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THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Journal is published by the Institute for Comprehensive Community Development, a venture of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The Institute works to advance the field of comprehensive community development and the positive impact it has in urban and rural communities across the country by:

- Building the capacity of community development practitioners
- Providing on-site support and technical assistance to comprehensive community development initiatives in cities across the U.S.
- Applying lessons learned through research and performance evaluation to continually improve on-going comprehensive community development initiatives and to develop new initiatives
- Supporting the development of public policies which integrate government programs in order to effectively facilitate and support comprehensive community development
- Communicating broadly the best there is in practice and theory in the field of community development

The Journal advances the mission of the Institute by communicating outstanding theory and practice in the field, sharing the lessons of research and evaluation, providing a forum for robust debate about the model itself and the challenges and opportunities faced by its practitioners, exploring policy implications, and, through reflection and debate, building the community of those engaged in this work.

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Tuan P. Do

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Complex Solutions for a Complicated World

Communities are complex. For those of us in comprehensive community development that's not news. Trying to rebuild neighborhoods through comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) is a complicated, challenging and sometimes overwhelming endeavor. The problems and opportunities can seem endless, as practitioners wrestle with issues from housing to safety, economic development to health, education to the environment.

To address these issues, community development organizations have just as long a list of strategies: engage residents, create visions, craft consensus, draft plans, develop projects, launch programs. All the while, they hunt for resources, advocate for policy change and try to measure their success. On a tight budget. In a troubled economy. With dwindling public support.

It would be a difficult undertaking for a heavily resourced corporate giant like Apple or McKinsey & Company to analyze, strategize and implement successfully. In fact, some heavily resourced giants—the federal government, large cities and major foundations—have tried their hand at transforming communities for decades, with mixed success at best.

And yet, the number and scope of CCIs are growing, in the United States and beyond. LISC, Purpose Built Communities, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Canada's Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement have programs that trumpet comprehensive approaches to complex urban problems in hundreds of target neighborhoods with what appears to be, at least in some cases, very promising results. Through the Institute for Comprehensive Community Development, practitioners participate in workshops, training, and conferences to share the lessons and best practices from these examples.

Community development organizations hunt for resources, advocate for policy change and try to measure their success. On a tight budget. In a troubled economy. With dwindling public support.

But, as Hamlet might say, "Ay, there's the rub." As Institute Director Eileen Figel and I visit sites around the country, we find that everywhere we go, researchers, practitioners, funders and public officials are struggling with some basic questions, even as many CCI programs are providing real-world benefits to their neighborhoods.

What exactly is comprehensive community development?

How do you do it best?

If communities are complex, with a vast array of issues, how do you select the right strategies and interventions to create the greatest impact?

What is success—and how do you measure it?

As I said, neighborhoods are complex and comprehensive community development is complicated. So it's probably not a surprise that the questions—let alone the answers—are complicated too. To keep the conversation going and to keep learning more, the Institute sponsors Research Roundtables, seminars and this *Journal*.

In this issue's Q & A, for example, we asked long-time CCI veteran Xavier de Souza Briggs, who recently left his position as the associate director for general government programs at the federal Office of Management and Budget to return to MIT, about what opportunities and risks face the field. He discusses place-based programs to strengthen families, how to rethink community development's relationship with the criminal justice and health care systems, training community members in leadership and consensus building, and more. It's a fascinating, wide-ranging and ambitious collection of ideas.

But he also talks about the importance of choosing interventions that are carefully targeted to produce measurable impact, saying, "I believe the top opportunities will come where there is compelling proof of impact, because fiscal impact is the coin of the realm now and will be for a while." In this context, it's more important than ever that CCIs need to find a niche and select the right strategies.

Another facet of the choices we face is examined in our new "Up for Discussion" department, where two renowned housing experts, Edward Goetz and Myron Orfield, face off over place-based vs. regional strategies to build new affordable housing. Do we concentrate our efforts in low- and moderate-

income city neighborhoods, or do we emphasize affordable housing in suburban areas to redress decades of racial segregation that has perpetuated inequality and discrimination? It is a thoughtful, vigorous and important debate, touching on issues of social justice, equity and the law. *If communities are complicated, with a vast array of issues, how do you select the right strategies and interventions to create the greatest impact—and for whom?*

A signature aspect of comprehensive community initiatives is how they weave together many issues and programs that are traditionally seen as existing in separate realms. In decades past, community developers hadn't typically worked closely with public health officials, for instance. In Xuemei Zhu and James Sallis' paper starting on page 9, they explain the research behind "active living," a new, more comprehensive way of tackling obesity that is focused on issues like community open space, public safety, a robust local commercial corridor, and successful neighborhood schools. That's a familiar list to anyone working in comprehensive community development.

How can community development corporations and other neighborhood groups connect to public health efforts such as these? The ambitious new federal Let's Move program to fight childhood obesity, headed by First Lady Michelle Obama, includes many active living ideas: safer routes to school to encourage walking, more playgrounds and safer streets, schools that encourage physical activity, access to healthy food. By incorporating and partnering with these types of programs, we can bring more resources and momentum to the goals of strengthening our communities.

This issue also features two reviews of publications that examine how complexity theory can be used to tease out exactly how comprehensive community development works. With

roots in ecological and biological systems, complexity theory attempts to find patterns and systems where many variables interact to create a unique whole—certainly one good definition of a neighborhood.

Anne Kubisch, director of the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change, takes a closer look at complexity theory and leadership in emergent community projects in her review of a recent paper in the *Community Development Journal*. In communities that are complex adaptive systems—that is, "non-linear, emergent, dynamic, open, networked, interdisciplinary, adaptive, cooperative, multi-agent, interactive, collective and systemic"—how does complexity science offer a useful tool to analyze our work?

In his book *Development Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*, Michael Quinn Patton attempts to answer the question "How do we know that what we are doing works?" In Sarah Rankin's review, she examines his approach, a new category of "development evaluation" for programs that are always adapting to new circumstances. Both Rankin and Kubisch find that complexity theory might hold some very useful answers down the road.

We end this issue of the *Journal*, like each issue, with the reflections of a longtime community development veteran. Gordon Chin served the Chinatown CDC for 34 years with passion, creativity and dignity. His stories of intergenerational learning, collaboration, and leadership are inspiring. *How do you do it?* One way is to listen and learn from one of our field's many well-respected leaders, Gordon Chin. ■

Joel Bookman
Managing Director
The Institute for Comprehensive Community Development
December 2011



A Venture of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation

What Comes Next: Opportunity and Risk for Comprehensive Community Development

A Q&A with Xavier de Souza Briggs

The rapidly growing field of comprehensive community development is at a crossroads in terms of funding, focus, expansion and grassroots growth. For a broad perspective on the landscape and how to best advance through it, we interviewed Xavier de Souza Briggs, who has just returned to the faculty at MIT as an associate professor of sociology and urban planning after serving for nearly three years at the White House Office of Management and Budget. Briggs talks candidly about what it will take to weather government austerity, why we should widen our conception of how place-based programs work, how to think about measuring success, and more.

***Journal:** Your experience includes working in the South Bronx as planning coordinator for a program that is generally cited as one of the first comprehensive community development initiatives in the country. When you look at the field today, are there ideas that you wish your team had back then?*

Briggs: So many things come to mind, but there are a few that stand out. First, I wish we had had a better handle on the mobility of households through the neighborhoods we were working in. There was a good deal of churning in those South Bronx neighborhoods, especially by immigrant households. Most initiatives since—perhaps most consciously the [Casey Foundation Making Connections](#) work and the [MacArthur-supported LISC New Communities Program](#)—have tried to incorporate the dynamics of neighborhoods into programming and also, very crucially, into measuring impacts. [Jobs-Plus](#), a “saturation” community initiative in selected public housing developments, confirmed the enormous importance of tracking the impacts of community interventions on families that move as well as those who stay. I outlined this in the [Working Smarter in Community Development](#) series online. It’s a challenging idea in a field that clings, I think, to a more static conception of neighborhoods as “urban villages” rather than stepping stones—and neighborhoods can be either, of course, depending on a household’s circumstances and what’s happening in the environment around them.

And of course, I wish we had known more about what kinds of interventions work best to strengthen families in high-

risk neighborhoods. We were comprehensive—in the sense of covering a broad waterfront—but sometimes flying blind back then. The science of family strengthening, and the need to be more intentional about it in place-based initiatives, has come a long way in less than twenty years, even in the last ten.

Sometimes, important lessons come from unexpected sources. Our work on the [Moving to Opportunity](#) experiment, for example—a classic “people-based” rather than “place-based” intervention—taught us so much about the way young girls, in particular, experience high-risk neighborhoods. We need to have a much bigger focus on buffering young people not only from violence, including the lure of gangs, but from sexual predation, abuse and other serious risks. I’m pleased to see the Attorney General take up children’s exposure to violence as a national issue, but of course the fiscal and political climate will make it hard to invest significant new federal money. We’ll need to be inventive in other ways.

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We can and should make poverty less miserable and dangerous for those who experience it, for whatever period of time, not just less common and less prolonged.

Moving to Opportunity is a good example of a program that was studied with a very rigorous scientific methodology and provided a lot of interesting findings. What's your perspective on how well that kind of evidence is impacting decisions made by policymakers and by local groups?

The quick answer is: slowly but surely and through a variety of channels. It's not a linear road from evidence to remaking policy or implementation approaches. I used to teach a course called "Knowledge in the Public Domain: The Uses and Abuses of Research." Several large literatures all suggest that influence is a many-splendored thing.

But I would say that the headlines of the MTO experiment—the surprises, in particular—are beginning to reshape thinking in the field. Some of it is basic: The tightest, most expensive rental housing markets are extremely constraining to low-income people, making it hard for them to make meaningful housing choices. And choice is something that law and culture say they should have. We venerate choice, almost religiously in this country—but much more consistently for some kinds of people than others. Rarely for the poor. That "headline" emerged from one of the most basic findings about MTO: Many families who eagerly signed up to move out of very poor neighborhoods, and who managed to successfully move out, struggled to stay out of them even though most were highly motivated to do so.

Another big headline with relevance for community development is the fact that you can make a big impact on the quality of life of the poor—for example, by expanding their "freedom from fear"—in ways that can have a measurable impact on their health and mental health. The science is good enough now for us to agree: That has value, it is not a consolation prize, even when you haven't succeeded in lifting someone out of income poverty per se.

Another way of saying that is we can and should make poverty less miserable and dangerous for those who experience it, for whatever period of time, not just less common and less prolonged. Comprehensive approaches at the neighborhood level have an important role to play in that, especially in the health and safety area. In fact, they will tend to have more leverage over making poverty less miserable and dangerous than over rates of exiting poverty or how long a family can stay out of poverty, which are outcomes that are primarily

driven by labor markets, life events like a death or divorce, the tax code, and other forces.

What are the one or two biggest hurdles to comprehensive community development right now? What could keep it from having as big of an impact as it could?

One is a "perennial," and the other is a bit more current. The perennial, I'd say, is that any approach that depends on connecting fragmented resources still cuts against the grain of public bureaucracies and their legislative overseers. I believe the top opportunities will come where there is compelling proof of impact, because fiscal impact is the coin of the realm now and will be for a while. Governments, like households, will not be revamping their balance sheets overnight. Demonstrated impacts can win useful waivers to broaden the eligible uses or users of government money, and those are much easier to come by than sweeping legislative reforms.

The other, more current issue is the risk of missing opportunities, especially those presented by the fiscal crisis. One is the huge cost of incarceration—and I mean the fiscal cost, not to speak of the enormous social cost on individuals, families and communities. The fiscal cost offers comprehensive community development the chance to be a serious contributor to ex-offender re-entry, as well as for diversion and other alternatives to incarceration.

Incarceration is eating the Justice Department budget at the federal level and doing the same in many states. It's quite obvious that sentencing reform can make a big difference, but we need to work "up stream" as well, and make a focused case for crime prevention and deterrence, drug courts and community diversion programs. These work naturally as part of integrated, place-based solutions, but I think that we, as a field, have made too diffuse a case. It's fine to say that education and other developmental investments, along with job creation, are the keys to bringing down crime. But how long does it take to turn around an inner-city school, let alone a district? Years, often longer. The short ball strategy has to include a suite of smart criminal justice interventions. Community development could partner with law enforcement and public health, for example, on approaches such as *Operation Ceasefire*. You can have significant leverage if you intervene with the right approach at the right points in a cycle of violence or potential abuse.

The other big opportunity is the need to dramatically improve health outcomes while bringing down health care costs. A number of us have been writing and speaking out about the so-called "social determinants of health." Health care is breaking the budgets of governments, employers and families. What's at stake is no less than a paradigm shift in the system. Thanks to health care reform, we are on our way to solving the access problem, and that was job one for the past century or more of advocacy. But now we need to become

a nation invested in wellness, as opposed to simply treating sickness. It will depend in part on well-targeted, community-based solutions that demonstrate how they can be part of the cost-avoidance equation. At the federal level, the [Community Transformation Grants](#) are a promising start. But we need singles, doubles, and even some home runs for proof of concept for programs that affect multiple health indicators, with varied models, for diverse populations. Community developers could work much more with health care providers and educators to make homes healthier inside, for instance. Surgical changes in housing environments can lower problems associated with childhood asthma, lead poisoning and other problems. The key is engaging with health professionals who measure and care for these problems, so that they see community development more and more as part of the “solution set” for health and wellness. A pediatrician colleague here in Boston calls one part of this framework “housing as a vaccine.”

Patients who are the most at risk, the frail elderly and chronically ill, for example, generate high costs in health care and other systems, especially when those systems are purely reactive. Programs that work for that population need to be especially visible and well-documented. I’m impressed by efforts such as the [Commonwealth Care Alliance](#) to take a very place-based, community-based approach. And when the savings are clearer, the interest will surge.

From what you learned working at the OMB, what do the federal departments fostering comprehensive community development need from those working in the field? Success stories? Hard data? Smart advocacy on Capitol Hill? Something else?

Hard data would help, especially if it includes cost avoidance, per my earlier comment. Sadly, the current debate in Washington is not really about discovering and backing what works—which is why little of the “social innovation” approach can break through right now—but about how much to shrink government and, for more progressive players, how to protect critical supports for the most vulnerable. Comprehensive, place-based initiatives would do well to find niches in that context.

I would add that support could come from key conservative members of Congress if the issues resonate and results are there, though such members would be bucking the party line for now. If Bono could win support for major debt forgiveness for the poorest nations in Africa, from a conservative Congress that famously resented foreign aid, anything is possible. But members respond to mobilized constituents, of course, not just hard data on what works. Members in fiscally conservative states and districts hold particularly important swing votes. Beyond that, the federal agencies need to learn how to mount people-intensive efforts on a platform of property reinvestment, what the field has generally referred to as “bricks and mortar.” I worked closely with the HUD Secretary and his

team on this, centered on the [Choice Neighborhoods](#) program, and it’s vital that that program survive budget cuts.

What HOPE VI should have taught everyone is that it is harder to transform distressed lives than distressed real estate and that programs won’t succeed unless they’re well targeted at those who can benefit. Don’t expect results if a family is offered shelter and “services lite” when it really needs a more intensive model, such as supportive housing. This isn’t a rocket science idea. And it’s been illustrated again by Moving to Opportunity, given the kinds of families that the relocation-only intervention was and wasn’t in a position to help.

Put differently: Do not expect results if interventions are so broadly targeted—providing a “salad bar” of every kind of service that could possibly help—that a given population or subset of families does not get what it really needs. There is much more diversity among the very poor than our efforts have recognized. And we have also had the tendency to try and “boil the ocean.” It’s much wiser, and will garner more political support over time, if we’re choosy about the outcomes we are trying to shift and make sure our efforts are intensive enough, and “touch” the people they can help long enough, to make a difference. It’s worth sacrificing some comprehensiveness for that, in fact.

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Is that an inherent danger of a comprehensive approach: The focus can become diffused and programs can therefore become ineffectual?

Yes, it’s a huge problem. Both quality and intensity can suffer. A corollary is that governance of the program becomes more complex. Much “comprehensive” work happens outside of the realm of electoral politics, and neighborhood-level democracy is a tricky thing. The field has lacked roadmaps for sorting out interests, sorting out what’s technical from what truly needs deliberation as a “policy” issue.

Beyond encouraging organizers of ambitious efforts to be more mindful of the distinctions I just mentioned, I think two things could help. One is training people in negotiation and consensus building. These are core civic skills in any society in which we need to organize the cooperation and capacity of people who do not report to us but who also do not want to spend the rest of their lives in long, not-so-productive meetings. Programs for young, school-age negotiators have generally been effective and well received but don’t seem to endure. It’s a shame.

It's great to have a comprehensive strategy, but it does not logically follow that any given organization should aim to be "comprehensive" in its services or programs.

I would also suggest consciously working to get better at neighborhood democracy, including getting people to bear responsibility and work within rules to make decisions together more legitimately and effectively. There's a vibrant international conversation about this, especially about "empowered" participation by citizens, and groups like *Everyday Democracy* are plugged into sharing that knowledge. In the *Working Smarter* series I've written about some of these issues, and lessons from what's billed as "the world's largest community-driven development project" in Indonesia. I think the evidence is hopeful. Democracy takes practice, and there's more to it than mobilizing to pressure policymakers, though that's part of the recipe.

How do we reconcile the government's push—and all politicians' push—for rapid and concrete results with a community revitalization field that focuses on capacity building and community building?

One strategy is to embrace at least some of the work that lends itself to measurable results, including interim successes—the quicker "wins." The health work I mentioned earlier is in that category, and most of the metrics and evaluation approaches are well-established, so they need not be reinvented or revalidated.

We should patiently educate the people in government, again and again, on the value of longer-run capacity building, particularly as elected officials cycle through office. The key is also to be more creative, rigorous and specific about how the capacity of the local community and its institutions can be brought to bear on change that is both valuable and measurable: Improve readiness to learn by the age of five? Resolve costly disputes over physical and economic redevelopment of an area? Something else?

