MEMO

TO: Hub Steering Committee
From: Community Grant Subcommittee

January 30, 2013

Re: Subcommittee Report and Recommendation to Approve & Release BHC Community Grant Application


The Community Grant Subcommittee met on Thursday, January 17th, 2013 and Tuesday, January 22nd, 2013 to review and revise the BHC Community Grant Application as needed for its upcoming release. Summary Report Of Accomplishments, Findings And Lessons From Interviews with BHC Community Grants Of 2011-2012 composed by UC Merced Researchers has been reviewed by the subcommittee and is attached as an informational item.

**RECOMMENDATION #1: To approve and release the revised version of the BHC Community Grant Application for funding cycle: 2013 Cycle 1.**

The Community Grant Subcommittee made the following changes to the BHC Community Grant Application (all changes are highlighted in the application):

1. Changed the application deadline date throughout.
2. Section: WHO CAN APPLY
   a. Added the following language: **Individuals or groups who are NOT currently a BHC Community Grant recipient are preferred in order to encourage new partners to join BHC efforts. While current grantees are not excluded from applying, first-time applicants and those not currently receiving Community Grant funds will be given preference.**
3. Section: HOW TO APPLY
   a. Added the following language: **The BHC Community Grant funds will be made available twice per year in two cycles, one in the summer/fall 2013 and one in the spring 2014. Only one application may be accepted per entity per cycle. Applicants may only be awarded one grant per year.**
4. Section: GRANT APPLICATION WORKSHOPS  
   a. Changed section header to read: Grant Application Workshops & Technical Assistance Available  
   b. Added the following language: Four (4) general grant workshops will be available to help interested applicants in completing the Community Grant application. Spanish and Hmong interpreters will be available. One-on-one Technical Assistance is available upon request through March 21st, 2013 at 3:00 p.m.  
   c. Changed the dates/locations for Grant Application Workshops.  
   d. Added two additional Grant Application Workshops; total of four workshops – one in each site.  

5. Section: REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS OF AWARDED APPLICANTS  
   a. Added the following language: Any single equipment valued at or more than $150 and purchased with the Community Grant funds shall be relinquished to the BHC Hub at the conclusion of the project/program.  

The motion is to:  

1) Approve recommendations as suggested by the subcommittee, or  

2) Reject the recommendations, or  

3) Approve the recommendation as amended by the Hub Steering Committee  

RECOMMENDATION #2: Approve the extension of voting membership on Community Grant Subcommittee through May 2013 for Hub Steering Committee members who are currently on the Community Grant Subcommittee and whose terms are scheduled to expire in March 2013.  

Members of the Community Grant Subcommittee agrees that this would allow for a smooth transition; and ensure that there would be an adequate number of representatives from the Hub Steering Committee to conclude the selection process for 2013 Cycle 1.  

The motion is to:  

4) Approve recommendations as suggested by the subcommittee, or  

5) Reject the recommendations, or  

6) Approve the recommendation as amended by the Hub Steering Committee  

United Way of Merced County  
658 West Main Street  
Merced, CA 95340  
Office: (209) 383-4242  
www.unitedwaymerced.org  ♦  www.mycalconnect.org/merced
The California Endowment (TCE) is investing in 14 communities including Southwest Merced/East Merced County to build healthy and safe environments where people live, attend school, work and play. This effort is known as Building Healthy Communities (BHC).

In many places across California, there is a need for more choices for youth to become involved in their communities and to take pride in their neighborhoods. Through the BHC community-grant funding we hope that local youth and neighborhoods within our BHC site will have more chances to take on community projects or events that will unify community voices, provide learning and skill building opportunities, and improve the safety and health of the community.

**WHAT IS A BHC-HUB COMMUNITY-GRANT:**

**BHC Southwest Merced/East Merced County Community-Grant** will award up to $1,000 to qualifying applicants to fund projects that will help BHC’s central mission: *To build a healthy community in which youth and families are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.* The community-grant will directly fund projects in the four communities identified within the BHC area: Planada, Le Grand, South Merced, Franklin/Beachwood areas of Merced County, or that involves community members from the four identified areas that make up our BHC site. Community-grants should improve youth leadership, community involvement, and behaviors related to developing healthy and safe communities. Examples of potential programs or projects include, but are not limited to health related activities, educational trips, cultural arts, music or video projects that focus on the prioritized BHC outcomes for Southwest Merced/East Merced County, which are:

- **Outcome 5:** Children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods.
- **Outcome 6:** Communities support healthy youth development.
- **Outcome 8:** Community Health improvements are linked to economic development.

