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EMT ASSOCIATES, INC.

771 OAK AVENUE PARKWAY, SUITE 2
FOLSOM, CALIFORNIA 95630-6802
916.983.6680 fax: 916.983.6693

15720 VENTURA BOULEVARD, PENTHOUSE
ENCINO, CALIFORNIA 91436-2929
818.990.8301 fax: 818.990.3103

www.emt.org

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Dear Project Director:

We are delighted to be able to make this case study available to you to help you make your mentoring program a success. This publication was funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools under contract with EMT Associates, Inc. Although this publication has not yet been officially released by the U.S. Department of Education, we have been authorized to make it available on the Web at this time to solicit your feedback.

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Mentoring Resource Center
C/O EMT Associates
771 Oak Avenue Parkway, Suite 2
Folsom, CA 95630
Phone: 1-877-579-4788
E-mail: Shelly@EMT.org

Sincerely,

Judy Strother Taylor
Project Director



U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center



Case Study

By Belinda Basca

Continuing Mentoring Program Services: Fundraising and Other Sustainability Practices

Case Study

Fundraising and Other Long-Term Practices

Introduction

Those who have invested their time and energy into a mentoring program believe that mentoring makes significant contributions to the success of youth. Many of us also recognize that youth mentoring is expanding across the country—swelling into what some call a “movement” (Yoo, 2004). Support for youth mentoring comes from all levels of the public and private sectors; even the current president of the United States publicly underscores the importance of mentoring as a way to have a positive impact on the lives of young people. It is because of this fundamental belief that mentoring changes lives that many of us have poured our hearts and souls into building strong youth mentoring programs (Furlop, 2005:1).

In spite of this belief in mentoring by so many, and the media’s portrayal of the public and private support for mentoring as “swelling,” we know that, too often, the day-to-day reality of program coordinators around the country sounds quite different (Furlop 2005:1). For example:

“We are in our last eight months of our grant that we were awarded in 2000. During the last three years we have actually developed a pretty solid program... We maintain about 30–40 matches and we’re proud that our program reflects the commonly recognized quality assurance standards. Because of our size, it doesn’t take much to support this small program, but we have struggled to find

any funding from either the state level or national level. Securing local funding seems equally impossible. Unfortunately, we face the reality that our program might have to be shut down if we do not receive funding to ensure our sustainability...”

What can mentoring programs do to increase their likelihood of program sustainability? Although funding is critical, there are other vital components needed to sustain a mentoring program over time. At base, sustainability means continuing the benefits (enhanced outcomes) that a demonstration or program innovation brings to program participants (Scheirer, 2005:324).

Sustainability is a complex issue involving many aspects of an organization’s overall management and operations: planning, finance, fundraising, human resources, programming, partnership building, etc. Three strategies to ensure long-term sustainability are to diversify funding, integrate effective program marketing, and to build partnerships and service infrastructures. These principles are being successfully implemented by the Orange County Bar Foundation, Inc. (OCBF) in the long-term sustainability of their mentoring programs and are the subject of this case study.

Program Description

The Orange County Bar Foundation, Inc. ® (OCBF) is a non-profit organization committed to providing legal education to families to prevent juvenile crime. The OCBF has been a leader in the field of juvenile crime diversion and citizenship education for 30 years, consistently achieving positive results in the community served.

In 1998 OCBF was awarded a 3-year CSAP grant for **Project Youth Connect (PYC)**. Project Youth Connect is a unique mentoring Program for Latina girls and their families. Selected as one of fifteen sites in the nation, the OCBF program was part of a national study designed to determine the effectiveness of mentoring/advocacy programs. The goal of the study design was two-fold:

- To increase resiliency factors to enable young people to overcome the effects of a high-risk environment; and,
- To develop social competence to make better decisions in order to stay out of the criminal justice system.

PYC targeted Santa Ana girls ages 9-15 and their families, who participated in mentoring activities that provided substance abuse and teen pregnancy prevention.