I explored this a few years back in a book about civic capacity in communities across the globe, including the U.S., India, Brazil and South Africa. One of my favorite moments was an interview with a banker in Mumbai, which is known for its enormous slums but is also a very institutionally innovative place in terms of working with slum dwellers and their leaders. This banker, who represented one of India's largest banks, made the decision to partner with a nonprofit organization tied to slum dwellers because he had determined that their capacity and track record for resolving disputes within the community was so strong that engaging with the nonprofit would significantly lower the bank's execution risk for invest-

ments. He was in the business of risk management, and he understood "community capacity" in those terms.

It's not always going to be that straightforward, but I don't think we should be afraid to think in those instrumental terms and to make the case on specifics. It's a healthy discipline, in fact. Both public and private funders are unlikely to be responsive to a more general case that community building is a mystical, you-know-it-when-you-see-it enterprise.

So in an era where it looks like federal resources will be harder to come by—at least in the short-term and perhaps for much longer—what strategies would you recommend to community-based organizations that want to work in a comprehensive way?

I come back to something that was painfully clear to us in the South Bronx nearly twenty years ago: It's great to have a comprehensive strategy, one that you've created with others, but it does not logically follow that any given organization should aim to be "comprehensive" in its services or programs—a supermarket, if you will. "Doing it all" is not a core competency, though connecting those who together cover many functions—that is a competency, one of brokering and orchestrating. So I think savvy division of labor will remain important.

And I think spotting opportunities in these systems in transition—the imperative of containing health care costs, for example, as we discussed earlier—will be critical. Spotting an opportunity is one thing. Building a shared understanding of it, designing a way to act on it collectively, sustaining effort, being accountable for results—and accountability runs in more than one direction—those are the things community development does at its best. Resource scarcity will not change that.

Not to sound too cynical, but I think that because of scarcity, the politically well-connected organizations will fare better than others in the resource race, at least in some regions, and the more effective organizations will fare better than others, where results really matter. I wish it were only about the results. But I don't think I was that naïve even when I landed, as a whippersnapper, in the Bronx. ■

*Xavier de Souza Briggs served as acting assistant secretary for policy development and research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Clinton administration and was the associate director for general government programs at the Office of Management and Budget under President Obama. An associate professor of sociology and urban planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he is the founder and director of the online resources "The Community Problem-Solving Project @ MIT" and "Working Smarter in Community Development." His most recent award-winning book is the co-authored *Moving to Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty*.*

Designing for Healthy Communities: Active Living and Comprehensive Community Development

by Xuemei Zhu and James F. Sallis

Limiting obesity—which is closely linked to several chronic diseases and is sharply on the rise in the U.S.—has become a public health priority in this country. Recently there has been a paradigm shift in how policymakers view efforts to reduce obesity, from a focus on individual behavior to a wider understanding of the role of personal, interpersonal, organizational, community and public policy factors. The active living field aims to improve health by incorporating physical activity into the daily routine.

To support active living, proponents focus on many factors of the urban built environment, including safe streets, compact land development, local parks and other green space, and well-designed local schools. This paper from Active Living Research offers a summary of empirical evidence that can be used by community developers to add a public health component to their work. It can be used in projects that range from local economic development to public safety campaigns, as well as serving as an introduction to the field of active living as potential allies and partners in community development.

Health has been and continues to be one of the ultimate goals in people's lives. Living in a "healthy community" is everyone's dream, yet what that is and where to find it can be difficult questions. Many families move into suburban communities, expecting more living space, clean air, lawns and gardens, fewer urban hassles and great places for children to play—all leading to better health. But the work place, school and grocery store are further away and require more driving, which is sedentary and often stressful. Time for family or exercise is more difficult because of a longer commute. Children spend more time in front of television or video games, as there are "dangerous traffic and strangers" outside and no watchful neighbors' "eyes on streets."

Urban communities may have advantages that have been forgotten: mixed land use means stores, schools and jobs can be accessed by walking; commute times are shorter; and parks and sidewalks can allow children more opportunities to play. City communities, however, do not guarantee opportunities for a healthy life. A child's school may be nearby, but the walk may be unsafe because of crime, gangs or traffic. Or there may be no safe and well-maintained park, play area or other usable green space nearby.

What does it mean to have a healthy community? How do you find them? What can be done to promote health in urban communities?

Community planners, designers, developers and government officials must consider a vast array of potential consequences

of their decisions around land development, including the effects on housing, employment, transportation, economics, schools and education, parks and recreation, social equity and quality of life. For health concerns, there is growing interest in the effects of community design on active living, healthy eating, obesity and related chronic diseases such as heart dis-

There is growing interest in the effects of community design on active living, healthy eating, obesity and related chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancers.

ease, diabetes and cancers.¹ These inter-related health issues account for at least 70 percent of all deaths in the U.S. and a large share of health care costs.²

Obesity, through its relation to several chronic diseases,³ is responsible for nearly one in 10 deaths⁴ and an estimated 112,000 preventable deaths each year in the U.S.⁵ The prevalence of obesity has increased dramatically since about 1980, tripling among children and doubling among adults.⁶ Lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations are at higher risk of obesity at all ages.⁷

For the majority of individuals, being overweight or obese results from an energy imbalance. On one hand, they eat in an unhealthy manner with an excessive energy intake that contributes to obesity, and an inadequate consumption of nutritionally dense foods like fruits and vegetables that reduce risk of cardiovascular diseases and cancers.⁸ On the other hand, their energy expenditure is insufficient due to physical inactivity, which is the fourth leading cause of death due to chronic diseases.⁹

In contrast, physical activity helps to prevent obesity and has numerous additional health benefits.¹⁰ Public health recommendations are for healthy adults to engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or a combination. For children and adolescents, the recommendations are to engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each day.¹¹ The majority of adults and youth are not meeting these recommendations,¹² putting most Americans at risk. Based on activity monitors, fewer than half of children, 10 percent of adolescents and 5 percent of adults in the US are meeting these guidelines.¹³

Traditional health promotion and behavior change interventions target psychological and social factors to change individual behaviors, but these have not been successful in achieving sustained effects.¹⁴ Recently, there has been a paradigm shift from individual-focused models to ecological models, which consider human behavior to be influenced by multi-level factors (e.g., personal, interpersonal, organizational, community and public policy factors). As a result, recommendations are for comprehensive, multi-level interventions.¹⁵

Interdisciplinary approaches have been increasingly used to address the potential of built environmental and policy changes in promoting population-level behavior changes.¹⁶ To promote physical activity, the focus has shifted from exercise to active living—“a way of life that integrates physical activity into the daily routine,”¹⁷ involving multiple fields such as public health, behavioral science, urban planning, transportation,

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parks and recreation, urban design, landscape architecture and architecture.¹⁸ For healthy eating, the focus is shifting from nutrition education to changing the food environment on community, consumer, organizational and information levels, incorporating disciplines such as public health, health psychology, consumer psychology and urban planning.¹⁹

There is a significant overlap between the fields of active living and healthy eating and comprehensive community development in theoretical basis, goals and approaches. All three fields embrace a comprehensive (instead of “piecemeal”) approach with systems thinking.²⁰ They consider human behavior (for active living and healthy eating) or communities (for comprehensive community development) to be influenced by complex systems of multi-level factors.²¹ Their goals are in support of sustainability (e.g., more walking and biking and less driving), economic development (e.g., more locally grown produce and more viable local businesses as daily walking/biking destinations), health and quality of life. They all address the importance of local context and tailored strategies. Communities, especially their public places (e.g., schools, parks, open spaces, recreational centers and local grocery stores), are important settings for promoting active living, healthy eating, and development.

The State of Knowledge about Built Environment and Physical Activity

There is a large and growing body of evidence on the relationship between the built environment and physical activity²² and obesity.²³ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Active Community Environments program and the National Institute of Health’s Obesity and the Built Environment initiative were key supporters of earlier research. Since 2001, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Active Living Research program provided the most sustained and targeted early funding for this field.²⁴ It supported studies to develop measurement tools for built environment and physical activity, establish an evidence base of environmental and policy factors related to physical activity, evaluate innovative interventions in communities, build the capacity of interdisciplinary teams, and use the results to stimulate and inform policy changes.²⁵

The literature has informed the recent upsurge of multi-level environmental and policy interventions to promote physical activity in occupation, recreation, transportation and household domains. Different environmental factors have been found to be related to each domain of physical activity, especially the transportation and recreation domains,²⁶ and this information can be applied by community designers and planners. Authoritative organizations in the U.S. and other countries recommend environmental and policy changes as essential to meeting physical activity guidelines and obesity control goals.²⁷

Disparities in Access to Health-Promoting Environments

Lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations have disproportionately higher risk for obesity.²⁸ Built environments may have played a role in this disparity, and there is mounting evidence these groups are disadvantaged in access to built environments that support active living or healthy eating. Lower-income and minority populations are actually more likely to live in highly walkable areas (with greater density, street connectivity and land-use mix) that promote active transportation. However, their communities also tend to be less pleasant places to walk in, unsafe because of traffic, crime, and social disorder, and lacking social cohesion,²⁹ all of which may undermine the benefits of walkable community patterns.

Access to and quality of recreational facilities such as parks, trails, open spaces and private recreational facilities is often lower in low-income, low-education and minority communities, at least in the U.S.³⁰ Research has also shown disparities in school physical activity. A study reported lower facility

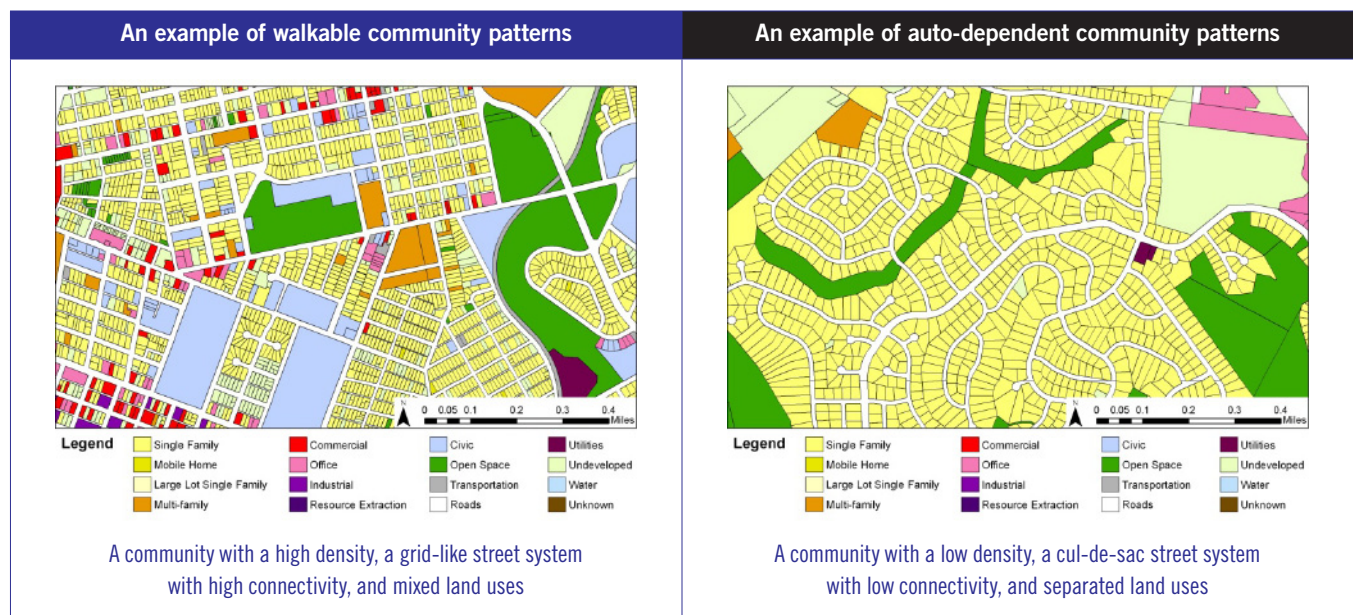
Lower-income and racial and ethnic minority populations have disproportionately higher risk for obesity.

provision in schools that most need them—those located in urban areas, with high percentages of minority students, or with high enrollment.³¹ Socioeconomic disparities also exist in the access to healthy foods. A review of 54 studies found that lower-income, minority and rural neighborhoods had poorer access to supermarkets and healthful food while their availability of fast-food restaurants and high-fat, unhealthy foods was greater.³² Studies in New York City found that predominantly African-American schools or neighborhoods had more fast food nearby than mostly white neighborhoods.³³ Other studies show these environmental inequalities are likely to have important effects on health.

Walkable Communities

“Walkable communities” have higher density, mixed land uses (e.g., homes, work places, schools, shops and parks), and well-connected street networks (Figure 1). They support physical activity, especially active transportation (walking and biking).³⁴ This association is supported by substantial literature and recognized by leading agencies such as the Transportation Research Board, the Institute of Medicine³⁵ and the Centers for Disease Control’s Task Force for Community Preventive Services.³⁶ Walkable communities make everyday destinations closer to each other, enable the connection of daily activities through short walking/biking/transit trips, and

Figure 1: Examples of walkable and auto-dependent community patterns



make driving less necessary or even less desirable because it takes more time and costs more. A weaker but growing body of evidence indicates that other features such as rich pedestrian/bicyclist infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes and traffic calming), good visual quality and maintenance, and safety from traffic and crime may provide additional support for walking and biking.³⁷

Since about 1950, most communities in the U.S. have been designed to optimize automobile travel. Density is low; streets are disconnected; land uses are separated as required by zoning laws; and pedestrian and biking facilities are either an afterthought or absent. However, becoming a walkable community can be a goal for not only new communities but also existing ones; for example, through infill development with mixed land uses that also revitalize the local economy.

Study examples show the positive health effects of designing communities that allow people to safely walk from place to place. In a U.S. study conducted in the Seattle and Baltimore regions, the association between walkability (land-use mix, street intersection density, residential density and pedestrian-friendly design of retail areas) and physical activity translated into 34 to 47 more minutes of total physical activity per week in high-walkable neighborhoods, as measured by accelerometers—electronic devices attached to the body to capture body movement.³⁸ The same study found significantly lower rates of overweight and obesity among residents of high-walkable neighborhoods. The health effects of walkability were similar in lower-income and higher-income adults, suggesting environmental changes could help reduce health disparities.³⁹

An Australian study showed a dose-response relationship between the mix of destinations (post boxes, bus stops, convenience stores, news agencies, shopping malls and transit stations) and walking for transportation. Each additional type of destination within 400 meters (about 0.25 mile) and 1,500 meters (about one mile) resulted in five to six additional minutes per week walking for transport.⁴⁰ A recent review of youth studies found that the mixed-use component of walkability was among the most consistent correlates of child and adolescent physical activity.⁴¹ Studies on the impact of environmental changes on physical activity changes are limited

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but have shown some promising results. For example, a study in North Carolina reported a causal relationship between moving to a more walkable neighborhood and an increase of self-reported physical activity.⁴²

Walkable communities also have the potential to promote community development by generating economic, environmental and social benefits. First, walkable communities are economically viable. Higher density can make jobs more accessible and facilitate the success of local businesses and public transit systems; reduced automobile use (or even ownership) can bring financial saving to residents; housing developments that benefit from enhanced walkability to retail, services, transportation, parks and other amenities⁴³ may sell or lease for higher prices than low-density, automobile-dependent development.⁴⁴ Recent studies have shown a growing demand and strong market acceptance for walkable communities.⁴⁵

Second, walkable communities can generate environmental benefits by reducing automobile use and vehicle emissions and by preserving natural areas through more compact development. Further, walkable communities may encourage social interactions and foster a stronger sense of community and social capital, and thereby, promote community development.

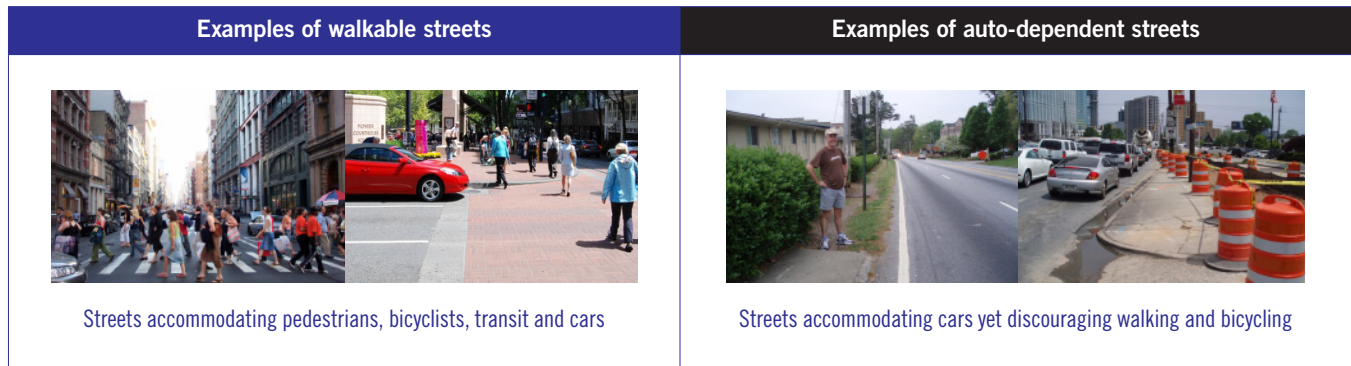
Land uses also affect food access in the community and influence obesity by their impact on healthy eating.⁴⁶ A review of 54 studies found that individuals with better access to supermarkets and limited access to fast-food restaurants had healthier diets and lower rates of obesity.⁴⁷ Higher residential density, convenient multi-mode transportation systems, and vital community economics may attract more healthy food outlets into the community. Zoning that encourages or requires walkable communities can help preserve local farmland, enhancing access to local produce.

Policies influencing these community elements are land-use and zoning codes (e.g., those related to mixed use and density), building codes (e.g., regulations about orientation to the street, parking requirements and visual quality) and transportation policies (e.g., roadway design standards and sidewalk requirements). Traditionally, physical activity benefits were not considered in these policies. Nowadays, a growing number of local governments are recognizing such health benefits and employing more comprehensive approaches.⁴⁸

Walkable Streets

Streets are the transportation infrastructure in communities, serving the movement of people and goods and allowing access to jobs, schools, recreation and other destinations. Well-designed, walkable streets can also serve as health infrastructure by offering safe places for active transportation and

Figure 2: Examples of walkable and auto-dependent streets



recreation, providing access to restorative natural environments,⁴⁹ and fostering social interactions (Figure 2).