**WHO CAN APPLY:**

Open to all local entities who meet the following criteria below and whose project will serve the four areas in Southwest Merced/East Merced County:

1. Individuals or groups who are NOT currently a BHC Community Grant recipient are preferred in order to encourage new partners to join BHC efforts. While current grantees are not excluded from applying, first-time applicants and those not currently receiving Community Grant funds will be given preference.
2. Individuals or groups without a 501(c) (3) status are encouraged to apply and highly encouraged to partner with a nonprofit organization that will serve as their financial sponsor.
3. Individual youth, youth-serving groups, or student organizations. Youth may use student-led school organizations as financial sponsors.
4. 501(c) (3) nonprofit organizations, agencies, schools, faith-based organizations.
5. Any requested funds intended for the following are **prohibited** and will cause the application to be disqualified:
   - religious or political instructions or political activities
   - conducting worship services
   - providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious worship
   - constructing or operating facilities specific to religious instruction or worship
   - political campaigning, promotion, or related to politics, or
   - engaging in any form of religious and/or political preaching or activities
HOW TO APPLY:

Please complete the application on the next page. The BHC Community Grant funds will be made available twice per year in two cycles, one in the summer/fall 2013 and one in the spring 2014. Only one application may be accepted per entity per cycle. Applicants may only be awarded one grant per year. Completed applications could be accompanied by poster boards, video clips, artworks, poems, music with lyrics and must be delivered to United Way of Merced County postmarked by no later than: 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 22nd, 2013.

All media and artwork must be free of harmful contents that may be deemed offensive to any individual or group. All attached articles will not be returned unless a written request is submitted along with the application.

Applications including additional articles may be submitted electronically to tatiana@unitedwaymerced.org, or by mail to:

Attn: Tatiana Vizcaino-Stewart
United Way of Merced County
658 West Main Street
Merced, CA 95340
Fax: (209) 383-4254

Funded projects will be announced after Wednesday, May 1st, 2013.

GRANT APPLICATION WORKSHOPS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE:

Four (4) general grant workshops will be available to help interested applicants in completing the Community Grant application. Spanish and Hmong interpreters will be available.

One-on-one Technical Assistance is available upon request through March 21st, 2013 at 3:00 p.m.

For more information or to RSVP, please call (209) 580-6067.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Le Grand</th>
<th>Planada</th>
<th>Beachwood/Franklin</th>
<th>South Merced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 21st, 2013 5:30-6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 5th, 2013 6:00-7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Monday, March 4th, 2013 6:00-7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Thursday, February 28th, 2013 5:30-6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Le Grand High School - Library 12961 Le Grand Road Le Grand, CA</td>
<td>Senior Annex Building 9167 East Stanford Planada, CA</td>
<td>Joe Stefani School - Cafeteria 2768 Ranchero Lane Merced, CA</td>
<td>United Way of Merced 658 West Main Street Merced, CA</td>
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REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS OF AWARDED APPLICANTS:

All applicants who are awarded must:
1. Agree to adhere to all federal, state and local non-discrimination laws and regulations and affirms that it shall not unlawfully discriminate against any person or persons on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical disability (including HIV and AIDS), mental disability, medical condition (cancer), sex, age, and/or sexual orientation.
2. Understand that any requested funds intended for religious or political instructions or political activities, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, political campaigning, promotion, or related to politics, or engaging in any form of religious and/or political preaching or activities are prohibited and will cause immediate termination of this MOU and funding.
3. Ensure that the name “Building Healthy Communities Southwest Merced/East Merced County” and “United Way of Merced County” or its official logos are used to clearly identify BHC and United Way of Merced County as a source of support in all published material related to this grant.
4. Become involved in the BHC effort by attending designated meetings and inform the Hub and its partners how they may connect to your activities.
5. Agree to participate, collaborate, and partner with other BHC grantees in the coordination of events and services as appropriate and shall provide healthy food options at any events, meetings, and/or activities.
6. Keep complete and accurate sign in sheets, receipts and other supporting information available for inspection at any time by BHC Hub Manager.
7. Submit a final one-page report or other form of reporting such as video clip, poster, voice recording, etc. to the BHC Hub Manager 30 days after the end date of the project or project period, whichever comes first. The final report must include how the grant funds were spent with proof of receipts of items purchased and/or other supporting financial documents.
8. Any single equipment valued at or more than $150 and purchased with the Community Grant funds shall be relinquished to the BHC Hub at the conclusion of the project/program.
# Application Form

