These parents need training, education, and support so that the issues do not continue with each additional child.
- Kathy – a common issue with this community (which is her community) is that they expect a handout, or a hand-holding, and they become apathetic.
- Pam – Access to prenatal care is adequate; navigating the health care system *after* pregnancy is very challenging
- Veronica – immigration issues are significant – many clients are fearful of being noticed/flagged and opt to forgo services in order to remain anonymous. *Trust* is a major factor in seeking help. Parents feel more confident about resources when they see it in writing
- Pam – the hospital has flyers in Spanish re: medical insurance
- ** Families need to know what they can and cannot access (depending on their immigration status, income, etc.). Many individuals are not taking advantage of resources because they believe that they are ineligible (due to documentation, income, etc.).
- Pam – spoke about the Migrant Ministry tutoring program – 1x/week; free; tutoring done at their Church St. office in Newton; tutors are students from Blair; students are mostly

from Newton, 1 from Stillwater, a few from other towns; the struggle is getting families to commit to coming more than once

- Lis – Merriam Ave. School offers after school tutoring for Hispanic children; 2x/week; free; tutoring done at MAS; tutors are Spanish Honor Society students from Newton High School
- Pam – the problem is that many families are not aware of this tutoring option at MAS. Also, some people feel that if a program is free, it is less valuable/effective.
- **Relationships are key to reaching the Hispanic community. 1:1 relationships build trust, help connect families to existing resources, help families stay committed (e.g. PSS's HV program very successful with this population – the Hispanic participants are typically very committed and consistent).
- Viviana – another issue is finances and money management. Mentioned the Pathways to Prosperity program that has been instrumental in teaching Viviana budgeting and money management.
- Kathy – many Hispanics that she knows do not know how to balance a checkbook
- Lis – “Kathy, how did you learn to do manage your finances? How did you learn to use the internet to find out information?”
- Kathy – said that she has a college degree in Business Administration, and this set her up for success
- Viviana – also has college degree in Bus Admin., from Uruguay
- Pam – learned money management from her parents; also, schools used to teach the basics
- Lis – again, education is a significant factor
- Veronica – one of her Hispanic clients just found out that she can open a bank account, even without immigration documentation
- Language barrier – a major issue
- Pam – a common attitude is, “My child is learning English. He/she can translate for me.”
- Veronica – many of her clients want to use their 9-, 10-year-olds to translate for them at DASI, in court, at the probation office, etc.. She has to explain to them that this is inappropriate and that the parent can get an interpreter.
- Parents need education/training
- Lis – How do we best encourage parents to seek training/education? Should we consider accessing some cultural competency training ourselves on how to “speak” to parents in the various Hispanic communities in Sussex County? (gave example of social worker in Chicago school system – they engage fathers in their children’s education by providing parenting classes geared for fathers. Their flyers are culturally appropriate for that population – “It is your *duty* as a father to help your child...etc.” This wording speaks to this population better than just offering the parenting classes as a suggestion.)
- Deb – What are the cultural norms of parenting? How do these norms impact parents’ approach to their children’s education?

- Kathy – in Peru, schools are demanding, and children do most work on own without parental input
- Viviana – in Uruguay, parents are more “hands-off” when it comes to their children’s education
- Pam – Many of the Hispanic parents that she works with treat persons in authority (teachers, doctors, etc.) as the ultimate authority. Parents do not question them.
- Deb – asked about CityServe
- Bob – gave overview of CityServe and their three main domains of focus: education, health, judicial. They recognize that the Hispanic population of Sussex County is a significant population, and they would like to possibly provide ESL services and “immigration hope” (helping people navigate through the judicial system for things such as marriages). CityServe wants to come alongside Sussex County organizations and provide volunteer manpower to support the work that is already being done.
- Kathy – yes, you can get married without immigration documentation. Use your passport.
- Pam – agencies need to be educated on the laws surrounding the Hispanic community (e.g. understand HIPAA regulations – that an individual can legally use an interpreter without violating HIPAA regulations; etc.)
- Deb – envisioning a summit for professionals in the community around immigration issues (understanding the laws, etc.)
- Deb – Are the currently available ESL options adequate?
- Pam – yes
- Viviana – It is the individual’s responsibility to overcome barriers and learn the language
- Lis - HV-model ESL program would reach individuals who cannot access existing ESL programs. Send tutors to people’s homes for ESL.
- Deb – Is there a place for 1:1 advocates? Is there a need?
- Mixed response
- Pam – Migrant Ministry is trying to empower individuals to advocate for themselves
- Deb – Having an advocate does not mean that a person will not become self-sufficient. We need to meet individuals where they’re at.
- Deb - ** It needs to be clear what resources/helps they can access and what they cannot access.
- Deb spoke on the companion grant that PSS won – Central Intake for Sussex, Warren, and Hunterdon Counties; bilingual helpline
- Pam – spoke about the bilingual helpline that Migrant Ministry started about 10 years ago. Not actively used by the Hispanic community.
- Pam – spoke about putting info on Project Sussex Kids in places that people visit often – grocery stores, laundromats, etc.
- Gaps – transportation

- Pam – mentioned that Public Health nurses can provide immunizations, vaccinations
- Brief discussion on clinics in Newton (dental clinic on Spring St.– difficult to navigate; Free Clinic Newton)
- Deb – gave overview of the Familias Hispanas schedule for the year and closed the meeting