Evaluations of the PYC mentoring sites showed:

- 120 mentor-mentee matches with a retention rate of approximately 70% over the three year period.
- No significant increase in risk and protective factors, which allowed the participants to maintain healthy attitudes and offset any increased use of illicit drugs or alcohol.
- Improved intervention skills at higher rates than those in other control groups.
- Positive trends in grades, attendance, youth positive perception of school, parent perception of attachment with youth, family adaptability, youth positive feelings toward adults, and parent

perception of child's capacity to form positive adult relationships.¹

At the end of the grant period, OCBF reapplied and was one of seven sites to receive three years of additional funding through a Mentoring and Family Strengthening Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative. This initiative enabled OCBF to replicate PYC at a second site. This site targeted Costa Mesa girls 9-15, and their parents, who participated in mentoring activities that prevented substance abuse, improved youth ability to relate to adults, improved family and school functioning, and improved academic performance.

After the initial CSAP funding initiative for PYC ended, Santa Ana was re-funded under the **Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention within Minorities Initiative**. Although the funding was not a mentoring initiative, OCBF adapted the PYC program at Santa Ana by incorporating HIV/AIDS prevention into the PYC model. This intervention served Santa Ana girls ages 12-17 and their mothers, who participated in mentoring activities that provided substance abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention.

During this time OCBF found that many high school Latina girls were interested in college, but seemed to be "falling through the cracks" and were not in fact taking the steps to reach higher education. OCBF applied for and was awarded a small grant from the Orange County Community Foundation for the **Higher Education Mentoring Program**. HEP targets Santa Ana high school girls ages 14-17 who are interested in entering college but need assistance due to cultural and gender barriers and limited financial resources. The girls participate in mentoring activities that guide and assist the pursuit of higher education. Students at the University of California Irvine, University of Southern California-Irvine Campus, Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Fullerton provide cultural mentoring. This program has been sustained by several small foundation grants.

¹ Trends used a 40-hour minimum program participation benchmark

Most recently, OCBF used PYC's focus on culture and gender-specific curriculum in their application for new funding. They were awarded a CDC grant to continue HIV education and risk reduction for 15-25 year-old Latinas at high risk for HIV. This is known as the **HERMANA Project**.

The OCBF has been quite successful in achieving its goals and in bringing mentoring to underserved communities for many years through a variety of mentoring programs. As Martha Madrid, Director of Mentoring Services for OCBF said, *"We have found that using a successful mentoring model like PYC as the foundation and then integrating components that satisfy new initiatives into it has been successful in addressing the needs of our target population."*

Best Practices and Strategies

There are several key strategies that the OCBF has used in developing, sustaining, and expanding their mentoring services for their local community.

#1 Diversifying Funding Strategies

OCBF has found value in diversifying funding—combining resources from personal, private, state, and federal sources. Because some funding sources may be unstable, they have expanded the ways in which funding is acquired. OCBF has a strong and flexible funding infrastructure in the organizational environment which has ensured sustainability of their programs over time. Although federal and state grants are still OCBF's primary funding source, they know that as these grants end, they must diversify their funding strategies to sustain their programs—mentoring included—over time. Below are listed several ways in which OCBF has diversified their funding strategies.

- **Direct Corporate Support.** Corporate support can come in the form of direct dollars or in-kind donations of materials and supplies (Weinberger, 2005). OCBF

has acquired a wide array of corporate support through their board of trustees. This group of 35 individuals has been a core source of ideas and means for diversifying funding. In terms of direct corporate support, the board has assisted in identifying a variety of services, including free printing of materials and the identification of local companies that provide funding to charities of their choice.

Even when corporations could not give direct dollars, OCBF acquired in-kind donations, such as coverage of printing costs. For other mentoring programs it could include space for activities, equipment (such as computers or furniture), or pro bono services (designing your brochure, or hosting your Web site, for example). Almost every business has something they can contribute.

- **Foundation Funding.** Foundation funding can take the form of a family or private foundation, a corporate foundation, or a community foundation. Today there are nearly 65,000 foundations in the United States. In most cases, foundations award grants in a geographic area near their home base (McGrath, 2005).

OCBF actively seeks local foundation grants. The Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF), a lead agency which distributes monies for small family foundations, funds the Higher Education Mentoring program. In addition, OCBF has foundation funding through the Margaret Osser Foundation for Women and the Draper Foundation (Helping Kids Achieve Program). Through inquiries of their board, OCBF found out that several members worked for companies that had private foundations which could only be accessed through letters of invitation by a current employee. OCBF received funding from the Union Bank Foundation and the State Farm Foundation in this manner.