*Please type or print legibly.* Applications are due or postmarked by **Friday, March 22nd, 2013 by 5:00 p.m.**

## Applicant Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Applicant or Organization:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Sponsor: (if any)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Person &amp; Title:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>City:</td>
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<td>Contact Number:</td>
<td>Email:</td>
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**Office Use Only**

| Date Received: | Staff Int'l: |

**Grant Amount Requested (not to exceed $1,000):**

## General Program Information:

- □ Outcome 5: Children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods.
- □ Outcome 6: Communities support healthy youth development.
- □ Outcome 8: Community health improvements are linked to economic development.

Have you received funding from The California Endowment or BHC?  □ Yes  □ No

Which BHC site(s) will this program serve?  
- □ Beachwood/Franklin  
- □ Le Grand  
- □ Planada  
- □ South Merced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people to be served?</th>
<th>Age group(s) to be served?</th>
<th>Is there a fee for participation in this program?</th>
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<tr>
<td>✗</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>6-12</td>
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<tr>
<th>Program Start Date:</th>
<th>Program End Date</th>
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<tr>
<th>Applicant Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<th>Authorized Financial Sponsor Name</th>
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*Draft 1/25/13*
Please provide written responses to the following questions.

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<th>What is the purpose of your organization or group?</th>
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**Provide a summary of the project and what goals you are trying to achieve.** (Example: What are the activities you will provide? How many youth will you serve? How long will your project run? How your proposed project builds on the goals and objectives of BHC Southwest Merced/East Merced County activities?)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Explain how you will use the funds. <strong>(List the amount you are requesting and outline how the money will be spent. Example: Exercise Camp for Kids ages 10-15 for six months, 12 basketballs, 24 jump ropes, etc.)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th>Explain how you would know if your project is successful. <strong>(Example: Sign-in sheets will show how many people attended, surveys will show that participants benefited from the project, comments from participants, etc)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th>If you do not receive full funding, do you plan to continue with the project? If so, how would you operate your project as planned?</th>
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PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

Applicant/Organization Name: 

Project Title: 

Please use this form to categorize and itemize your project's budget. Use only the budget categories needed for your project; add or subtract lines as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Item Budget</th>
<th>Budget Justification (Detailed Narrative)</th>
<th>Funds Requested</th>
<th>Additional Funds from Other Sources (including inkind/donations)</th>
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Total Fund Requested (must be $1,000 or less)

Total Additional Funds from other sources

TOTAL PROJECT COST
SUMMARY REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FINDINGS AND LESSONS
FROM INTERVIEWS WITH BHC COMMUNITY GRANTS OF 2011-2012

Prepared by Octavio Valencia, Alex Parnell and Stergios Roussos

Background on the Interview Project

This report summarizes the ideas and insights from interviews with the community members who received funding from the Community Grants Program in 2011 and 2012. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how the grantees completed their objectives, how they contributed to the overall BHC and Community Grants Program goals with a special emphasis on community and systems change, and to understand their recommendations and ideas for future work of the Community Grants Program. Out of the 28 grantees, 21 had one or more lead personnel be part of an interview in person. The interviews used a semi-structured format with specific questions generated by the Community Grants Program staff and the evaluation support staff at ACRD. ACRD completed the interviews with staff and volunteer student researchers from UC Merced. This summary report synthesizes the analyses of common themes and unique ideas generated by two evaluators. Each evaluator prepared their independently summary of common themes and unique ideas and then they and a third evaluator came together to review the summaries and develop on this report. A list of the interview questions and aggregate data from the interviews is available upon request.