In the classic book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities,” Jane Jacobs⁵⁰ discussed impacts of streets on safety, sense of community and children. She also criticized her era’s urban renewal for isolating communities and destroying street life. Five decades later, many American communities still struggle with the loss of streets’ economic, social and physical vitality associated with designing them to serve only cars. Some active living studies have found community streets to be a popular destination for walking—the most common type of physical activity⁵¹—implying streets’ central role in promoting physical activity and bringing social life, surveillance and safety back to communities.

Theory and practice in urban design, urban planning and transportation offer some general guidance on the relation of street design to physical activity. Empirical evidence in this area is limited but growing. For example, in an international study, “sidewalks in the neighborhood” was the strongest environmental correlate of adults’ physical activity.⁵²

It is desirable to develop complete and connected sidewalks equipped with smooth walking surface and sufficient amenities (e.g., greenery, protection from severe rain or heat, adequate lighting and benches). When the streets accom-

After distance to school, the main parental barrier to children’s active commuting to school is traffic safety. A single dangerous intersection or busy road barrier, especially a freeway, reduces the likelihood that a child will walk to school.

modate busy or high-speed traffic, landscape or other types of buffers should be used to protect pedestrians from vehicle traffic. Land uses along the street should provide a mix of attractive destinations, and buildings should be designed with human scale and visual interest to further encourage walking. Public/civic spaces (e.g., plazas, pocket parks) should be provided as attractive nodes⁵³ of the street system and the community, with good amenities and visual quality, connected to the transit system and integrated into the surrounding area. Increased pedestrians, bicyclists and social interactions also provide “eyes on streets” for better surveillance and safety.⁵⁴

It is possible for communities or towns with a traditional main street to use the thoroughfare as the hub for active living and healthy eating by developing pedestrian amenities, bringing in attractive local businesses (including grocery stores and restaurants offering healthy foods), adaptively reusing historical buildings and offering convenient transit. All of these activities are often goals for economic development; by increasing the walkability of the neighborhood, they provide health benefits as well.

Street conditions may be particularly important for children. After distance to school, the main parental barrier to children’s active commuting to school is traffic safety. A single dangerous intersection or busy road barrier, especially a freeway, reduces the likelihood that a child will walk to school.⁵⁵ Positive sidewalk characteristics, safe street crossings and traffic calming features (e.g., speed bumps, traffic lights) were associated with greater total physical activity among youth.⁵⁶ One study found that children with busy streets near their homes gained more weight over eight years than children without such streets, likely because heavy traffic leads to less walking and bicycling in the neighborhood.⁵⁷

An important age difference should be noted on the topic of how physical activity is impacted by street connectivity—whether streets are linked together or are dead ends. Although higher street connectivity promotes physical activ-

ity among adults,⁵⁸ reversed associations have been reported among children.⁵⁹ The interpretation is that children can use cul-de-sacs as low-traffic play areas. This inconsistency points out that we need to remain aware of the complexity of built environment—physical activity relationships, which are often specific to the physical context, domain of activity or population characteristics.⁶⁰

Note that community streets are influenced by land-use, zoning codes and transportation policies like road design standards and sidewalk requirements. The lack of collaboration across agencies may make activity-friendly development difficult. For example, the Fire Department may disapprove the design proposal for narrower streets intended to slow automobile traffic, citing a concern of limited space for fire trucks. A business route of a state highway may be managed by the State Department of Transportation, making it difficult for the local municipal government to implement pedestrian-friendly infrastructure changes.

Parks, Trails, Open Spaces and Other Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities can be publicly provided (e.g., public parks, open spaces, playgrounds, trails and community recreation centers) or privately owned (e.g., health clubs or exercise facilities at home). Both types can encourage recreational physical activity, and public facilities with activity-friendly features can promote population-level changes (Figure 3). In a review of studies on recreational facilities and physical activity, about 80 percent of the studies showed some significant results.⁶¹

Proximity to parks or other recreation settings was the most studied attribute in these papers and was consistently reported to be positively associated with physical activity among adults⁶² and children.⁶³ One mile was recommended as a reasonable distance to parks,⁶⁴ although that figure should be considered within specific contexts (e.g., availability of private vehicles or presence of freeway barriers). Other park attributes such as activity facilities (e.g., trails, open fields, pools, tennis

Parks and other recreational facilities may be both the “green lung” of the community and also the “social core” that can boost social capital and community capacity.

courts), park size, aesthetics, amenities (e.g., drinking fountains, bathrooms, trash cans), maintenance and cleanliness are less studied, and the research results on their impact so far have mixed results.

Trails may be particularly important public spaces for physical activity, because almost all trail users are active, and trails can be used for both transportation and recreation. One study reported trails to be most strongly associated with physical activity among various park facilities.⁶⁵ A study of trails in three cities found that the presence of excellent trail conditions, streetlights and cafes were associated with increased trail use.⁶⁶ The access to and quantity of recreation facilities and amenities, as well as their quality should be considered for people of all ages, activity preferences and income levels.

Parks and other recreational facilities also can often be used as settings for important community events, including health-promotion activities. They may be both the “green lung” of the community and also the “social core” that can boost social capital and community capacity. In addition, they often bring economic values to nearby properties and contribute proportionately higher property tax revenues for local governments.⁶⁷ A review of about 30 studies suggests a 20 percent increment on property values from abutting or fronting a passive park area.⁶⁸ If the park is heavily used, the proximate value increment may be minimal on abutting properties, but may reach 10 percent on properties two or three blocks away.⁶⁹

Figure 3: Examples of activity-friendly and non-activity-friendly parks and open spaces

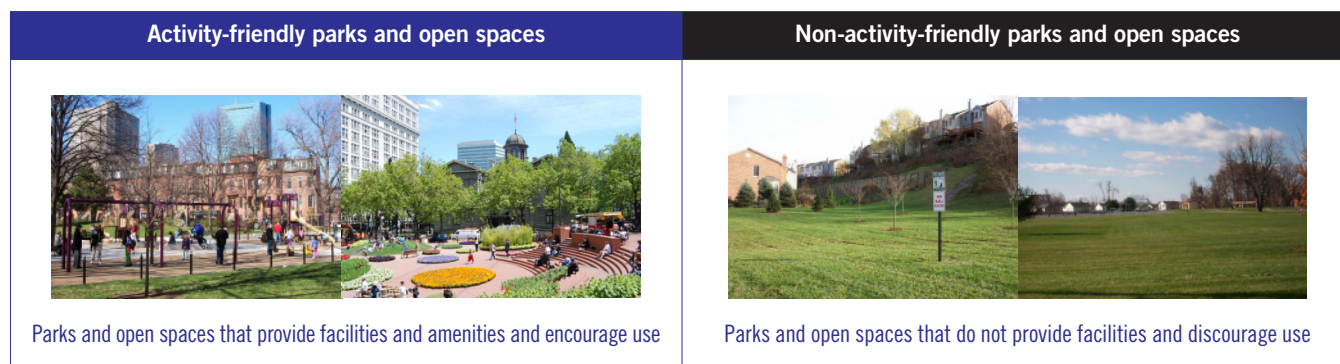
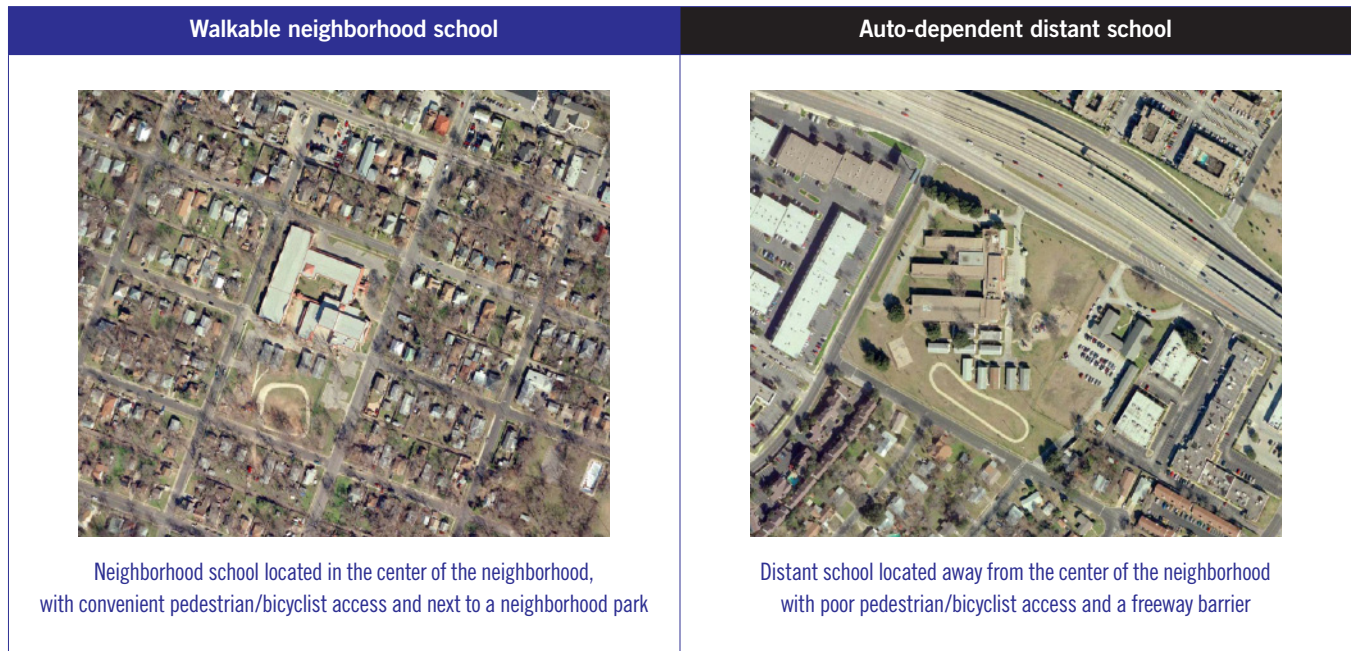


Figure 4: Examples of a walkable neighborhood school and an auto-dependent school



Policy support on regional and local levels is needed to ensure the provision of accessible and quality parks and open spaces for all types of communities. Comprehensive master plans should incorporate considerations of parks and open spaces and address their multi-faceted impacts on the natural environment, human health and community development. Partnerships between local governments and developers (e.g., policy incentives for developers to protect and invest in parks and open space) may facilitate the development of public recreational facilities.

Neighborhood Schools

A local school can serve as a community hub and, as one of the largest capital investments for most local governments and school districts, it can promote comprehensive community development by influencing the local environment, health, transportation, social equity and local finance.⁷⁰ In terms of the economy, distant schools often contribute to the migration away from existing cities and towns, which can cause disinvestment and hurt local economies. By contrast, neighborhood schools can improve property values, support local businesses and serve as catalysts for revitalization.⁷¹ In terms of environment and health, schools in distant locations increase automobile traffic congestion and air pollution.⁷² From the social aspect, distant schools are less likely to become anchors of the community or encourage community interaction, engagement and pride.⁷³

Schools are also important settings for promoting active living and healthy eating. Centrally-located neighborhood schools can promote active school transportation of walking and bik-

ing (Figure 4). They also can improve school children's access to physical activity resources in the community. Rich physical activity facilities at school or shared use of facilities between school and other local institutions can further promote children's and residents' active recreation.

Walking and biking to/from school can be an important source for daily physical activity among school-aged children. However, in the past few decades, walking and biking to school has decreased dramatically in the U.S., from 40.7 percent in 1969 to 12.5 percent in 2011.⁷⁴ Distance is the strongest correlate of active commuting to school,⁷⁵ but many schools have been built in more distant locations to accommodate larger campuses and/or because the land was less expensive.⁷⁶ Other environmental characteristics such as traffic barriers (e.g., freeway, busy intersections), lack of pedestrian infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, safe pedestrian crossings) and safety concerns are also important barriers to active school transportation.⁷⁷

School design, together with school policies and programs, influences the amount of physical activity that students engage in during school hours. A study of 10 middle schools found that larger campuses and buildings and more play areas per student promoted physical activity.⁷⁸ The differences in these 10 schools' design factors led to a 20 to 30 percent difference in total physical activity during school hours, which translates to an increase of approximately 34 calories per day or walking two extra miles per week, independent of other factors. In another study of 24 public middle schools, environmental features of physical activity areas such as the area's type and size explained 42 percent

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of the variation in the proportion of girls who were physically active and 59 percent of the variation for boys.⁷⁹ A few intervention studies have demonstrated the potential of schoolyard or playground renovations as low-cost strategies to improve students' physical activity.⁸⁰

The goals of walkable distance for a community school and larger campuses may conflict when decisions are being made for location. In such cases, comprehensive decision-making is needed to balance different factors. It should be noted that centrally-located neighborhood schools can utilize existing facilities in the neighborhood to compensate for the possible loss in the size of campus and in-school play areas, and may offer a more cost-effective approach to school development. Neighborhood school facilities also can be used for community meetings and adult education classes, and indoor and outdoor facilities can be used by residents for physical activity. However, school policies often prohibit such use due to concerns of legal liability, staffing, cost and maintenance.⁸¹

Policy changes have been recommended to improve the impact of schools on health through both environmental interventions and educational programs.⁸² First, joint use agreements can be developed between schools and park departments or other recreation providers to share facilities (and costs) to allow broader community use of existing resources for physical activity and other purposes.⁸³ One example is the Learning Landscapes program in Denver. Landscape architects worked with the school district to renovate school grounds in low-income neighborhoods. With extensive community input, school grounds also became neighborhood parks. An evaluation showed that the renovations increased children's physical activity.⁸⁴

Second, to facilitate the development of centrally-located neighborhood schools, decision makers can consider policy interventions to limit minimum acreage requirements and funding formulas that favor the development of large, new schools in relatively remote areas, over the renovation of existing neighborhood schools. Between 2003 and 2007, three states (South Carolina, Rhode Island and Maine) abandoned minimum acreage requirements for new schools.⁸⁵ Comprehensive considerations and collaborative processes are needed for the decisions regarding the locations of schools and the designation of attendance areas, and attention should

also be given to school transportation (e.g., the possibility of walking/biking to school and the cost of busing students).⁸⁶

Another school factor that can impact health is the school food environment. Up to 50 percent of students' total daily energy intake can be consumed at school.⁸⁷ The availability of snacks and drinks sold in schools through snack bars, stores or fundraisers have been related to higher intakes of total energy, soft drinks, total fat and saturated fat, and lower intakes of fruits, vegetables and milk.⁸⁸ Interventions to improve the school nutrition environment have been found to be feasible and effective, and may be implemented without reducing school revenues. Examples of such interventions include competitive pricing and promotions for fruits, vegetables and low-fat foods⁸⁹ or requiring school snack bars to offer only individual portions of foods and beverages.⁹⁰ Combinations of these strategies appeared to be most effective.⁹¹

Limitations and Future Directions of Active Living Research

Researchers are increasingly studying policy interventions and economic values of active living environments⁹² to mitigate several limitations in the field. Most previous studies are cross-sectional in nature and subject to the criticism of self-selection bias and the inability to establish causal relationships. A small yet growing number of studies are using prospective, quasi-experimental ("natural experiment") designs⁹³ and offering insights into causal relationships.⁹⁴ Newer studies are examining how the findings summarized above may vary according to the context or population-specific characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or geographic locations.⁹⁵ Also growing is the effort to examine more detailed environmental measures and to establish how much of each environmental attribute is needed, so that results can better inform the design and policy-making process.⁹⁶

Conclusions and Discussions

Both comprehensive community development and active living fields pursue comprehensive approaches that actively engage multiple stakeholders. Comprehensive community development employs integrated, inclusive and systematic approaches and views neighborhoods as complex systems influenced by the larger interactive systems and neighborhood characteristics such as building stock, location and transportation infrastructure.⁹⁷ The field calls for "broad engagement of stakeholders with local knowledge and capacity, development of strategies which are simultaneously integrated, comprehensive and flexible, and institutional capacity to sustain on-going engagement, adaptation and execution."⁹⁸

This framework is consistent with the ecological models behind active living and healthy eating that posit multi-level interventions that change people, environments, and policies

are needed to be effective.⁹⁹ To achieve active living goals, policy makers in city planning, transportation, parks and recreation, education, housing, social services, medicine and public health must be engaged. To achieve the policy changes that will produce activity-friendly environments, community voices must guide the specific nature of the changes based on the context, to generate political support.

Both initiatives require deep, local knowledge of neighborhoods and context-based, tailored strategies for effective and sustainable interventions. Active living promotes the integration of physical activity into daily routines (e.g., walking and biking for daily tasks), which is most likely to take place in local communities. Comprehensive community development also highlights the importance of local communities and considers them as the “front lines and building blocks” for successful development.¹⁰⁰

Comprehensive community development addresses sustainability, economic development, health and quality of life. A physically active lifestyle (active living) provides synergistic effects on these goals, not only through a healthier population, but also through sustainability (e.g., by reducing automobile dependence), social interaction, quality of life and economic benefits for the community. Successful community developments help build the social and physical infrastructure for active living. They can address disparities in environmental opportunities for healthy life, and thereby, offer a major opportunity to reduce such disparities and advance Americans’ health.¹⁰¹

With the increasing recognition of the relationship between physical environment and physical activity and its potential

to help curb the obesity epidemic, fields such as community development and active living have much common ground. Many professionals working to achieve active living would like to become involved in community development, and their expertise may help make community development even more comprehensive. By combining ideas and learning from each field, we can enhance both health promotion and community development. ■

Xuemei Zhu is an assistant professor in the Department of Architecture at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, and a fellow at the university’s Center for Health Systems and Design. An architect, she works to combine her interest in design with her interest in health and physical activity. For Active Living Research, she has studied the factors that impact whether children do or do not walk to school, including economic disparities, public safety, parental education and the built environment.

James F. Sallis, director of Active Living Research, recently moved from the department of psychology at San Diego State University to the department of family and preventive medicine at University of California, San Diego. His primary research interests are promoting physical activity and understanding policy and environmental influences on physical activity, nutrition, and obesity. He is an author of more than 500 scientific publications, co-author of several books and on the editorial boards of several journals. His current focus is using research to inform policy and environmental changes that will increase physical activity and reduce childhood obesity.