- **Individual Giving.** Individual giving accounted for 83% of charitable contributions made in 2003 (Bowman, 2005). This is more than corporate support (6%) and foundation funding (11%) combined. According to the American Association of Fundraising Council (AAFRC), this amounts to over \$201 billion dollars. Although most of this goes to religious institutions (36%), mentoring programs can diversify their funding sources by targeting individuals, as well.

OCBF has integrated a variety of strategies to tap into this resource. They host many fundraising events and fee-based programs each year. Several are highlighted below:

- An Annual Orange County Marathon which drew an estimated 2,000 volunteers, 12,000 participants and over 40,000 spectators in 2006. Donors can contribute online, or sponsor runners/teams. OCBF is one of twelve charities that receive proceeds from the marathon.
- The Food and Wine Society is a pay-by-member group that meets twice a year for culinary delights with eminent local chefs. An extensive wine collection is highlighted, and vintage years of wine are auctioned off at the end with the proceeds benefiting OCBF.
- An annual OCBF Celebrity Golf Classic raises funds each year for OCBF. In addition to golf, a silent and live auction is held with proceeds going to OCBF.

OCBF also recently completed the Robert "Sam" Barnes Capital Campaign. The fund was established in their past president Robert "Sam" Barnes' name and is a segregated reserve account of \$300,000. It was established with \$150,000 of individual giving that was then matched by a private donor. OCBF hopes that the capital reserve fund will ensure the OCBF's financial stability and will alleviate cash flow issues by providing a working capital fund.

#2 Building Partnerships and Service Infrastructures

Building partnerships through collaboration and fostering a strong service infrastructure are also keys to sustainability (Scheirer, 2005; Springer, 2006). For OCBF, the mentoring programs it supports are just a few of the programs OCBF manages. Below are several strategies OCBF has adopted to build partnerships and service infrastructures:

- Funds raised through OCBF events are dispersed amongst the various other OCBF programs—mentoring included—to ensure sustainability.
- The Higher Education Mentoring Program and Project SELF both align with OCBF's organizational mission of helping underprivileged youth to ensure them a life free of crime. This type of alignment with the Lead Agency's priorities can also be a key influence on sustainability.

Strong project leadership is also a very important factor in supporting sustainability. OCBF is supported by a 35-member Board of Trustees that has been instrumental in sustaining OCBF programs. OCBF has taken ample steps to help the board feel connected to the programs and takes advantage of the time, talent, and treasure the board has to offer. The board has been instrumental in getting the "foot in the door" for several key funding opportunities.

#3 Effective Program Marketing

A final strategy to ensure sustainability of program services is to utilize effective marketing strategies in the acquisition of funding (Webster, 2000). There are many ways a mentoring program can be marketed. One strategy is to develop a logic model of the program that can be shared with potential funders. A logic model includes the theory and assumptions underlying a program and

links both short- and long-term outcomes with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles guiding its development. Logic models convey an organization's fundamental purpose, why it is important, how it will operate, and what results can be expected (Bowmen, 2005). This can be used to persuade potential funders or contributors to support the mentoring program based on its well-thought-out plan to achieve its goals.

A second marketing strategy is to use evaluation data (Springer, 2006). Evaluation results and outcome data can be valuable in writing grant applications. Evaluation findings are also immensely useful as you market your program to potential funders. The following highlight several strategies OCBF has implemented:

- The development of an executive summary of programs with key evaluation findings highlighted. Although brief, these short and concise summaries are helpful marketing tools to show the uniqueness of the programs OCBF offers.
- The creation of logic models that demonstrate OCBF's mentoring program components relative to the program's outcomes. It is often said that "a picture is worth 1,000 words." OCBF has effectively created and used logic models as valuable marketing tools when seeking funding for their mentoring programs.
- The utilization of the media and program participants to tell the "story" of a program. OCBF has employed this strategy by inviting the media to various program events and highlighting program participants on their website. These "snapshots" put programs in a real context that potential funders can relate to and conceptualize.
- The development of a videotape that overviewed the program services of Project Youth Connect. OCBF used this as a marketing tool when seeking funding resources.
- The organization of special events, such as OCBF's Annual Orange County Marathon, the Food and Wine Society, and the Celebrity Golf Classic, which are

excellent promotional strategies to market the programs that OCBF offers.