In trying to generate a "systems change", one of the underlying expectations of BHC is to have people come to the realization that we need to start taking ownership of our communities’ transformation and not just expect that "someone" will come in and fix things for us. Many of the programs assessed in this report are working precisely towards bringing about that change, by not only teaching people to get involved, but also, to care about and advocate for the communities’ best interests. To start with, these programs are helping to generate a "systems change" by providing the opportunities for the community to come together, interact and unite. For the entire community to see itself as being part of the same team and start working together towards achieving the communities goals. Besides reinforcing community integration and cohesion, sharing resources and spaces for the use and benefit of the entire community is also evidence of an important systems change being generated in some of these communities. Furthermore, procedures were adopted in order to broaden the "client base" for some of
this programs, such as providing a system for shoppers to pay with their EBT cards at the farmers markets or giving school teachers a pamphlet on how to incorporate the arts into the classroom and utilize it as an additional tool, with which to enrich and improve on the learning experiences of kids.

The two most common themes that answer the question of why these programs are important to the community have to do in the first place, with helping kids in developing richer and more positive self images or identities for themselves, and secondly, with bringing families and communities together into a cohesive and self aware group, that incorporates people from different backgrounds and ethnicities in friendly and constructive interaction. Better health is also a common theme within the objectives of these programs, as is creating a safer environment and a more civically involved community.

The entire community is positively impacted by these programs, however, most of them tended to focus on reaching the kids, as most of the people running these programs are mainly concerned with the negative lifestyles that many of our youth are living, such as getting involved in dangerous and destructive behaviors such as gang activities and substance abuse. They want to offer kids healthier and more positive alternatives for them to canalize their energy into more constructive activities that may also help them in developing a more confident, positive and self respecting identity for themselves; Activities that will build a sense of pride and a positive self image, as well as help them tin developing bigger dreams for themselves, like the possibility of going to college. They want to offer these kids the opportunity to be proud of themselves for the right reasons and to believe that they have the potential to be successful in life.

The array of programs evaluated ranged from those that aim at promoting healthy eating habits and physical exercise for a healthier community, such as farmer markets, soccer, zumba classes, and physical education, to those that concentrate on bringing rich cultural experiences to the community for people to experience both as spectators, in opera and theater performances for example, and also as active participants in programs like the "Valet Folklorico" and the "Afro-Cuban Drum Project". There are also arts and crafts programs like the "SWING" project, which teaches sawing and crochet, as well as those that bring fun activities to the community, such as swimming and "Movie in the Park Nights", but perhaps the kind of programs that have the potential to bring about a lasting change in the community, are those that seek to mobilize the community and promote a civic conscience and a more active community life, such as "Planada en Accion", or the "Juneteenth Committee".
All of these programs contribute towards empowering our communities in one way or another. Many of them focus on making alternative and more positive activities available to our youth; activities that will build up their self confidence and sense of identity and pride, so that they can feel empowered and valued in their communities. Kids also learn to do thing together by participating in these activities in a safe, supporting and constructive environment that models for them a more positive way to interact with one another and enjoy each other's company, which is essential in generating group cohesiveness. Successful and healthy habits, as well as ideologies are reinforced through many of these programs, as a more promising alternative to the outlooks and behaviors that many of these kids may be able to find on the streets of their neighborhoods.

LESSONS LEARNED

There were three ways by which the grant recipients found out about these BHC grants and launched these programs: 1) It was offered to them by someone they knew, 2) An organization asked for volunteers to take on the projects and they volunteered, or 3) The project was passed down from someone that had previously ran it. However, just about every one of these people that got these grants are people that were already involved in the community and it was by having been involved in the first place, that they found out about this grants and/or that this opportunities were offered or passed down to them. For the most part, the people running these programs have a self starter can do attitude and a vision of community and service that makes them get involved and try to improve something or provide a valued service for the benefit of the community. They all seemed very excited about what they were doing and many projects reflected their own personal passions, such as crafts, sports, music, performing arts, activism etc.

Every one of these grantees said to have applied for the grant because they needed the money to make their project viable. All of them found out about these grants through word of mouth, by people that are involved in community events, many of whom were reported to be also involved with either BHC or with the United Way. The only other agency mentioned as having acted as the connection to this funds was the CLRA (California Rural Legal Assistance), who came to Planada to organize a
community development group that once instituted was called Planada en accion and is now the parent organization for a couple of other projects.

Even though all of these programs could grow, reach more people and solve their general financial struggle with a bigger budget, all grantees reported being very grateful for having received those funds, which they all thought to be instrumental in making their projects a reality. One grantee said the following of how important the grant had been to his program: "On the scale of one to ten: Eleven".