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State of Practice in Designing for Healthy Communities

Xuemei Zhu and James F. Sallis

Previous research has identified numerous environment and policy changes likely to be effective in promoting active living and healthy eating. Our article “Designing for Healthy Communities: Active Living and Comprehensive Community Development” on page 9 of this issue outlines the benefits and opportunities of such an approach. But achieving these changes will be challenging.

Table 1 lists some of the relevant research programs. Parallel to the growing body of knowledge is a rapid development of practice in the past few decades that uses environmental and policy interventions to promote active living, healthy eating and social benefits. These practices incorporate multi-level approaches (changing the person, social environment, physical environment and policies) and involve multiple stakeholders. Table 2 summarizes some of the important examples in these areas.

Table 1. Sources of environment and policy research	
RESEARCH PROGRAM	WEBSITE
Active Living Research	www.activelivingresearch.org
Healthy Eating Research	www.healthyeatingresearch.org
National Collaborative for Childhood Obesity Research	http://www.nccor.org/
National Physical Activity Plan	http://www.physicalactivityplan.org/
Salud America! The Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Research Network to Prevent Obesity among Latino Children	http://www.salud-america.org/index.html
Youth, Education and Society Project	http://www.yesresearch.org/index.html

Table 2. Examples of multi-disciplinary initiatives intervening on multiple levels to promote active living and healthy eating		
PROGRAM OR PRACTICE	PROGRAM OR PRACTICE DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Walkable Communities to Promote Active Transportation and Recreation		
Active Living by Design	Established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this community grant program helps 25 communities create activity-friendly environments using a community action model and 5P strategies—preparation, promotion, programs, policy and physical projects. ¹	www.activelivingbydesign.org/

PROGRAM OR PRACTICE	PROGRAM OR PRACTICE DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
New York City Active Design Guidelines	Developed by a partnership of several New York City departments working with architects and academic partners, this document provides a manual for creating healthier buildings, streets and urban spaces, based on the latest academic research and best practices in the field.	www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/html/design/active_design.shtml
The California Endowment's programs	The Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program ² and Healthy Eating Active Communities program ³ are changing food and physical activity environments for the better by teaming up with local schools and communities.	http://www.calendow.org/
Kaiser Permanente Community Health Initiative	This comprehensive initiative promotes obesity-prevention policy and environmental changes in communities served by Kaiser Permanente. It is designed to produce a sustained effort by engaging a broad range of community stakeholders.	http://info.kp.org/community-benefit/html/our_work/global/our_work_3_b.html
Comprehensive plans addressing active living	Local governments use comprehensive plans to establish a long-term vision to guide local policy decisions. A new trend is for plans to address public health. Active living is the 7 th most cited (44 percent) public health topic in comprehensive plans and the 5 th most cited (59 percent) public health topic in sustainability plans. ⁴	www.planning.org/research/publichealth/pdf/surveyreport.pdf
Health impact assessment	A health impact assessment is a combination of procedures, methods and tools that estimates the health impacts of proposed policies, plans and projects using quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques. It helps decision-makers make choices about alternatives and improvements to prevent disease/injury and promote health.	www.who.int/hia/en/ www.hiaguide.org/about
Sustainable development initiatives promoting walkability	LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Neighborhood Development): a rating system for sustainable neighborhood development that integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building. It promotes improved walkability in communities, consistent with promoting active transportation.	http://www.usgbc.org/Display-Page.aspx?CMSPageID=148
	New Urbanism: A planning movement promoting diverse, walkable, compact, vibrant and mixed-use communities. Currently, there are more than 4,000 New Urbanist projects planned or under construction in the U.S. alone.	http://www.newurbanism.org/
	Smart Growth: A planning movement promoting "smart" strategies to serve the economy, the community and the environment. Its active-living relevant principles are: mixed land uses; compact building design; diverse housing; walkable neighborhoods; distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place; preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas; strengthening and directing development towards existing communities; and diverse transportation choices.	http://www.smartgrowth.org/

PROGRAM OR PRACTICE	PROGRAM OR PRACTICE DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Streets that Promote Active Transportation and Recreation		
Complete Streets	Complete streets is a nation-wide movement in the U.S. to build street networks that are safer and welcoming to all users (bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians) of all ages and abilities. States, cities and towns are instituting complete streets policies.	http://www.completestreets.org/
Streets giving higher or equal priority to pedestrians and/or bicyclists	Woonerf: A street where pedestrians and cyclists have legal priority over motorists. It uses techniques such as shared spaces, traffic calming, and low speed limits to improve pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety.	http://www.shared-space.org/
	Shared space: An urban design concept that encourages traffic engineers and urban planners to consult with users of public space when planning streets and squares. It replaces the conventional road priority management systems with an integrated, people-oriented understanding of public space.	
Use of streets for physical and/or social activity	Some cities and communities are converting streets to places for physical and/or social activity, by temporarily blocking vehicle traffic. Examples include Ciclovias, play streets (e.g., summer streets in New York) and farmers' markets.	http://www.8-80cities.org/
Parks and Other Recreational Facilities to Promote Active Recreation		
Fitness zones	Easy-to-use outdoor gyms developed by the Trust for Public Land to promote health and introduce new healthy activities to the park, creating a supportive, accessible and social environment for getting fit. The equipment is installed in existing parks and designed to be durable and appropriate for people of all ages and fitness levels.	http://www.tpl.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/california/los-angeles-county/fitness-zones.html
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	A nonprofit organization that creates a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connects corridors to provide healthier places for healthier people.	http://www.railstotrails.org/index.html
Schools to Promote Active Transportation and Recreation		
Active school transportation	Federal Safe Routes to School program: A program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. It was created by Section 1404 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act (SAFETEA-LU). A total of \$612 million was made available over five years (FY 2005-2009) to improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely.	http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/safe/routes/overview/ ; http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/
	Walking School Bus: A program that organizes a group of children to walk to school with one or more adults. The adult supervision helps to overcome the safety barrier frequently reported by parents. A variation of this program is the bicycle train, in which adults supervise children riding their bikes to school.	http://www.walkingschoolbus.org/

PROGRAM OR PRACTICE	PROGRAM OR PRACTICE DESCRIPTION	WEBSITE
Initiatives promoting neighborhood schools	The National Trust for Historic Preservation developed a report on policy recommendations for removing barriers to community-centered schools.	http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/historic-schools/
Joint use agreement	A formal agreement between two separate government entities—often a school and a city parks department—that sets forth the terms and conditions for shared use of public property or facilities.	http://www.phlpnet.org/childhood-obesity/products/nplan-joint-use-agreements
Food Environment in Schools		
Healthy school food program	Federal programs: The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 focuses on improving child nutrition. It authorizes funding for multiple school programs that help provide nutritious food at school. The Summer Food Service Program provides free, nutritious meals and snacks for low-income children during the summer months.	http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/ ; http://www.summerfood.usda.gov/
	Industry initiative: In 2006, three soft-drink companies controlling more than 90 percent of school beverage sales announced voluntary guidelines to limit portion sizes and reduce the number of calories available to school children during the school day. ⁵	http://www.healthyeatingresearch.org/publications-mainmenu-111/research-briefs-and-syntheses-mainmenu-114/58-school-foods-sold-outside-of-meals-competitive-foods-may-2007
School garden movement	A program that helps children learn where food comes from while providing modest amounts of fresh produce.	
School wellness policy	The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 established a new requirement for all school districts with a federally-funded school meals program to develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity by the start of the 2006-2007 school year.	http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/

NOTES

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The Promise Neighborhoods Initiative: Improving Developmental Outcomes Through Comprehensive Interventions

by Anthony Biglan, Christine Cody, William Aldridge II, Alexis Dabroski and Jean Kjellstrand

The federal Promise Neighborhoods initiative has provided planning grants to 21 communities around the country to find their own way to replicate the model of the Harlem Children's Zone, a comprehensive "cradle-to-career" program for the community's children. Many of the core attributes of a Promise Neighborhood, such as a requirement for a number of local groups to work collaboratively and a focus on education, will seem very familiar to anyone working on comprehensive community development. Other aspects, such as an emphasis on school and family interventions that social scientists have rigorously tested, are less common in the field of community development.

This paper, by five members of the Promise Neighborhoods Research Consortium, offers an introduction to the concept of evidence-based interventions and how Promise Neighborhoods and similar programs can utilize multiple, overlapping interventions. It also provides findings from a survey of 13 of the initial Promise Neighborhoods, with some of the first insights into how the communities are measuring results, collaborating across organizations, accessing resources and more.

Community developers, teachers, youth volunteers, nurses, advocates and countless others dream of a better, safer and more fulfilling future for America's children. They strive to use their knowledge, experience and passion to improve the lives entrusted to their care. Yet countless roadblocks stymie their success: lack of money or other resources, indecipherable bureaucratic mazes, apathetic leaders and even wary communities, worn down by violence, drugs, substandard housing and inadequate schools.

In Harlem, a new framework began 10 years ago when Geoffrey Canada started a program with a goal of ensuring that all children living in one certain city block would finish college. Today, the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) provides a wide array of supports to all youth living in a 97-block area.

As an antipoverty strategy, the Harlem Children's Zone is noteworthy for its concentration on social interventions that enable young people to develop the skills, interests and habits needed to escape from intergenerational poverty. To do so, the HCZ utilizes substantial evidence about the importance of nurturing children and adolescents throughout development.¹ A 2009 Institute of Medicine report documents how effective preventive interventions from the prenatal period through adolescence can help limit common and costly psychological and behavioral problems, including depression, anxiety disorders, antisocial behavior, academic failure, sub-

stance use and abuse, premature or unsafe sex, inadequate exercise and poor dietary habits.²

The Harlem Children's Zone "cradle-to-career" programs include:

- Baby College, a 9-week parenting program for expectant parents and for "those raising a child up to three years of age"³
- The Three-Year-Old Journey, which helps parents whose children will soon be entering preschool
- Get Ready for Pre-K and Harlem Gems, both all-day pre-K classes
- Promise Academy Charter Schools and seven public schools
- An expanded academic case management system supporting every student from fifth through twelfth grade, whether or not they are in an HCZ charter school
- Community Pride, to help tenants with housing problems

- Health programs, such as the Obesity Initiative and the Asthma Initiative
- Several programs under the aegis of HCZ Foster Care Prevention, including the Family Development Program, the Family Support Center, the Midtown Family Place, Project CLASS (Clean Living and Staying Sober), the Babies Initiative, and Truancy Prevention

In a 2009 study, Harvard researchers Will Dobbie and Roland Fryer stated that the HCZ effects “...are enough to close the black-white achievement gap in mathematics and reduce it by nearly half in English Language Arts.”⁴ The following fall, the U.S. Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) completed a review of the HCZ, and found the results “consistent with WWC evidence standards.”⁵

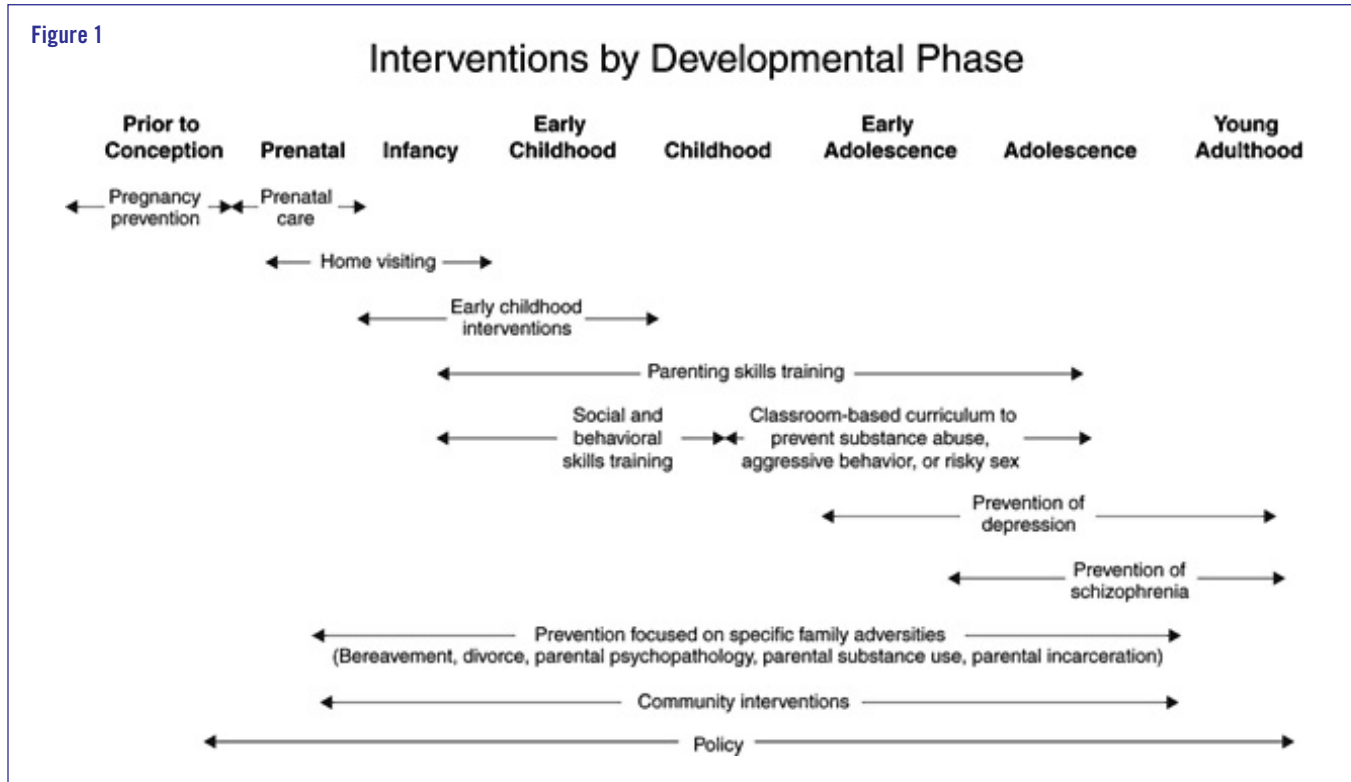
The success and model of the Harlem Children’s Zone inspired President Barack Obama to create the Promise Neighborhoods (PN) initiative. In 2010, 339 communities “with high levels of poverty and crime and low levels of student academic achievement”⁶ applied for the first one-year planning grants: of these, the Department of Education chose the top-scoring 21 to receive a total of \$10 million in awards. In April of this year, the Department of Education announced the second round of Promise Neighborhoods grants: this time, \$30 million in funding will be split between a new group of 1-year planning grants and implementation grants.

Effective preventive interventions from the prenatal period through adolescence can help limit common and costly psychological and behavioral problems.

Evidence-Based Interventions that Support Successful Development

The Promise Neighborhoods strategy is distinct from many efforts tackling the problem of intergenerational poverty. Instead of concentrating on economic development, it focuses on establishing evidence-based school and family interventions with the same goal as set by the Harlem Children’s Zone: Children attend college and escape poverty through their ability to obtain well-paying jobs.

The best evidence that a program, policy or practice can make a difference comes from randomized controlled trials—experimental evaluations in which one group of people receives an intervention while an equivalent group of people (the control) does not. If the group receiving the intervention does better than the control group a year or even a decade later, we can be fairly certain that the program made the difference. Over the last 15 years there has been an explosion of such trials, with more than 300 reported since 1995.⁷



Studies show that providing support to mothers during pregnancy and the first two years of their babies' lives reaps multiple benefits.

Figure 1 indicates the types of programs and policies that, in rigorous experiments, made significant improvements in the life prospects of youth.⁸ For example, several studies show that providing support to mothers during pregnancy and the first two years of their babies' lives reaps multiple benefits, including reduced child abuse, improved cognitive and social development and even reduced delinquency when the children reach adolescence.⁹ Parenting training programs can reduce their children's problem behavior whether the programs are provided during childhood¹⁰ or adolescence.¹¹

Most of these interventions prevent multiple problems. This is no surprise, since most youth problems are inter-related and influenced by the same environmental conditions.¹² Moreover, a program's effects can be lasting. For instance, one preventive program that provides support to at-risk mothers during pregnancy and the first two years of the baby's life ceases contact with families when their child turns three; nevertheless, it reduced delinquency even when children had reached age 15.¹³ The Family Check-Up, which provides families of middle school students with brief advice and feedback about effective parenting, led to reduced arrest rates and substance use when those children were 18.¹⁴ The Good Behavior Game, a classroom behavior-management program that

rewards first and second graders' cooperative behavior and self-regulation, resulted in lower rates of antisocial personality disorder, suicidality and substance abuse when recipients were young adults.¹⁵

This evidence focuses mostly on young people's social and emotional development, although many of the interventions also contribute to academic success.¹⁶ There is also a solid body of evidence about effective instruction. Of particular importance is reading skill: A child who does not learn to read by the end of third grade is very unlikely ever to become a skilled reader.¹⁷ Yet ample evidence indicates that virtually every child *can* learn to read.¹⁸

Most efforts to improve people's economic well-being have focused on incentives to increase job training and work availability.¹⁹ However, interventions focused on improving family relationships and young people's development can have economic benefits, and not just for the children. For example, a study of the Oregon Parent Management Training, which offers parent training for newly divorced mothers, showed that providing high-quality parenting support significantly increased mothers' standard of living over the next nine years.²⁰ Similarly, the Nurse Family Partnership (described above) increased mothers' income.²¹

It may be useful to think about evidence-based programs as "best bets" to dramatically improve the life prospects of most children living in poverty. There is no guarantee that neighborhoods will achieve the same results if they adopt a program that has been evaluated through research. Nevertheless, the fact that the program worked in a randomized trial—or better yet in multiple randomized trials—makes it more likely to

	Prenatal/Infancy	Early Childhood	Childhood	Early Adolescence
Families	Home Visitation Play and Learning Strategies (PALS)	Triple P	Triple P	Family Checkup
	Evidence-based kernels		Evidence-based kernels	
Schools		High-quality preschool and daycare	Positive Action	
		Evidence-based kernels	Evidence-based kernels	
			Good Behavior Game	
			Effective Instruction	
			Afterschool supports	
Neighborhood	Community development to increase social cohesion and cooperation Community organizing and evidence-based policy promotion to improve the neighborhood environment			

Figure 2: PNRC model for integrating interventions in a Promise Neighborhoods (intervention teams indicated by common shading)

make a difference in a neighborhood than a program would that has never been evaluated. To be sure it works, an organization must ensure that such a program is implemented in the same way that it was originally. Even then, it is essential to monitor its impact to make sure that the program is working and to modify portions of it that might not be working.