Program Replicability

Effective fundraising and other sustainability strategies are critical to ensure the longevity of a mentoring program. OCBF has successfully sustained their mentoring programs for over 10 years using many well documented strategies including diversifying fundraising, integrating effective program marketing, and building partnerships and service infrastructures. Utilizing these techniques has ensured the long-term success of their mentoring programs.

In this last section, tips are provided to help plan for the long-term sustainability of mentoring programs. Use them as a checklist to begin building the infrastructure to ensure the long-term endurance of your program.

In order to start working towards long-term sustainability, consider organizing your planning by doing the following three things:

- Assess where you are
- Assess where you want to be
- Create a plan and process to get from where you are to where you want to be

In creating the plan, consider the following:

To Diversify Funding Strategies... ..

- ✓ If your program has a board of trustees or board of directors, make use of them. They are often the "hidden" connections to a variety of corporate, foundation, and private funding.
- ✓ Take some time to brainstorm all the material goods your program needs, both for day-to-day operations and for one-time events, and see how many of them you may be able to get free as an in-kind donation from a large or small corporation.
- ✓ Through online and library research, identify foundations that make grants in your town or city and that fund projects in prevention or education.

- ✓ Develop a who-do-you-know inventory with board members, staff, and friends before you approach a foundation. If you find someone who knows someone, use that contact.
- ✓ For individual giving, focus on the people you already know: the people who care about you and your organization and the things you care about. It is likely that your passions will connect. This will make your requests more likely to be fulfilled.

“Keep abreast of what is going on in the community. If your community has needs, you must be open to expanding your program’s services to meet these needs. We have found this is to be a key factor in our sustainability.”

--Martha Madrid, Director of Mentoring Services for OCBF

To Build Partnerships and Service Infrastructures...

- ✓ Find alignment with your Lead Agency's priorities.
- ✓ Identify a dynamic leader who has been with the project for a long period of time and has a history of commitment to your program's principles. These champions

can be some of the strongest proponents for your program.

- ✓ Build partnerships with other community organizations integral to providing services within the mentoring program itself.
- ✓ Be flexible as you move forward with your program. It is likely you will have to modify your program in some way to meet changing needs.

To Effectively Market Program...

- ✓ Develop marketing tools such as executive summaries and logic models that let funders know what your program is about.
- ✓ Utilize the media and program participants to help tell the “story” of your program. Doing so highlights the need for these mentoring services in your area, and provides funders with a real person to whom they can relate.
- ✓ Consider developing a needs assessment to demonstrate the gap and quantitative need for mentoring services in the community with valid data.
- ✓ Promote funding opportunities through brochures or newsletters, a website, public speaking, face-to-face solicitation, giveaways, and special events.

Additional Resources

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About the Author: Belinda Basca

Belinda Bell Basca (Ed.M. Harvard University) is a K-5 writer and curriculum specialist of Science Companion®, a hands-on learning program that takes advantage of children's extensive knowledge of--and curiosity about--how things work in the world. As a consultant for EMT and CARS, Belinda has assisted on a variety of mentoring projects and conducted site visits for Friday Night Live Mentoring and the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community program. As a former researcher at Harvard Project Zero on The Understandings of Consequence Project, Belinda's work focused on complex causal science concepts and their application in the classroom. In particular, she studied how children reason about challenging topics in science at the elementary and middle school level. She developed science curriculum and conducted frequent classroom observations of teachers and interviews with children.

Mentoring Resource Center

Case Study Series

The Mentoring Resource Center (MRC) has been created to provide United States Department of Education Mentoring Program grantees with training, technical assistance, publications, research, and consultation, all in an effort to help their program staff design and implement the highest quality mentoring programs. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, the MRC is a collaborative effort between EMT Associates, located in Folsom, CA, and the National Mentoring Center, located in Portland, OR.

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Contact Us:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Mentoring Resource Center
c/o EMT Associates
771 Oak Avenue Parkway, Suite 2
Folsom, CA 95630

MRC Toll-Free Number: (877) 579-4788
fax: (916) 983-6693
email: edmentoring@emt.org
web: www.edmentoring.org

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Contributing Editor: Kerrilyn Scott-Nakai
Graphic Design: Julienne Kwong

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