There are three things that are needed for the successful implementation of any and all of these programs: 1) Funding 2) The program itself and 3) Participation. All of these items were mentioned at about the same level of importance towards making these programs successful. The funding part of it was crucial to most grantees, as fixed operating expenses, investments in equipment and materials costs need to be met. However, not all programs depended entirely on BHC funds, since some of them do some of their own fund raising activities or receive sponsorship by other institutions. What was essential and a common denominator to all of the people running these programs was having the specific talent, or experiential knowledge and skill sets necessary to do what they do successfully. The third important element to determine the success and impact of these programs is the degree of participation or involvement by the people they are intended to serve. Additional factors for success were also mentioned, such as creativity, organizational skills and having an innovative spirit, as well as program inclusion.

Most of the people cited by these grantees as having helped them with their projects were local community activists and volunteers that many times were also associated with BHC and with the United Way. Teachers, school officials and the MCOE were also mentioned several times, as were municipal advisory councils, local service institutions and some local businesses, who for the most part helped by sponsoring some of the programs' activities.

The main lesson learned by most of the grantees had to do with them needing to have a more aggressive promotional strategy to make their program known to more people and this observation makes sense, since it directly connects to the biggest limitation for success having been poor program participation. Other things mentioned were trying to network with nearby communities, in the case of the soccer team, being more inclusive to other races and not just blacks, in the case of the Juneteenth
committee, and wanting to include new activities into the zumba classes or ask for a bigger grant in the case of the PE facilities at Granada H. S. that require a bigger infrastructure investment.

Every grantee is planning on continuing with their programs, except for one of them, who has moved out of the area but continues to support the same music program in his town's school as much as he is able to, even though he is not being funded by the grant. Most grantees said to be planning on complementing the grants' contributions with additional fundraising activities such as garage sales, car washes, and food sales, or by asking businesses or institutions for financial support. However, they all seemed to be struggling with making ends meet and feeling like they could be doing a lot more with a bigger budget. A couple of innovative ideas were: 1) Planning to get parents' buy in the grantee’s Afro Cuban Music program, so that they take part ownership of the success of the program and 2) Having successfully partnered with MCOE to share in 50% of the cost of performances with the schools, in the case of the Play house Merced project, making it more affordable for the schools and in so doing, incrementing the number of performances contracted.

CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACHIEVING BHC’S OBJECTIVES

Other than the collaboration effort reported by the "Movie in the Park" project promoting other programs via a slide show, prior to their movie showings, no other “real” collaboration was reported between the BHC programs that were part of this evaluation. Sometimes the people running one program do run into people running other programs and talk about their projects, but if they do not join forces to do something together, no collaboration can be inferred just from having had those conversations, even if they are supportive to one another. The kind of collaborations that were reported was in the form of aid given to the programs by institutions that have similar goals or responsibilities, and not as much among different programs joining efforts and/or resources.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE GRANTEES

The one thing mentioned the most as something that could make these programs more successful was more participation. Being able to reach and bring the benefits of these programs to more people, which is many times limited by the amount of promotion that a small budget allows for, which brings us to the second most cited element required for success: A bigger budget. Every grantee cited very different, program specific uses they would have for a bigger budget, ranching from equipment and
facilities upgrades to uniforms and even advocating for institutional changes to take place, but they all had in mind those specific things that would help their particular programs in having a bigger impact.

Overall, about half of the grantees reported not having had any "real" barriers in bringing their programs to work, once the grant funds were made available. Interestingly however, the most commonly mentioned key challenge for their success was actually getting the participation of the people they intend to serve through their programs. There were also about as many mentions to unforeseen technical challenges in making their programs work, like constraining rules and regulations, as there were for budgetary restrictions. They felt that the application process was easy enough to go through and only a couple of them thought that BHC "asked for a lot of information". Other than that, the only other issue mentioned at a lesser degree, was dealing with "difficult people", who don’t always have the best attitude and tend to highlight the limitations over the possibilities.