The Promise Neighborhoods Research Consortium (PNRC) received a two-year grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to assist high-poverty communities like the Promise Neighborhoods with identifying and implementing evidence-based practices. Figure 2 illustrates the PNRC model of how to integrate evidence-based practices (EBPs) to nurture child and adolescent development throughout a neighborhood. It is an example of a comprehensive, multilevel intervention that integrates evidence-based practices for prenatal development through early adolescence. Well-researched family supports would be available for the prenatal and infancy periods,²² early childhood and childhood²³ and early adolescence.²⁴

The PNRC model includes high-quality preschool education, which has well-established benefits for the social and cognitive development of young children, but is currently difficult to obtain in most high-poverty neighborhoods.²⁵ In elementary school, systematic programs such as Positive Action,²⁶ which teaches children that when they do something positive, they will feel good about themselves, have proven benefits in promoting prosocial behavior, preventing substance abuse, and improving academic performance.²⁷ Effective instruction (i.e., clearly stated objectives, quality instruction, observable and/or measurable learning), especially in reading, is vital to children's academic success. In both schools and homes, kernels can supplement these programs. Kernels are simple, evidence-based, behavior influence techniques shown to affect one or more behaviors.²⁸ Examples include peer-to-peer praise notes,²⁹ omega-3 supplementation³⁰ and a prize bowl for rewarding desirable behavior.³¹

It should be noted that there are significant obstacles to getting effective programs chosen and well-implemented. A first issue is simply determining what counts as an evidence-based intervention. Although the research community has reached a fairly strong consensus that programs, policies and practices should be evaluated in well-controlled experiments,³² that is not a universally shared consensus among those trying to make a difference in high-poverty communities.³³ This is understandable, given that the consensus among researchers is a recent development and because a critical mass of evidence-based interventions has accumulated only within the last 20 years.

Our work over the past two years has made us realize that few people are aware of all of the childhood and adolescence

Interventions focused on improving family relationships and young people's development can have economic benefits, and not just for the children.

programs, policies and practices that have been experimentally evaluated and shown to be beneficial. Moreover, it is still widely believed that experimentally evaluated interventions have not been shown to have value in minority or rural populations. This is not the case. Among the interventions that have proven effective in diverse populations are home visiting programs for at-risk mothers,³⁴ parenting programs,³⁵ school-based interventions such as the Good Behavior Game³⁶ and supplemental reading instruction for students who are second language learners.³⁷ In addition, there are well-supported interventions for rural populations.³⁸

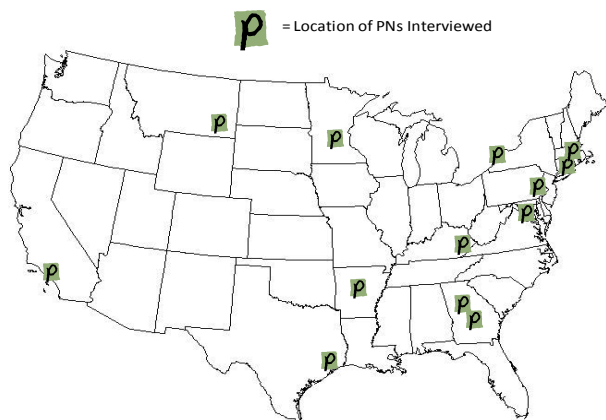
Even when projects choose evidence-based interventions, it will be a challenge to implement multiple interventions with fidelity for all of the developmental phases that the projects are trying to affect. It took several years and considerable resources for the Harlem Children's Zone to put programs in place from infancy through young adulthood.³⁹

Moreover, neighborhoods that successfully adopt EBPs will still need several years of careful monitoring to be sure that they are having the hoped-for effect. The traditional—yet unwarranted—notion was that one could take a program that worked in a published study and be confident it would have the same benefits when replicated by a new set of people in a new setting, often with a different population of recipients. Ongoing monitoring of intervention impact is now known to be a fundamental part of effective interventions.⁴⁰ If manufacturers use continuous quality improvement procedures to improve the quality of their products, we should certainly use the same approach to ensure that our young people grow up successfully.

Initial Insights from the Promise Neighborhoods

This spring, five members of the PNRC spoke with key representatives from 13 of the 21 Promise Neighborhoods that had received one-year planning grants from the Department of Education in the fall of 2010. We wanted to know what they had initially accomplished and what, if anything, they felt they would not be able to complete. We wondered what might particularly challenge each grantee and we wanted to know if we could offer any help.

To illustrate how diverse geographically and culturally these grantees are, we imagined a trip around the country to visit each community. Beginning in Buffalo, N.Y., we would head east to rural Massachusetts then down through New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.; west through three rural counties in Kentucky, head south with stops in Atlanta and Athens-Clarke County in Georgia; west through the cities of Little Rock, Ark., and Houston, Texas, to Los Angeles, then north through the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana, culminating this circular trip in St. Paul, Minn.



By surveying the status of the Promise Neighborhoods, we were able to discern a number of early trends in the field, giving an initial real-world measure of how this federal program is operating to date:

Planning should pay dividends

The Promise Neighborhoods representatives we spoke with have a commitment to their communities that began long before the Department of Education even announced the Promise Neighborhoods awards and that will continue, whether or not they receive further federal funding. However, the funding enabled them to move forward more effectively with blueprints for neighborhood transformation.

For example, Amherst-Wilder Promise Neighborhood in St. Paul conducted a needs assessment survey of the residents. Following that, more than 200 community members met to hear about the results and then discussed proposed recommendations to improve the lives of their community's children. The Gulfton Promise Neighborhood in Houston has developed plans for each age group. For preschool chil-

dren, for instance, they are “planning to work with the Collaborative for Children to provide training and technical assistance to other early childhood service providers in the neighborhood to improve the quality of early childhood services,” according to Ann Hilbig, vice-president of program planning at Neighborhood Centers, the lead agency.

The key organizations have decades of experience

All the lead organizations we surveyed have been active in their neighborhoods for a long time. The lead agency in the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana, the Boys & Girls Club, has been in existence for nearly 20 years. In Los Angeles, the coordinating body of the Boyle Heights Promise Neighborhood (at Proyecto Pastoral) consists of five organizations and two schools “with a long history of working to improve conditions in Boyle Heights and a rich history of community organizing,” according to Promise Neighborhood Director Deycy Avitia. A general assembly includes about 120 residents, teachers and community organizations organized into issue-based workgroups where all decisions are consensus-based.

In Arlington, Mass., the Community Day Care Center had been offering parent classes, infant and toddler pre-school programs, and early childhood education literacy programs long before they received news of their Promise Neighborhoods funding. Now, as the Arlington Center of Excellence (ACE) Promise Neighborhood, they set their overriding goal to provide cradle-to-career support. When we spoke with them in June, they had raised additional funds to build a new playground for the neighborhood, which will provide a safe place for children and adults, even into the evening hours.

Schools and community organizations are dedicated partners

Promise Neighborhoods representatives said that they have a positive and collegial relationship with the schools in the community, which is important considering the amount of programs that are housed at or linked to local schools in the Promise Neighborhoods model. In the Athens-Clarke County Promise Neighborhood in Georgia, “Schools are deeply embedded in the work.... [They serve on] every strategic action team,” according to Program Director Erica Gilbertson. In Arlington, Mass., an established relationship around after-school programs in the school has been a useful platform on which to build new Promise Neighborhood programming.

Ann Hilbig, from the Gulfton Promise Neighborhood in Houston, said that their good working relationship with the school district was forged as they initially focused on getting the data needed to guide the effort. “Overall we have an excellent relationship at the district level. The school district is working with us to mine their data for what we need. Data sharing is a legal challenge. The district is working hard to help us jump through the legal hoops. They really support

Promise Neighborhoods representatives said that they have a positive and collegial relationship with the schools in the community.

the purpose of our work, and are excited to use the data to improve their own work.”

Collaboration is clearly recognized as important, despite some typical setbacks

The Department of Education required matching funds or resources from local partners, which could include free rent, services from local school districts and health clinics, or a large financial match from organizations able to donate. For example, the Central Little Rock Promise Neighborhood in Arkansas has six partners: the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Arkansas Children’s Hospital, the City of Little Rock, the Central Arkansas Library System, Little Rock School District and local nonprofit New Futures for Youth.

When we asked the Promise Neighborhoods grantees if they were finding it challenging to work with so many groups, most of them said this was one of the best parts of their job. The Buffalo Promise Neighborhood works with 18 local organizations. “Because of our collaborative partnerships, we have the ability to leverage resources provided by our partners,” said Patrick Mansfield from the Westminster Foundation. According to Director Don Speaks at Morehouse Promise Neighborhood in Atlanta, “Arthur Blank YMCA, Atlanta Food Bank, Fulton County Health Department, Atlanta Public Schools, and Westbank Health Center have come together and this has gotten more people on board. People have more or less submitted their egos and turf to that conglomeration of organizations and funders.”

Sharon Thompson of Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc. in Massachusetts said, “Overall, this project has been smoother than expected. Community involvement has been exceptional—the neighborhood has been very welcoming of change. We initially focused on empowering residents and partners to start initiatives on their own and they have been doing so enthusiastically. We have a very collaborative environment in which everyone works together, not for themselves.”

However, we also heard of the occasional challenge of managing the varied points of view of the people and organizations trying to make a difference in the neighborhood, which at times has manifested as suspicion and conflict among parties. Tension comes from uncertainty about success, long hours, multiple (and sometimes conflicting) ideas about issues, and disappointments when things fail to go well.

Erica Gilbertson of Athens-Clark County, Georgia, mentioned the challenge of “managing partnerships and different agendas; working together and holding each other accountable.” A director from a large city Promise Neighborhood, wishing to remain anonymous, said that “intervention

“Intervention fatigue” and despair are factors. Both residents and partners are wary of more plans.

fatigue’ and despair are factors in [our] area. [There have been] lots of prior initiatives and interventions in the area without success. Both residents and partners are wary of more plans and interventions.”

In Houston, “there have been a lot of budget cuts at federal and state level. This can affect some degree of service, but most affected are those partners we’re working with. It seems that in times of financial uncertainty they’ve become more isolated, focused internally (for survival) rather than externally. We feel that it’s in times like these that collaboration with other partners is paramount for survival. We’ve reached out to our partners even more to help leverage resources and make us all stronger.”

Money and resources remain a challenge

Establishing an array of programs covering all children from cradle to career is an expensive proposition, and the federal grants do not provide all the funding necessary to build such a network. Program Director Erica Gilbertson for the Promise Neighborhood in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia (named Whatever It Takes, after the Paul Tough book on the Harlem Children’s Zone) said that finding resources is their “number one challenge. We aren’t in a major urban area, so it has been very hard to link into foundation markets.” The project received a temporary consultant from the Promise Neighborhoods Institute who helped them develop a Fiscal Mapping Team. The team gathers budgets from major agencies in town (e.g., education, colleges, health) to show where dollars for children and families come from. Gilbertson says they use this information to determine “how we can best braid where our funds are coming from.”

One Promise Neighborhood developed an innovative way to address resource development. They organized a “Fundors’ Desk,” which meets at regularly scheduled intervals and allows representatives from all of its partner funding agencies to get together, talk about their progress and brainstorm about how to collectively advocate and secure more funding for their project.

It is difficult to identify and use evidence-based practices

We asked the project representatives if they found it challenging to identify evidence-based practices. Nearly half (6 of 13) said yes. The Athens-Clarke County Promise Neighborhood has assigned several workgroups of community volunteers to

“Selecting an appropriate evidence-based practice that will fit our school and neighborhood culture has proven to be a challenge.”

research EBPs, and the Berea Promise Neighborhood felt that identifying evidence-based practices is “always a challenge.”

In Central Little Rock, a University of Arkansas at Little Rock social work faculty member and associate dean of the College of Education is working with professional practitioners in a solutions team to identifying EBPS, review the best practices and then select which practices will best target each of their indicators.

One project (choosing to remain anonymous) has assigned one of its ten Results-Driven Workgroups the task of researching evidence-based practices and setting up the interventions that they choose. The group reports, however, that they are having some difficulty defining EBPs and agreeing on their roles in implementing them. The Morehouse Promise Neighborhood in Atlanta also has charged work groups with doing the research. Their work group describes evidence-based practices as “well-written, well-researched, well-regarded by experts to work in our environment,” but adds that the members feel there is a need to be flexible within local context. “Selecting an appropriate evidence-based practice that will fit our school and neighborhood culture has proven to be a challenge,” said Patrick Mansfield of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, which is working with the authors of *The Turnaround Challenge* to identify appropriate EBPs.

As of June, few of the projects had selected their interventions. One that had, the Central Little Rock Promise Neighborhood, was already implementing some EBPs, although they had not yet formally unveiled the complete cradle-to-career pipeline to the community. Familiar with others’ attempts to implement EBPs in the community that had not worked as well as planned, the Promise Neighborhoods administrators plan to use focus groups and community forums to help with informing and educating the community. They also said they are hesitant to begin too many new practices at once, which they feel would overload the community.

There is progress on measurement

It is widely recognized that ongoing measurement is needed to monitor and ensure the fidelity of intervention implementation and to evaluate its impact,⁴¹ and the Department of Education requires that Promise Neighborhoods measure a

defined set of indicators of youths’ progress, although there is no agreed-upon set of measures in use across the projects. Valid measures of most aspects of child and adolescent functioning are available, as are measures of the major influences on youth development.⁴² As a result, it is now possible to create systems of continuous quality improvement. For example, the Response-to-Intervention (RTI)⁴³ movement in schools has teachers frequently measuring children’s progress and adjusting instructional practices in light of their progress. To the extent that such systems are in place, they will ensure the incremental improvement of interventions. These measurement systems will also ensure that we can document the benefits of interventions.

Most grantees have at least a good start at their measurement systems. Of the 13 Promise Neighborhoods that we interviewed, only two are still in the planning stages for measurement. Many of the Promise Neighborhoods are using outside evaluators to help them with data collection. Nevertheless, when we asked where they needed help, 90 percent of the grantees stressed measurement.

“We’re currently in the process of collecting and analyzing data focusing on four subject areas: [Early Childhood Education/Pre-K, K-16/Career Development, Family Development/Social Services, and Community Economic Development],” said Lamar Wilson, the project director of the Point Grays Promise Neighborhood in Philadelphia. “We’ve assembled four workgroups relevant to Department of Education requirements as well as what makes sense in our neighborhood. [The goal is]... to have a clear, transparent and objective monitoring process for evaluating quality of services and quantitative results.”

Athens-Clarke County, Georgia has developed a list of 45 indicators (some developed locally and others from Promise Neighborhood grant indicators) using Census, public health and school record data, as well as survey data for hard-to-get indicators like Internet use. The project is also developing a logic model to align major goals, programs and indicators. The Gulfton Promise Neighborhood in Houston, which is tracking 18 indicators thus far, has also used a survey of more than 1,000 elementary, middle and high school students, as well as hundreds of adults.

In Lawrence, Mass., Sharon Thompson of the Community Day Care Center said, “We are creating a longitudinal data-

Most grantees have at least a good start at their measurement systems.

base which will connect our organization with other partners in the community. The goals of this database include providing individual case management capabilities. For instance, a caseworker can easily access updated information on students, such as the types of programs they are in. Ultimately we anticipate this system will help us aggregate and customize data reporting.”

The underlying problem for the Promise Neighborhoods is that low-cost systems for collecting and organizing the data are not available. Although the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Education have put considerable money into developing and validating measures of child and adolescent development and the risk factors that affect development, they have not invested as much in getting systems set up that enable these measures to be used to track development in individual neighborhoods. The Results Leadership Group has developed some excellent systems for reducing data once it is collected,⁴⁴ but, it remains very costly to collect the needed data.

Looking Ahead

Certainly, more work is required on reaching a system of measurement that can guide the ambitious Promise Neighborhoods efforts. Given the critical importance of ongoing measurement, we suggest a concerted effort by federal agencies to develop a system that readily obtains data from archival sources, parents, students and other community residents, so that it is not necessary for each community to invent its own measures, the system for obtaining data and the methods for reducing data so that they can serve the needs of the community. Either the New York State database⁴⁵ or the Results Leadership Group⁴⁶ offers a model of the possible kinds of system we propose nationally. Such a system could serve the needs of the Promise Neighborhoods, LISC communities and the HUD-funded Choice Neighborhoods.

Further ahead, the question will become how to evaluate progress. As comprehensive interventions get underway in Promise Neighborhoods, experimental evaluations can document their success and strengthen their effectiveness. Experiments provide clarity about whether a particular strategy or intervention is making a difference. Over time, they help make the practices even more effective. An intervention may help some outcomes and not others, for example, which leads to modification of the intervention and further evaluation.

Through this painstaking process, experiments are transforming our ability to ensure human well-being. Over the past half century, clinical psychology and psychiatry have gone from having no clear evidence about what works to

Experiments provide clarity about whether a particular strategy or intervention is making a difference.

being able to offer numerous effective practices, such as the preventative interventions described above. Research in education has shifted to the use of randomized trials, thanks to the creation of the Institute for Educational Sciences, and, as a result, the identification of effective educational practices is accelerating. In political science, cogent arguments are being made about the value of experiments.⁴⁷

However, randomized controlled trials are not the most effective way to make progress in the work of the Promise Neighborhoods. A better experimental design is the interrupted time-series.⁴⁸ These experiments can provide rigorous information about an intervention’s impact, even when only one or a few entities receive the intervention. For example, a Promise Neighborhood could evaluate the impact of an intervention such as the Triple-P parenting program on child abuse by implementing it in one of three neighborhoods, while tracking reports of child abuse and parent reports of children’s behavior in all three neighborhoods. Evidence that the intervention affected these outcomes would come both from (a) an observed change in child abuse in the neighborhood with the intervention and (b) the lack of such changes in the other neighborhoods. As soon as they observed meaningful changes in family outcomes in the first neighborhood, they could implement the intervention in the second, and later the third neighborhood.

Such designs are appropriate both for the evaluation of individual components of complex interventions and for evaluating those complex interventions as a whole. For example, it is possible to stagger the implementation of a comprehensive intervention to improve young children’s school readiness through preschool and family interventions targeted at young children in a series of three neighborhoods. We can see whether the neighborhood that gets the intervention improves on readiness, while the other two do not. In addition to being a good experiment, this may be an efficient way to marshal limited resources and refine the intervention with each successive neighborhood.

Ronald Reagan used to say, “We fought the war on poverty and poverty won.” That was not entirely true then and it need not be true now. However, there is good reason to be concerned that ambitious antipoverty interventions such as Promise Neighborhoods will seem to be failures, either because they do not achieve their ambitious goals or because

no one conducts careful empirical evaluations to document their benefit.

Fortunately, behavioral science knowledge and methods are much more advanced than they were during President Johnson's War on Poverty. As the examples above indicate, there is much greater clarity about what young people need in order to escape from poverty and we have proven interventions to ensure their success. As the efforts of the funded Promise Neighborhoods and similar projects show, many promising evidence-based efforts are taking place and they all have a good chance of success. However, those efforts are far more likely to succeed if they include implementation of evidence-based interventions, if state-of-the-art measurement systems accompany them and if the people involved can use sophisticated experimental methods to evaluate and refine each effort. ■

The authors are all members of the Promise Neighborhoods Research Consortium (PNRC). Anthony Biglan is the co-director and a senior scientist at Oregon Research Institute. Christine Cody is editorial associate for the PNRC and at Oregon Research Institute. William A. Aldridge II is a center scientist at the University of South Carolina's Parenting and Family Research Center (PFRC). Alexis Dabroski is a doctoral student in social and community epidemiology at the University of Florida. Jean Kjellstrand, former early career scientist with the PNRC, is now teaching at Columbia University in New York.

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NOTES

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Gardens for Great, Green Communities

by Julia Prange

Urban gardens are an excellent example of a neighborhood project that has the potential to impact many different aspects of community well-being. Certainly the sites provide environmental and health benefits, but with programmatic intention, an urban garden can also support economic development, youth programming, public safety and more. This article from the LISC Green Development Center outlines the opportunities that urban gardening offers, with a special focus on examples of job-training and employment programs.

As communities implement programs that will make them stronger, more sustainable places to live, urban gardens have emerged as increasingly common features of a neighborhood. In under-used parking lots, on apartment building rooftops, in corners of pocket parks and on entire vacant properties, these fertile swathes of green space are bringing much more than fresh produce to both the residents who use them and the municipalities that have welcomed their existence.

Urban agriculture has become increasingly prominent as the national food movement has raised awareness about the deficits of the conventional food system and its sometimes damaging implications for human health, environmental quality and local economies. Urban gardens—also referred to as urban farms when they become large in scale—can reclaim formerly vacant lots for sowing, raising and harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables and are underpinning a much larger movement towards securing local access to affordable nutrition.

Although green community development has not always been specifically integrated with community development, many organizations have embraced the connection between environmental and community development goals. The LISC Green Development Center, which provides funding, education and technical assistance to make environmental sustainability inseparable from economic sustainability, has become particularly interested in the development of urban gardens and the programming that makes them successful. In a recent round of grant making for green construction and planning projects by the Green Development Center, nearly two thirds of applications contained an urban garden or another project to meet the desire of the local community to have access to healthy, fresh foods and green space.

Community gardening simultaneously meets a range of community development goals. Urban gardens can be incubators for local business development, workshops for green jobs, labs for youth engagement, and campuses for environmental education and community re-entry. In addition, because these gardens are safe, beautiful outdoor spaces, they also become places where residents of the neighborhood can meet and interact while caring for the gardens and building a sense of community. Some of the most commonly known benefits of urban gardens include:

- Neighborhood beautification
- Connecting urban dwellers back to the land and nature
- Providing wholesome, nutritious and economical food
- Reduction of crime and blight
- Creation and use of green space

Food issues have increasingly become an integral part of the strategy that local LISC offices around the country carry out in their Building Sustainable Communities work, staying true to a comprehensive community development approach. What follows are examples from various LISC offices and their community partners:

Urban gardens can be incubators for local business development, workshops for green jobs, labs for youth engagement, and campuses for environmental education and community re-entry.

San Diego

In San Diego, for example, the New Roots Community Farm—a 2.3-acre parcel in the heart of Mid-City—provides growing space for more than eighty refugees, new immigrants and neighbors seeking access to fresh, culturally appropriate food. The New Roots Community Farm also offers its growers business development assistance through The Refugee Entrepreneurial Agriculture Program (REAP), a project of the International Rescue Committee—San Diego, to tap into the local and organic food market. The program is a good example of how, with the right programming and partnerships, urban gardens also offer opportunity to achieve economic development, employment and sustainability goals.

Adding to San Diego's active community garden scene, the Crawford High School Youth Garden hires 10 to 12 youth interns each semester who learn to seed, harvest, cook, market and eat the food they produce on campus. These youth then act as ambassadors of food justice and healthy eating throughout their communities.

Duluth

The Seeds of Success program in Duluth, administered by Community Action Duluth (CAD), revitalizes neighborhoods through urban agriculture on 12 sites throughout the city and provides jobs for low-income adults and youth who grow, process and distribute food from the plots. This summer, Seeds offered transitional employment to 13 individuals, five of whom found full-time employment or educational opportunities within months of their experience with Seeds. CAD's Green Jobs Initiative won the 2011 Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Innovation Award.

Toledo

In Toledo, a 2004 LISC partnership with the Toledo Botanical Gardens has led to the creation of more than 100 community gardens, many of which were developed through Community Integration for Training and Employment (CITE), a program of the Lucas County Juvenile Justice Division. In 2009, this partnership provided paid employment in the gardens to more than 100 adjudicated youth, who learned new skills, connected with positive mentors and provided valuable ser-

vices to their neighborhoods. As a result of the program's popularity, a local community college transformed its landscaping program by focusing on urban agriculture and is planning to incorporate a training center and kitchen into their greenhouse to teach entrepreneurial and growing skills to youth from the CITE program.

Buffalo

In Buffalo, the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) operates Growing Green, an urban agricultural training program that provides leadership skills and meaningful employment to local youth, who tend the farm and sell fresh produce and other organic food products. The program began in 2003 on an urban farm, teaching youth to grow food organically, and since then has developed other program components, including "Be Vocal Eat Local Week," with activities and events in celebration of local food, and "Eat-Up," an annual youth conference on food issues. MAP's expanded and award-winning urban farm is home to Buffalo's first straw bale greenhouse, which includes a closed-loop aquaponic system to grow fish in addition to the farm's produce crops.

Cincinnati

A newly constructed community kitchen and farmer's market are being added to a community garden on the grounds of a former Parish Hall in Cincinnati. Produce from the garden and planned hoop houses for year-round growing will allow the ministry to serve fresh, healthy lunches throughout the week and provide new job opportunities for farmers looking to sell at the new market.

Urban gardens provide more than just access to fresh food in communities that have few healthy options. They beautify a neighborhood's physical landscape, act as natural filters and control for stormwater, are places for community convening and engagement, and provide for economic development opportunities. From job training to youth engagement, urban gardens have presented a particularly ripe opportunity for community development practitioners to expand the scope of their work and accomplish the holistic goals of comprehensive green community development; sometimes literally in their own backyards. ■

Julia Prange is an assistant program officer at the LISC Green Development Center. She manages communications for the GDC and coordinates an affinity group to support LISC staff interested in and working on food systems related projects. Prior to working at LISC, Prange worked in both the public and private sectors as a planner and community organizer.

Regionalism and Affordable Housing

with Edward G. Goetz and Myron Orfield

In recent years, many researchers and policymakers have considered the larger metropolitan area for examination of housing markets, economic development, planning and more. Looking at a city's communities through this regional lens can provide a starkly different perspective, and academics and legislators are still exploring how that impacts urban low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

To discuss one aspect of regional thinking—housing policy—we asked for the views of Edward Goetz and Myron Orfield, both of the University of Minnesota and long-time proponents of affordable housing. They agreed to a back-and-forth format, with four rounds of discussion, starting with this introductory question:

When it comes to a regional vs. place-based perspective, there is much agreement on community development issues. One place where there is a difference of opinion is around where to build new affordable housing. How can we prioritize investment to both improve low-income communities and give families the best opportunities?

Edward Goetz

The three main goals of affordable housing policy are: 1) providing decent, safe and affordable housing to persons of limited means, 2) improving the physical conditions of declining neighborhoods (the “community development” objective) and 3) ensuring greater choice for all households and diversifying the housing stock in communities where such diversity is lacking (the “fair housing” objective).

Pursuit of the first objective implies producing housing where the need is greatest. Unfortunately, this is *everywhere*. Virtually all communities in our metropolitan areas need more affordable housing. A federal government estimate in 2010 found that close to six million very low-income families pay more than half of their incomes on housing or live in “severely inadequate conditions.” Most of these families live in central city neighborhoods. At the same time, however, poverty is spread-

ing to suburban areas and in fact, there are currently more households living in poverty in suburban areas of the U.S. than in central cities. Thus, pursuit of the first goal of affordable housing provides no compelling answer about where to geographically focus our efforts.

The community development objective suggests that we concentrate our efforts in central city areas where neighborhood conditions have declined most precipitously. In these neighborhoods, affordable housing addresses two concerns—the provision of decent and safe housing for people who need it and neighborhood improvement. New (including rehabilitated) housing that is affordable physically upgrades the neighborhood, and often means a shift in housing management from disinterested or overwhelmed private operators to community-based nonprofit organizations whose business it is to provide good housing and to contribute to community development. Such an approach, furthermore, serves to partially redress the adverse effects of decades of major federal initiatives from transportation policy to tax policy that have systematically disadvantaged central cities and that have led to much of the decline that community development efforts address.

The fair housing objective suggests a different targeting strategy. Too many suburban areas have erected zoning and other regulatory barriers to the creation of low-cost housing as a means of protecting their class-race homogeneity or their high property values. This has the effect of limiting the housing choice of lower-income households and limiting the diversity of some communities. Prioritizing this objective means focusing our housing efforts in suburban areas to create housing opportunities where they have been denied in the past. This approach redresses decades of exclusionary policies on the part of local governments.

In the end, our housing goals suggest no clear targeting strategy. Need exists in central *and* suburban areas. Affordable housing provides opportunity wherever it is located. In

suburban areas it provides access to community amenities otherwise reserved for middle class and affluent families. In central city areas, decent and affordable housing provides residential stability, safe living conditions and greater financial stability for families. To target one geographic area of our metropolitan areas over another requires both a convincing argument as to why one goal is more important than another and a justification for neglecting one geographic area in favor of another. I know of no such arguments that would lead me to conclude that pursuit of fair housing should be undertaken at the expense of community development; or vice versa. Affordable housing needs are universal; our strategies should be also.

Myron Orfield

Racial segregation in housing and schools is a fundamental reality of the American housing market. Residential segregation remains stunningly high for black and Latino households. After improving for twenty years, segregation in schools, which is deeply intertwined with residential segregation, is now worse than ever. Racial segregation causes concentrated poverty, destroying human potential and the fabric of neighborhoods with its web of discrimination and fundamental inequality.

Racial segregation is caused by illegal racial discrimination in the following forms: 1) racial steering, 2) mortgage lending discrimination, 3) exclusionary zoning, 4) racially segregated school boundary decisions, 5) individual discrimination by whites who will not sell or rent to non-whites in white neighborhoods and 6) *by the federal and state government building a disproportionate share of government subsidized affordable housing in segregated and unstably integrated neighborhoods*. All of these practices, while prohibited by the Federal Fair Housing Act, are common.

Professor Goetz advocates a *colorblind* approach to affordable housing policy. If this were a single race society without stunning racial segregation and blatant and continuing housing discrimination, I would agree. But racial discrimination in housing markets is a more fundamental factor determining individual opportunity and neighborhood revitalization than any policy of simply bricks and mortar. Non-white racially segregated neighborhoods, with few exceptions, have continued a long unabated comparative economic and educational decline for forty years. They have not only been starved of private capital, but recently have also been subjected to a saturated pattern of racially discriminatory predatory lending practices. Sadly, these neighborhoods today have relatively worse schools, higher unemployment and more incarceration than ever.

A colorblind policy in which most family affordable housing is built in segregated or resegregating low-opportunity neighborhoods means that, given the background reality of

multi-level discrimination, the problems of segregation and all its harms will continue to worsen and affordable housing policy will itself remain a significant aspect of the continuing inequality and urban disinvestment that has characterized American cities.

Further, the colorblind approach is technically illegal. The Fair Housing Act commands that our housing policy be *race-conscious and pro-integrative* on a metropolitan level. In this context, the federal courts have declared that a colorblind housing policy is “impermissible.” This (unenforced) law requires the federal government and all entities receiving federal housing support to use whatever “leverage” they have to foster racially integrated schools and communities. Federal law creates a presumption that building new units in segregated areas with failing schools is a racially discriminatory practice, particularly when it is possible to build these units in higher opportunity white areas.

There is a near perfect match of non-white racial and economic segregation in schools and academic failure. Segregated high schools are “drop-out factories” that are much more connected to prison than college. This is true whether they are public or charter schools, whether they are in states where the central city schools are broke or where they spend much more than the suburban average in segregated schools. Separate but equal—and even separate and more money than the suburbs—has never worked. Similarly, high-intensity approaches like Geoffrey Canada’s [Harlem Children’s Zone] in Harlem are very hard to reproduce and unsustainable in most contexts. These approaches are more anecdote than viable or systematic policy.

In contrast, the benefits of racially and socially integrated schools have been documented in innumerable studies over decades. For minority students, the benefits include improved academic achievement, better graduation rates, higher future incomes, higher college attendance rates and greater access to social networks associated with opportunity, as well as enhanced critical thinking skills and better interracial relations in future living and employment environments for students of all races. Integration is not a one-step panacea, but it is a necessary part of any real effort to improve education.

Hence, there should be a strong preference to adding new family units in areas with the best schools and against adding new units in areas that only have failing schools. While I think that the federal government can and should build part of its housing in segregated areas, its overall balance sheet must be pro-integrative on a metropolitan basis. The law and the facts require state agencies to take into account the racial and economic composition of schools and their performance before they make location decisions about new low-income family housing.

What does this perspective mean for community development? It argues against the status quo of colorblind community development and for a race conscious and pro-integrative community development strategy.

Goetz

Professor Orfield wants to orient housing policy with “a strong preference” toward fair housing goals. If, as I contend, housing policy serves many public goals, what would it mean to privilege fair housing above the others? Would we be able to achieve (or make significant progress) on segregation, and at the same time avoid falling behind on other (less favored) goals?

Would a fair housing-focused strategy effectively address issues of segregation and concentrated poverty? Not really. We are not building enough subsidized housing nowadays to have a traceable effect on patterns of racial segregation and poverty concentration. Three examples should suffice.

1) The Mount Laurel case in New Jersey, [which required that municipalities use their zoning powers in an affirmative manner to provide a realistic opportunity for the production of affordable housing], generated the nation’s largest fair share housing program aimed at providing subsidized housing in suburban areas. The only major study of resident outcomes ever completed on the program indicated that among 2,600 households, less than 2 percent were African Americans who had left the central city and moved to the suburbs. And when one takes into account the reverse flow (African Americans who moved in the opposite direction by leaving the suburbs to occupy a subsidized home in a city), the net flow accounted for 1 percent of the households assisted by that statewide effort. Why so few? In large part because need for affordable housing already exists among people currently living in the suburbs. The production of a unit of subsidized housing in the suburbs simply does not guarantee, and in fact rarely produces a pro-integrative move for a black family from the central city.

2) When Professor Orfield was a state legislator in Minnesota, he successfully championed a fair share housing law that was ultimately vetoed by an unsupportive governor. The program, had it been signed into law in 1994, could have operated at full funding for 50 years before it built enough affordable housing to house the number of families who, in 1994, needed that housing and *already lived in the suburbs* of the Twin Cities. We should all be in favor of building more subsidized housing in the suburbs. But don’t think for a minute it is going to affect patterns of concentrated poverty and racial segregation in central cities.

3) Since the early 1990s we have demolished hundreds of thousands of units of public housing in our central cities and dispersed the residents [through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s HOPE VI program].

The result? The level of concentrated poverty in American cities is *worse* now than in 1990. Most displaced residents have moved to other segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods. They have done so for a number of reasons. One chief reason has to do with preferences. Not everyone who lives in the central city wants to make the moves envisioned by Professor Orfield, even when they live in a segregated and declining neighborhood. Substantial portions wish to remain in their communities and want to see those communities improved. We need a housing policy for those people, too.

So, what would be the implications for other housing goals of a narrow policy approach focused on fair housing? It would, by definition, significantly limit affordable housing investment in central neighborhoods. These are the neighborhoods with the oldest and most deteriorated housing stock. Most affordable housing projects in such neighborhoods consist of rehabilitation of the worst of this stock.

Housing investment in these neighborhoods achieves multiple objectives that all community development practitioners know well. First, the property is brought up to code so that those living there no longer have to endure substandard conditions that threaten health and well-being. Second, rents are made affordable to persons of limited means and affordability is monitored over time. This allows families to devote more of their income to other critical needs such as food, clothing and health. Third, such investment improves neighborhoods by increasing property values nearby and incentivizing additional investment, and by decreasing crime at the location through more attentive management. To shut off this type of investment, or limit it more than we already have, is to ensure the further decline of these neighborhoods. When the private sector does this we call it red-lining and we oppose it because of its obvious deleterious effects.

Would a community development approach solve the problems of central neighborhoods? No, not any more than a fair housing approach would solve segregation or poverty concentration. Our level of investment in these areas is too meager and unlikely to expand significantly in the future. This is why I advocate an approach that incorporates multiple objectives and does not give primacy to any. That is called a flexible approach, not a colorblind one.