About half of the grantees that reported encountering barriers to their programs' success mentioned money as something that could have helped them in overcoming those barriers. The counterbalance factor to having overcome those and other hurdles or limitations was identified by some grantees as the trust, support and hard work of some engaged community members that "rolled up their sleeves" and contributed with whatever was necessary to make some of these projects a reality. The idea of generating some additional funding possibilities by using existing BHCs' infrastructure to serve the goals of other programs or organizations was also mentioned by a couple of grantees. e.g. The Mc. Namara Swimming pool being used for in-water medical therapy sessions, as they plan to do, or the Granada H.S. opening their sports facilities to outside clubs and informal adult volleyball and softball teams, as they have already done. Finally, the continuous search for additional funding sources and/or sponsorships for these programs is also something that could go a long way in helping program directors to overcome at least their financial struggles.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Every grantee reported being very satisfied with the results of their programs, except for one of them, who reported little interest and participation on her program, but said to be satisfied for having tough her craft, knitting and sawing, to a few people that appreciated it. Most of them even reported their programs having exceeded their original expectations and are in very good spirits planning to
continue with their projects in the coming years, despite the financial struggle, which was common denominator to all of them.

The most recurring theme for having felt a sense of accomplishment for these grantees and having had a proud moment are related to having reached a broad audience with their programs and having seen the enjoyment of the kids they have touched with their programs and specially that of those students who got to do special performances, as they also got to feel proud themselves. Having the participation and support of other local organizations and local governments was also cited as recognition of the importance of their programs. In addition, two noteworthy achievements were reported buy "The Juneteenth Committee" project: 1) Having stopped the demolition of the Mc Namara park and 2) having the park's swimming pool re-opened.

As the most successful community effects envisioned by these grantees for their projects, we had a lot of references to the growth of the projects themselves and to having more participation by community members in those projects. Several program coordinators saw their projects as conducing to having a healthier, tighter, more active and interactive community. Beyond that, several project specific outcomes were envisioned, such as the possibility of having a Latin Jazz Orchestra, more performance opportunities, sports tournaments, a boutique that would sell handcrafted garments, a stop light in a dangerous intersection in Planada and an entire Park renovation at Mc Namara park.

OPPORTUNITIES

All of these programs aim to enrich peoples’ lives in one way or another, starting with promoting healthy eating and exercising habits to improve their physical health; Going beyond that, many of these programs also try to generate and nourish a healthy civic and cultural awareness and by so doing, they all contribute to a community whose citizens may not only have more to contribute, but could also be more willing to contribute back into their community, as has been exemplified by some of the participants in these programs asking: "if there are any other volunteering opportunities for them to participate in," to make better their community. The exposure to the arts, be it through music and dance with programs like "The Afro-Cuban Drum Project" or the "Valet Folklorico, or the performing arts, with programs like "Opera in Merced County Schools" and "Playhouse Merced", are another way by which people’s lives are not only enriched, but are also filled with knowledge that they can pass on to other people, as they later share their talents and expertise. Nurturing our youngsters, as these programs
DRAFT, January 16, 2013

do, their self-confidence and sense of accomplishment as well as the pride that comes with mastery of any art form, surely makes for citizens that will have more to contribute to society. Lastly, the very simple act of getting along among the different cultures and ethnicities that conform our communities has traditionally been a problem, and one that calls for building communication, tolerance and integration bridges, which can all be constructed through our interaction, as we strive towards the common objective of improving our communities. Luckily, progress has also been reported by many program directors in this regard.

Promoting healthy eating habits, physical activity and community integration, as well as providing the venues for all of these activities to take place in, is of great importance in having us adopt these new healthier habits and thus, being able to create a cultural system change within our communities. Cultural awareness and integration is another area in which these programs are helping to generate a system change, by getting people from different backgrounds and cultures to interact with one another, to see each other as part of the same community and to care for the issues of the community. Interaction opens the door to teamwork, shared objectives and to the achievement of common goals, such as those already mentioned, by some of these programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GREATER IMPACT SUGGESTIONS

FOR BHC PERSONEL AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE

1. Basic
   a. Set up a system, mechanism or platform to promote the activities of all community grant projects.
      **Basis:** The lack of program participation was noted to be one of the biggest limiting factors encountered by grantees. Making these programs known will increase participation.

   b. Set up a mutual support bulletin or newsletter in which grantees may offer and solicit resources and/or support from and to each other.
Basis: There was no interaction or mutual support reported among the different program leaders and these are very active and engaged individuals that are looking to make an impact in their communities, thus, the odds that they would be willing to help out other people trying to do the very same thing. The suggested newsletter could be a tool for them to network, share resources, establish new contacts and offer their support, in whatever form they are able to.