Orfield

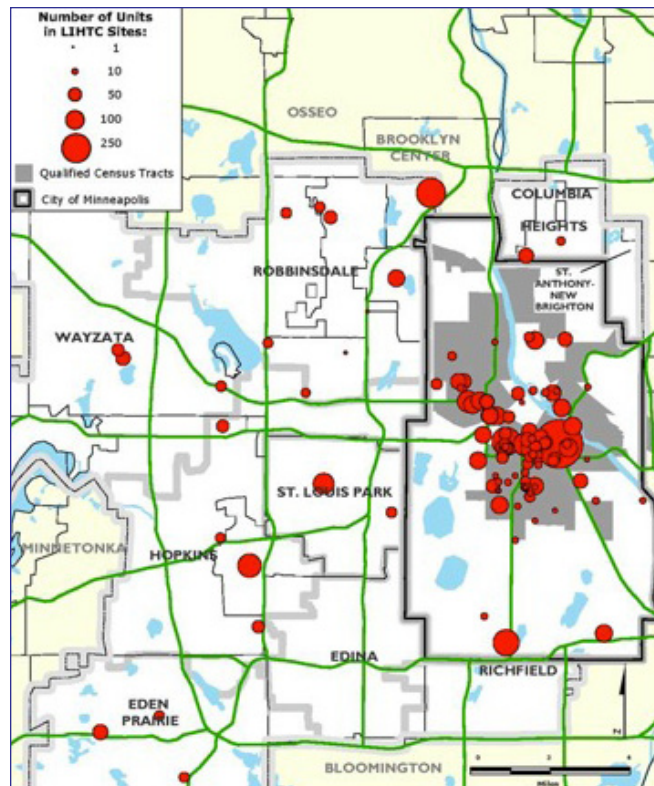
Professor Goetz is wrong about the pro-integrative effect of a strong fair housing policy. Many studies undertaken in conjunction with school desegregation lawsuits in the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s demonstrated that if HUD had located affordable housing in a race conscious and pro-integrative manner, no school busing would have been necessary to have integrated all the schools in many large metropolitan areas.

The Twin Cities at one time built a large share of new family units in a pro-integrative way in white developing suburbs under Federal Fair Housing Act rules. After 1982, the housing policy became colorblind and the region's subsidized housing has served mostly to intensify segregation in the city and resegregation in transitioning suburbs. During the last decade, the Twin Cities region has gone from eight to more than one hundred segregated elementary schools.

I had tried to overcome the serious pro-segregative bias that had developed in Twin Cities in the 1980 and '90s in my legislation. This effort was not only opposed by the whitest and most affluent suburbs but perhaps even more fiercely by community developers who tried to defeat my bid for re-election. Because of their opposition, this part of the bill never passed.

Straight-forward simulations with realistic racial occupancy projections of alternative location strategies for subsidized housing built in the Twin Cities in recent decades shows that if subsidized units had simply been placed randomly across the region—if we had simply eliminated the pro-segregative central city bias—school segregation in the Twin Cities could have been cut in half. Imagine what could have been accomplished by a pro-integrative strategy.

Figure 1: Low-Income Housing Tax Credit housing sites in Minneapolis and surrounding suburban schools, 2005.



Source: Institute on Race and Poverty. Data: 2005 HousingLink inventory of assisted rental housing

Next, Mount Laurel is an irrelevant example. It is itself a colorblind, race-neutral suburban fair share plan with no subsidy programs attached. When the original Mount Laurel plaintiff sought to build units for black families in white communities, community developers fought in court to deprive tax credits to such white suburban projects. They argued that the Fair Housing Act and racial integration were irrelevant considerations because the tax credit units that were saturated in the segregated black and Latino cities of New Jersey were revitalizing these places.

The HOPE VI program is also an irrelevant example. By rule, HOPE VI was explicitly exempted from Fair Housing law. When the units were demolished, they were largely rebuilt in segregated or unstably integrated neighborhood, not unlike the present system of housing siting. I, like many fair housing advocates, opposed these siting rules arguing that they violated the Fair Housing Act and the U.S. Constitution.

I have never proposed that anyone be forced to leave a central city neighborhood. I believe, however, that poor, non-white people should have many more choices than Professor Goetz does. By building such a disproportionate share of subsidized housing in segregated neighborhoods, we provide low-income families with lots of housing choices in areas with failing schools, poor services, crime and social pathways to prison. There are almost no choices for these families to live in neighborhoods with good schools, great services, low crime and social pathways to college and middle-income employment. More than 70 percent of black and Latino middle-income, two-parent families have chosen high opportunity neighborhoods in the suburbs. The color blind status quo does not allow low-income, non-white families these same choices.

Stably integrated neighborhoods have good schools and access to private capital and are truly revitalizing. Real community development is not just adding low-income housing to desperately poor neighborhoods. It should be a multifaceted strategy involving schools, health, parks, public infrastructure and transit to improve both neighborhood conditions and individual opportunity in the context of a more racially integrated and economically interdependent and connected region.

Goetz

Professor Orfield assures us that a “strong fair housing policy” would substantially solve school segregation problems. But what he offers in support of that proposition are counterfactual hypotheticals (i.e., what HUD might have done in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, and a simulation of the Twin Cities). I prefer the evidence of real life, which shows pretty conclusively that our best efforts so far have not produced desegregative outcomes. Furthermore, his references to *what might have been* acknowledge that the type of program Professor Orfield

has in mind, the kind that would work, has yet to be enacted. Anywhere. This is not a trifling observation. The political obstacles to creating a truly effective desegregative housing policy are enormous. That does not mean that we should stop trying, but it does suggest we be realistic about what is possible. I am not aware of any metropolitan area on the verge of enacting such a policy.

Thus, the New Jersey Mount Laurel-based effort is far from irrelevant in this discussion. It is the largest initiative we have nationally to break down the obstacles to affordable housing in predominantly white suburbs. That it exists in its current (and compromised) form is precisely the point. And the fact that it does not produce the mobility patterns that Professor Orfield desires is also precisely to the point.

Efforts to geographically spread affordable housing opportunities are important. Such efforts would attract greater support from community developers if they were not accompanied by efforts to limit or stop affordable housing development in central neighborhoods.

There are two important considerations here. First, we must not exaggerate the role of subsidized housing in creating segregative patterns. Professor Orfield's list of the factors that produce patterns of segregation (in his first section) is a good one. Note that the siting of subsidized housing is only one of six factors listed. Given the size of our subsidized housing effort in this country, it cannot, however, be regarded as a very important factor. Any assumption that a radical reorientation of our project-based subsidized housing efforts will solve segregation is simply unrealistic.

Second, we need to get beyond the notion that the primary impact of project-based subsidized housing is negative. Efforts to limit or stop such housing programs in central neighborhoods under-appreciate or ignore the contributions such housing make to the lives of people and to the communities where it is located. I very briefly laid those out previously. Professor Orfield's accompanying map of the location of tax credit units in the Twin Cities metro area is, I imagine, meant to fill us with alarm. The units, denoted by bright red dots (at least they aren't little red octagons with "STOP" written across them), cluster in central areas of the region. I look at the map and, while I see the need for more red dots in suburban areas, I see the dots in the central cities as being stable and affordable housing opportunities for families who would otherwise be paying half of their income or more for substandard housing in the private sector. I see families in more secure living conditions. I see upgraded or new housing stock in neighborhoods that need it.

Professor Orfield ends his last section with a description of what 'real community development' should be. I agree with every word of it. No one, to my knowledge, argues that community development is just affordable housing. But it is not comprehensive *without* affordable housing.

Orfield

In Montgomery County, Md., the pro-integrative, moderately priced dwelling unit ordinance provides housing almost entirely for low-income black families in one of the most affluent suburban areas of the United States. It creates one of the best, largest and most racially integrated suburban school districts in the country. Recent studies show stunning, long-term academic gains for the low-income black students who have access to these units and schools.

The Twin Cities (from 1970 until 1982) operated a race-conscious, suburban affordable housing program. Under the project-based Section 8 program, the Met Council set fair share housing goals for white developing suburbs and allocated affordable units to make sure the goal became reality. In eight years, the number of pro-integrative units in the suburbs went from 1,878 to 14,712. Unlike New Jersey, this program had affirmative marketing and unified waiting lists. In the nation's third whitest region, half of these units are occupied by non-whites. Studies of low-income black students living in this housing in the affluent suburb of Eden Prairie report academic results and continuous improvement unmatched by any school district in the state.

In the mid-1980s, this program was effectively ended by central city politicians and housing developers—not by the suburbs. Central city leaders kept the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program out of the Met Council's jurisdictions and opposed civil rights goals. If the 1970-82, Section 8 pro-integrative guidelines had been used for the tax credit, the Twin Cities could have kept its schools integrated, instead of going from eight to 100 segregated schools. If we hope to reintegrate the schools, we have to return to and enhance this successful race-conscious approach.

Professor Goetz's New Jersey facts are old. After a fair housing lawsuit in 2003, opposed by LISC, the number of family tax credit units outside of segregated areas has more than doubled in five years from 20 percent pre-lawsuit to between 40 percent and 70 percent each year.* Today there is a higher than average share of African Americans in Mount Laurel units and it is improving every year. If Mount Laurel had clear race conscious goals, more affirmative marketing and uni-

*Editor's note: LISC, the parent organization of the Institute for Comprehensive Community Development, filed an amicus brief in the 2003 New Jersey lawsuit referenced in this commentary. LISC objected to the reversal of the 2002 allocations of tax credits to Newark on the grounds that it would jeopardize affordable housing projects already in progress and argued that affordable housing development in urban areas is a benefit to those communities.

fied waiting lists, and if the tax credits were allocated to help communities achieve their integration goals (not to deepen segregation), New Jersey could become dramatically more integrated in a short period of time.

In 1966, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Gautreaux sued Richard J. Daley and HUD, arguing that a policy of building a disproportionate share of the subsidized housing in the Chicago ghetto violated the constitution and the newly enacted Civil Rights Act. Daley replied with the argument that the ghetto is where the housing need is the greatest and his practice of building most of the projects in the ghetto was central to their vitality. “Besides,” said the Mayor, “we have tried to build in white neighborhoods, and it’s just too tough.” Sound familiar?

The Supreme Court told Daley that his housing policy was illegal. As a result one-third of the *Gautreaux* program participants had a chance to live in the whitest and most opportunity-rich suburbs. Research demonstrates that parents got better jobs and their kids were twice as likely to graduate (from much better high schools) and were much more likely to go to college and become part of America’s mainstream than the students left behind in segregated schools.

There are at least a dozen other examples to show that significant racial integration is possible if we tried to obey the law.

Goetz

The debate seems to have veered off course a bit. My original point was that integration and fair housing efforts would not have a noticeable impact on the conditions of central city neighborhoods or result in a significant mobility opportunity for residents of those neighborhoods, and therefore a fair housing approach should not be used as a substitute for community development efforts. I stand by that and nothing that Professor Orfield has offered contradicts that argument. I am glad for the successes in Montgomery County, Md., and elsewhere. And while happy for them, I reiterate that there is no evidence whatsoever that any of those successes resulted in the desegregation of central city neighborhoods. Still, we need more affordable housing in the suburbs and all the better that it is occupied by people of color in otherwise predominantly white communities.

While I advocate for strong community development efforts and the need for affordable housing in central neighborhoods, I also acknowledge the need for integrative efforts in the suburbs and support those efforts. I sense, however, that the inverse is not true; that Professor Orfield is not willing to accept the proposition that community developers should continue to address the affordable housing needs of central neighborhoods.

On several occasions now Professor Orfield has noted the “opposition” of LISC, “community developers,” “central city leaders,” etc. to “civil rights goals.” I have allowed these points to go largely without rebuttal, but the argument seems to get more strident with each message. We are told that in the Twin Cities it is the community developers who have opposed civil rights goals. Are we to conclude that unless one agrees to essentially cutting off affordable housing work in central neighborhoods, then one is an opponent of civil rights goals? This is, of course, absurd and reflects an alarmingly narrow view of civil rights. My own view of civil rights in the area of housing goes a bit beyond integrating the suburbs.

But in Professor Orfield’s world, those of us, myself included, who advocate for affordable housing in central cities are comparable to Richard J. Daley. Really? Can Professor Orfield see no other possibilities? No nuance? We either agree to curtail meaningful affordable housing activity in the central cities or we are segregationists?

This is, it seems to me, a pretty rigid and extreme position. Extreme because it is a narrow focus on only one policy objective when it is demonstrably true that we have many affordable housing challenges. Extreme because it does not acknowledge the need for affordable housing in central neighborhoods. Extreme because it denies the benefits of affordable housing in those neighborhoods. Extreme because it would deprive disadvantaged communities the capital reinvestment they need. Finally, it is extreme because it would consciously underserve or ignore the needs of low-income families living in central cities who have no plans nor any desire to move to white suburbs.

Our way forward on the original question is clear: Aggressively pursue anti-discrimination in mortgage lending and in housing markets, reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing, increase housing choice in both the subsidized and private markets, and continue to pursue comprehensive community development that incorporates, as a central element, affordable housing.

Orfield

Contrary to Professor Goetz’s arguments, segregation should not be accommodated as a natural and inevitable part of the landscape. It should be ended by using the law and the substantial leverage of housing, transportation, education and other large funding streams. Fair Housing obligations come from the Constitution and the Fair Housing Act. Preservation and community development must be harmonized with fair housing’s higher constitutional and statutory priority.

There are three interdependent major causes of segregation: 1) exclusionary practices by affluent white neighborhoods, sellers and rental agents, 2) discrimination by banks and realtors, and 3) the disproportionate placement of low-income housing in poor segregated neighborhoods. When colorblind housing developers oppose pro-integrative placement of affordable housing in legislatures, agencies, and courts, they become one of the important causes of segregation.

At the center of successful pro-integrative housing strategies, there are pro-integrative race-conscious community development corporations. At the center of the Montgomery County plan is the Innovation Housing Institute. Making *Mount Laurel* better are Fair Share and Isles; in the Twin Cities, Common Bond and Twin Cities Habitat; in Chicago, the Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities; in Dallas, the Inclusive Communities Project.

There need to be more pro-integrative metropolitan Community Development Corporations (CDCs) with the capacity to build large projects and make communities, state and federal agencies, real estate agents and banks that are exclusionary obey the law. Metropolitan CDCs should support three different types of neighborhood CDCs, each suited for different types of metropolitan neighborhoods.

1. Non-white, segregated, high-poverty neighborhoods:

CDCs in these neighborhoods should advocate for stably integrated, racially just and inclusive magnet schools; better transit service; higher-density, mixed-use redevelopment; and significant public reinvestment in every major form of public infrastructure. They should work on improved health care, early childhood education, tutoring, day care, and after-school activities. They should do everything consistent with helping these neighborhoods become and remain racially and socially integrated. They should build and maintain low-income housing, just not a disproportionate share of all the subsidized housing in the metropolitan area.

In Raleigh/Wake County North Carolina and Louisville/Jefferson County, high-performing magnet schools located in previously poor, non-white neighborhoods are the centerpiece of a metropolitan strategy that has helped keep their schools (and neighborhoods) racially integrated on a metropolitan basis for four decades.

2. Racially integrated communities: Nearly 40 percent of the population in America's 50 largest metropolitan areas now lives in racially integrated urban and suburban neighborhoods. However, in America, integrated communities don't stay integrated unless they have support from community organizations.

CDCs should form the core of stable integration organizations with local officials and other important community stakeholders that are racially inclusive. Integrated communities are often subject to very severe racial steering and mortgage lending discrimination. Stable integration CDCs should encourage and/or operate pro-integrative loans and mortgage insurance programs, document and prosecute claims of housing market discrimination, and create and operate pro-integrative marketing plans. They should be charged with building and maintaining housing that promotes stable integration. They should promote better race relations and more interracial contact, communication and understanding in local neighborhoods and at schools.

3. High-opportunity communities: This is the last third of metropolitan America. These are the communities with the best school, services and health care, the lowest taxes, and the most parks and open space. Here, CDCs should advocate (and if necessary litigate) for the reduction of barriers to affordable housing in zoning codes, development agreements and development practices. They should spearhead a dramatic increase in the amount of affordable housing for low-income families. They should develop this housing and make sure it is operated on a non-discriminatory basis. ■

Edward G. Goetz is the director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and a professor at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The author or editor of several books, including Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America, Goetz's research focuses on issues of race and poverty and how they affect housing policy planning and development. Before joining the university he worked at the mayor's Office of Housing and Economic Development in San Francisco and for several nonprofit community developers in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Myron Orfield is the executive director of the Institute on Race and Poverty and a professor of law at the University of Minnesota. A non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and an affiliate faculty member at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, he teaches and writes on civil rights, state and local government and finance, land use, regional governance, and the legislative process. Orfield served five terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives, and one term in the Minnesota Senate. His most recent book is Region: Planning the Future of the Twin Cities.

Aligning Schools into the Neighborhood

Deborah L. McKoy, Jeffrey M. Vincent and Ariel H. Bierbaum, “Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities: Seven Steps to Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development.” The Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California-Berkeley, June 2011.

Reviewed by Eileen Figel

As practitioners of comprehensive community development well know, a community’s health and the quality of its schools are interdependent. This connection is also deeply and personally understood by families across the country. For those with ample resources, the quality of local schools often determines where they choose to live. And for many low-income communities, improving the quality of local schools is a top priority.

It would seem reasonable to expect, then, that city planners and community developers engaged in community revitalization efforts would work hand in hand with educational institutions that aim to improve local schools. Where cross-sector collaboration does occur, both schools and communities benefit. But such collaboration is still the exception rather than the rule.

A new report from the Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California-Berkeley attempts to bridge this divide. “Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities: Seven Steps to Align High-Quality Education with Innovations in City and Metropolitan Planning and Development” examines strategies to link and integrate community improvement and school improvement efforts. The authors interviewed more than 50 policymakers, researchers, community developers and community leaders to identify policies and specific practices which “promote positive educational outcomes in tandem with housing, transportation and sustainable community policies.” They used the results to develop a seven-step framework for “effective, aligned and integrated policies.”