2. Important
   a. Develop a very simple “Project Plan Template” to be filled out by grant solicitors in which the possible challenges of their particular project can be identified and planned for; For them, it would be like putting together a simplified business plan to launch and run their projects, and the clarity and structure drawn from it would be instrumental in increasing their projects degree of success, as well as its community impact.
   Basis: Planning for all the different aspects that come into play in making a project successful is the most basic of ideas and poor, or not planning, is one of the top five reasons why businesses (Projects) fail, according to the Small Business Administration.

3. Ideal
   a. Create an alumni group for past community grants recipients, that meets regularly to share experiences and offer each other continued support. This could be a very valuable leadership learning and networking opportunity that as a catalyst for “System Change”, would exponentially increase the long term impact of these community grants. Furthermore, it would be a “Resident Driven” initiative, geared towards increasing leadership capacity in our community.

*Within this alumni group you could also:
   1. Offer community building and leadership courses to grant recipients.
   2. Develop and promote the “Big picture impact message” that all of these BHC grants combined are having in our community, as “The whole [Effect] is greater than the sum of its parts”.

Basis: Three very important BHC objectives would be realized by the creation of this alumni group:

1) It would be a resident driven entity.
2) Its purpose would be aligned with generating Systems change.
3) It would build capacity for continued and permanent change.
FOR GRANTEES

1. Promote participation in your program by any means you can think of and by using any and all resources made available to you through BHC.
   **Basis:** Poor program participation was the biggest hindering factor to the growth and success of the programs evaluated.

2. Try to grow your support base by networking with likeminded individuals and organizations with similar goals.
   **Basis:** Many times your project’s goals will be aligned with those of other individuals and or organizations and seeking those connections may be a great source of additional support for your continued success.

3. Think creatively in coming up with a continued funding plan that offers several possibilities additional or complementary to the original community grant support.
   **Basis:** The grant amount does not have to be the limiting boundary to the growth and success of your program, especially because it is a “limited time” resource.

4. If possible, try to get other people involved in helping you “run” your program.
   **Basis:** As you “Teach your craft” (Running the program) to someone else, you are not only building capacity for the growth and continuation of your program, but also easing the work load for yourself, which is always a good idea to avoid burnout, as you look at a long term time and effort commitment to your project.

5. If possible, look over report for past grant recipients to learn what helped them be successful and to try and avoid some of the struggles they encountered.

6. Set realistic goals from the beginning for how you want your program to develop throughout the course of the grant period

7. Look into non-monetary support options in the beginning of the grant period to help boost your program from the start

CLOSING REMARKS

In the first place, this kind of programs are finding, inspiring and providing a venue to those people out there that really care about the well being of their communities, and that are also willing to do
the leg work required to generate a positive change in their communities and to inspire others to do the same.

Secondly, they are getting people from different generations and ethnicities to get to work together in community building activities or projects and having the chance to do this generates friendships in the community that may have otherwise not been formed, because common prejudices or cultural barriers. At the same time, it is giving people a common purpose or cause, which reinforces and strengthens their relationships with one another as they come together to work in specific projects that benefit the entire community and in doing so they get to experience the excitement and pride of realizing their common goals. Through some of these programs they are achieving little victories that will in turn also give them an even greater confidence in the process, as they see themselves moving forward towards their grander objectives. Some of these programs are clearly creating a different mindset in the people, so that the “getting involved in their community” part just comes naturally to them; They are helping to change the vision in the community members from one of indifference, helplessness, or “expecting a hand out”, to one of caring, of organizing and uniting for empowerment and of taking responsibility and action, towards achieving our own wellbeing. Furthermore, some of these programs are getting the community to unite and speak with one loud voice, which is in itself an important system change, and one that can greatly benefit the community. People are learning how to organize themselves and to figure out how to solve their community’s problems.

Thirdly, many of these programs can reach students and offer them new opportunities or alternatives to the bad habits that are so rampant in many poor and neglected neighborhoods. It is by offering constructive programs to these kids such as arts and sports related projects, that their own identities may be influenced in a positive manner, so that they may be able to look beyond their stereotypes and self-limiting expectations, to find and realize a better vision of themselves, and one that will have more to offer back into the community in an upward positive loop of possibilities for coming generations.