- Get to know your educational landscape
- Engage school leaders, families and young people in planning and development
- Establish a shared vision and metrics linking high-quality

education to economic prosperity at community and regional levels

- Support the whole life of learners through services and amenities
- Align bricks-and-mortar investments for regional prosperity
- Maximize access to opportunity through transportation
- Institutionalize what works to secure gains and ensure ongoing innovation

The seven-step framework includes many activities familiar to comprehensive community developers, such as asset mapping, engagement, visioning and alignment. Step 4, “support the whole life of learners,” is particularly well-aligned with neighborhood-based comprehensive community development programs, and many community-based organizations are indeed partnering with local schools to deliver programs and services that support students in and out of school. For example, the report describes how a program in Oregon’s Multnomah County delivers a range of social, health and support services to 21,000 students at 60 community schools. And in the section about Step 5, “alignment of bricks-and-mortar investments,” the authors include several examples of partnerships between school districts and other organizations to build new facilities that are jointly used by multiple local partners.

As the researchers point out, it is not always easy to over-

come long-entrenched practices of public agencies and other neighborhood stakeholders working in isolation. In one community I was working with years ago, neighborhood leaders were frantic to get a new elementary school built—and with good reason. The public housing authority had recently constructed more than 80 units of new scattered site housing in a fourteen block area, adding more than 100 new students to the already overcrowded local elementary school. During the several years it had taken to acquire the lots and prepare the construction drawings, nobody from the housing authority had coordinated with school district or city planners. By the time construction began, there was insufficient time to expand the capacity of the existing school to accommodate increased enrollment, and for several years students endured extremely overcrowded conditions.

This complete lack of even minimal coordination is, hopefully, becoming less common. But achieving a minimum level of coordination—which itself is by no means yet guaranteed—sets the bar too low. As the authors point out, efforts to improve

education and efforts to improve communities must be strategically integrated, especially in communities struggling with poverty, crime, substandard housing and other conditions which provide daunting obstacles to a student's success.

This report does not provide unique and extraordinary approaches for those goals. The “promising practices” highlighted in the report are, instead, good examples of the practical, common-sense approaches already being put into action around the country. I appreciate the authors' efforts to include these practical examples for each step in their seven-step framework. The real-world cases illustrate that better integration of school improvement and community development is not only possible, it is happening. ■

Eileen Figel is director of the Institute for Comprehensive Community Development. For more than twenty years she has provided community planning, development, and public policy services to community organizations, municipalities and developers across the United States.

RESEARCH ROUND UP

Taking Lessons from Medicine

Lyndee Knox and Cheryl Aspy, “Quality Improvement as a Tool for Translating Evidence-Based Interventions Into Practice: What the Youth Violence Prevention Community Can Learn from Healthcare.” *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 48, September 2011.

Reviewed by Richard Mertens

Often the biggest challenge in trying to solve difficult social problems is figuring out what really works. Then it's applying that knowledge in different real-world circumstances.

Consider youth and gang violence. Each year more than 5,000 young people die violently in the United States. Stopping the killing has become an urgent need in many cities; it's inspired tougher policing, outreach to gang members and potential gang members, and innovative programs like Chicago's attempt to foster a “culture of calm” in schools.

What works? Research is only beginning to address that question. But two researchers say that the fight against youth violence could learn a lot from health care's decades-long

effort to promote “evidence-based practice,” a formalized system to help practitioners adopt techniques and information that have been proven to work through rigorous research. In their recent article in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Lyndee Knox, co-principal investigator at the Southern California Academic Center of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention, and her colleague, Cheryl Aspy, a researcher at the University of Oklahoma's College of Medicine, argue that violence prevention efforts could become more effective if there were more research into vio-

lence prevention and—here’s the crucial part—greater effort to apply that research in the everyday work of agencies and nonprofits that help young people.

The idea that health care offers insights into youth violence is not new. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers youth violence “a major public health issue.” One well-known anti-violence program in Chicago, Ceasefire, was started by an epidemiologist who saw parallels between epidemics of disease and epidemics of violence. But Knox and Aspy take this insight a step further. They point out that most primary health care in the U.S. is delivered by practices with four or fewer clinicians—small organizations that, like many community-based organizations providing social services, are more focused on serving their patients and coping with “insufficient funding and too few staff” than discovering and applying the latest research.

The authors acknowledge important differences between health care and violence prevention, including the sheer volume of research available to health care practitioners and the vast sums of money available for medical care. But they argue that there are enough similarities to justify a common approach.

Knox and Aspy’s central insight—that the ideas and systems that help clinicians apply evidence-based practices in health care could also help grassroots programs for violence prevention—could also be applied to efforts surrounding many other difficult issues such as economic development, after-school programs and education. Certainly local programs focusing on these issues typically share the difficulties of keeping abreast of research into what works best and of finding ways to apply that research.

Take economic development. Some small towns, desperate to attract business and create jobs, have tried to boost their economies by attracting prisons, even though research suggests that prisons produce little long-term economic gain. With that knowledge, towns may want to put their efforts instead into improving educational opportunities and otherwise building up local resources, strategies that have shown to be more promising.

The authors suggest four ways to apply evidence-based practice to the fight against youth violence:

- **Create programs and institutions to promote research and communicate new findings to organizations involved with violence prevention.** Health care has the Cochrane Library, a repository of more than 4,000 systematic reviews of health issues, and “practice-based research networks” of clinics and practitioners whose main work is to provide primary care but who also affiliate in order to identify and frame research issues of common concern. Usually these

networks are linked to academic institutions. Examples include the Oklahoma Physicians Resource/Research Network and the Nursing Centers Research Network, based in Milwaukee. Similar networks could connect researchers with agencies and nonprofits that have anti-violence campaigns.

- **Develop national guidelines and standards.** A starting point might be the ongoing effort to identify indicators of child well-being. A voluntary accreditation program might encourage agencies to adopt evidence-based practices. The National Initiative for Children’s Healthcare Quality, founded in 1999 and based in Boston, is an example of a nonprofit organization that promotes best practices across a broad range of health issues, including autism, hyperactivity and obesity.
- **Explore strategies that are innovative or nontraditional.** In health care, the Chronic Care Model, developed in the mid-1990s in Seattle, has encouraged a comprehensive approach to caring for those who suffer from chronic illnesses, in part promoting a more patient-centered approach. Meanwhile, many health care clinics are hiring outside experts, sometimes known as “coaches” or “facilitators,” to spend extended periods in the clinics and suggest ways to make them more effective.
- **Apply external pressure to make sure programs become more effective.** This pressure might take the form of federal mandates or requirements from funders—e.g., “pay for performance.”

Some institutions are already trying to apply the example of evidence-based health care to violence prevention. Since 2000, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been setting up National Academic Centers of Excellence on Youth Violence Prevention at universities across the country. These centers promote research but also help community organizations find more effective ways of fighting violence. (Knox works at the center at the University of California, Riverside.)

None of this is easy or simple. In Knox and Aspy’s view, evidence-based practice demands a “systems perspective” and a comprehensive approach to problem-solving. In health care, it’s been a struggle that, even after three decades, remains unfinished. ■

Richard Mertens is a freelance writer in Chicago who covers public policy and social welfare research and programs.

Community Leadership as a Complex Job

Jenny Onyx and Rosemary Jill Leonard, “Complex Systems Leadership in Emergent Community Projects.” *Community Development Journal*, 2010. Oxford Journals.

Reviewed by Anne Kubisch

Two decades ago, complexity theory was an arcane subject that was firmly rooted in the world of mathematics and physics and ensconced in think tanks like the Santa Fe Institute. In the last few years, it has gradually entered into the popular lexicon, thanks to public intellectuals and writers such as Malcolm Gladwell.

Complexity theory also has begun to appear in some of the literature in the community development field. After all, the terms and concepts sound remarkably familiar to community developers: non-linear, emergent, dynamic, open, networked, interdisciplinary, adaptive, cooperative, multi-agent, interactive, collective, systemic. In many ways, comprehensive community development is an excellent example of a complex adaptive system: It is based on a dynamic network of interacting relationships that change and adapt over time as a result of experience.

The direct application of complexity sciences to community development practice, however, is still in its infancy. One much-discussed recent example is Kania and Kramer’s notion of “collective impact” as applied to the work of STRIVE in Cincinnati ([reviewed](#) by Robert Mertens in the July 2011 issue). In this issue, Sarah Rankin reviews Michael Quinn Patton’s book on developmental evaluation, which touches on both the strengths of complexity as a “way of thinking” and the limits of its on-the-ground usefulness in program evaluation to date.

Australian researchers Jenny Onyx and Rosemary Jill Leonard attempt to bridge the divide between complexity theory and practice for community development in their paper “Complex Systems Leadership in Emergent Community Projects,” which focuses on social capital and how it is mobilized by leaders in five communities that otherwise have relatively few economic or human capital resources. Complexity theory provided Onyx and Leonard with a vocabulary, an analytical framework, and an intellectual entry point into the dynamics that they were observing in five mini-case studies.

In Maleny, Australia a leader created social connections between traditional dairy farmers and new residents who held a commitment to a cooperative, environmentally sustainable lifestyle. A leader in Kimba, Australia, a declining traditional agricultural community, helped the community build “bridging” social capital in order to attract new residents and maintain economic viability. In Anapia, Peru a leader helped the members of this remote community develop and pursue an eco-tourism economic development plan without losing their traditional way of life. A group of disempowered immigrant workers in Juanico, Uruguay organized to develop housing, child care and other quality-of-life services. A leader in Lovik, Sweden brought the population together for social and cultural activities and, eventually, the construction of an eldercare cooperative.

All of these leaders emerged out of what complexity scientists call “disequilibrium”—in the case studies, the problems were economic disequilibrium. Each leader mobilized the community around the issue, negotiated among competing ideas for a collective response, ensured the plans were implemented and created a venue for ongoing community development. They offer a hypothesis about how complexity theory *should* help to explain the emergent, self-organizing networks that they studied, and then they analyze whether and how that happened.

Onyx and Leonard found seven common elements in the leadership across their case studies. These elements are likely to be found in any good community development enterprise, but when observed through the lens of complexity theory we understand and appreciate them somewhat differently. Three

As Onyx and Leonard see it, these leaders emphasized communication and feedback loops, which, as predicted by complexity theory, catalyzed learning and new modes of operating.

of the elements, the authors say, strongly reflect elements of complexity theory:

- **Embeddedness:** The leaders were strongly embedded within the networks of the community but, significant for complexity theory, they were not in positions of formal authority; they emerged as the need and opportunity arose.
- **Shared decision-making:** The leaders ensured extensive negotiations among a variety of stakeholders and the work was supported by management committees with representation across the community.
- **Navigating open systems:** The leaders engaged with other places and structures, and broke out of the traditional bonding social capital in their communities to bridge with knowledge, skills and resources outside the community.

Onyx and Leonard conclude that four of their seven leadership characteristics can be found in conventional management and leadership theories, but even these were exhibited differently from the classical forms because “there was no evident hierarchical, command and control, coercive authority, one relying on the dominance of the leader who gave orders to an obedient citizenry.”

- **A compelling vision:** The leaders had a broad vision for what is possible in their communities, articulated it and identified a path to achieve it.

- **Practical management skills:** The leaders could structure and mobilize action, and they developed procedures and protocols for getting things done.
- **Succession planning:** The leaders developed a plan for moving on and grooming others to take over the work.
- **Energy, commitment and perseverance:** The leaders were persistent, but in a way that was iterative (reflecting complexity) involving repeated interactions and meetings.

As Onyx and Leonard see it, these leaders emphasized communication and feedback loops, which, as predicted by complexity theory, catalyzed learning and new modes of operating. Ultimately, stability is created within the embryonic network based on shared values and operating principles, and when the relationships coalesce it “creates a fertile milieu, out of which may emerge new ideas, formations and intentions for collaborative action.” This is a cycle that complexity scientists would recognize.

Because of the small set of projects studied, which were all successful, some of the patterns Onyx and Leonard identify may not be definitive or representative for the field, a caveat that the authors acknowledge. For example, four of the five leaders in these cases were women. Is this chance? Is it gender? Is it culture? Is it complexity science?

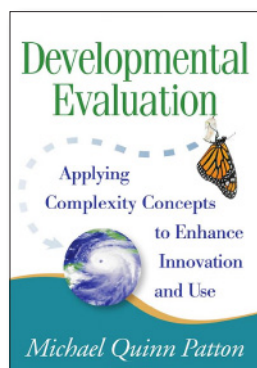
Onyx and Leonard conclude that complexity theory is indeed a useful tool for analyzing community development, and that their leadership study is an example of how complexity science can be applied to the field. Their work suggests that we should all keep abreast of and build bridges with the field of complexity because it promises to illuminate many of the dynamics that we see in community development. ■

Anne C. Kubisch is the director of the Roundtable on Community Change at The Aspen Institute.

A Wider, Wilder View of Program Evaluation

Michael Quinn Patton, *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use* (Guilford Press, 2010).

Reviewed by Sarah Rankin



How do we know that what we are doing works? How can we make it work better? Those are the basic questions that the field of program evaluation attempts to answer. In his fascinating new book *Developmental Evaluation*, evaluation guru Michael Quinn Patton gives evaluators permission to break out of some of the field's traditional boxes to find answers

for programs that are multifaceted, complicated and constantly evolving. He is, however, more successful in making a case for this approach than in providing a clear description of how to go about putting it in place.

Patton's most basic goal for the book is to stake a claim for a new category of program evaluation—the eponymous developmental evaluation. The two traditional types of program evaluation, formative and summative evaluation, are designed to be applied in succession to get to an answer to the question “does it work?” First, a formative evaluation is used to refine the program model, to define what “it” is and why we expect it to work. Then, once the program model has been perfected, a summative evaluation, preferably a randomized controlled trial (RCT), can be performed to prove once and for all that the intervention has the effect it purports to have. (Then, presumably, everyone who is trying to solve this particular problem will gamely adopt the approach and we can all move on to the next issue.)

Practitioners might shudder when they read the word “perfected.” Patton agrees. The first argument he makes is that in the real world, program models are very rarely finalized or perfected. Developmental evaluation is needed to handle situations where no one expects the program model to stand still, where practitioners are always adjusting to new circumstances and improving their approach.

Those working in community development, and particularly in comprehensive community development, might wonder if Patton is constructing something of a straw man to be easily dismantled—does anyone really think that program models will be locked in and monitored for fidelity of replication? The answer is yes; the insistence on “rigorous,” RCT evaluations with these assumptions is firmly established in fields like education, workforce development and health care.

Things start to get challenging as the book attempts to describe the developmental evaluation approach. Having acknowledged that most programs never “lock in,” Patton keeps going. One reason that program models might be continually evolving, he says, is that the problems they are trying to solve are complicated or complex. These are terms of art; much of the book is given over to complexity theory as applied to program development and evaluation, discussing ideas like nonlinearity, emergence, adaptation, dynamicism and uncertainty. When there are many causal strands interacting with each other, characterizing a pattern of cause and effect (necessary for testable predictions) can be very, very difficult at best, and likely impossible.

Again, comprehensive community development practitioners will recognize this dilemma as intrinsic to their work, and perhaps be surprised that some evaluation professionals seem to find it novel. (To be fair, Patton's masterly survey of evaluation literature on these subjects makes it clear that these topics have been under discussion for decades.) Here is where the book falls short, though it is difficult to blame Patton for failing to deliver on what may be an impossible demand. We all know that there is too much potential information available, especially when our goals are by definition comprehensive. That's a big reason we need a theory: to tell us how to determine what data is relevant to collect and what isn't.

A theory that tells us that all data might potentially be relevant may accurately reflect the real world, but it isn't

particularly helpful in narrowing down the scope of data collection. Just as the randomized controlled trial approach implies a menu of statistical models to help us answer questions about cause and effect, the complexity concepts introduced in the book are drawn from disciplines like biology, meteorology and information science, where they are used to make mathematical models of systems and predictions about how they behave. Patton makes a convincing case that complexity concepts are relevant to program evaluation, but does not provide any examples that use the mathematical techniques of complexity. Complexity is satisfying at the level of metaphor, but for it to be useful in an evaluation design we need some actual math. Patton provides none.

Indeed, the book contains no real prescription as to how to answer “does it work” using complexity concepts. Patton explicitly acknowledges that he is not providing “methods and tools” beyond a way of thinking about which questions are relevant to which situations. He quotes Mark Cabaj, another advocate of the developmental evaluation approach: “If you crave evaluation templates, formulas and frameworks, you will be frustrated with developmental evaluation.” His examples of successful developmental evaluations, for programs like a rural leadership initiative or an adaptation of a national workforce development program via community kitchens, include anecdotes about how evaluator insights led to programmatic adaptations, but they are short on in-depth descriptions of data collection approaches or evaluative criteria. Patton is trying to carve out space for evaluators to work on improving program delivery without requiring a thumbs up or thumbs down on whether the program “works.”

Instead, the book veers into a pointed—and on point—discussion of why we need rigorous answers to the “does it work” question anyway. After all, the users of the answer will be the ones who will determine whether the standard of proof

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is adequate for their purposes. One perfectly valid reason is to improve our practice, and it is my impression that for this purpose, Patton’s elastic, adaptive approach to evaluation may be more satisfying to practitioners than its more rigid predecessors.

Another reason we need to know whether “it” works, though, is to convince funders to provide the support to keep doing it. Here Patton confronts another fundamental assumption of the formative/summative model—the idea that once we have proved that something works, funders and practitioners will gladly contribute the capital and labor to replicate and scale it up. More often than not, he argues, the natural program development cycle is one of innovation, flourishing, creative destruction and regrouping/renewal (a sequence modeled on the adaptive cycle of ecosystems). Again, that might often be an accurate description of reality, but for those of us trying to show that complex interventions work and can have a positive impact in more and more neighborhoods, it falls a bit short.

In the end, this book provides many salient insights into the problems of creating and evaluating complex and dynamic programs, but it reads as more of a theory of program development than a guide to implementing a new kind of evaluation. ■

Sarah Rankin is a senior research associate at LISC.

Intergenerational Leadership

by Gordon Chin

In the Reflection section in the last issue of the *Journal*, my old friend Tom Espinoza talked about families as the backbone of communities. I want to say thank you to Tommy for his wonderful article because I completely agree that, indeed, “families do build communities.”

Let me complement this idea by talking about a corollary: “Communities can also build families.” What a neighborhood and the wider community offer to a family—how it protects, nurtures and supports that family—can mean a great deal for how well everyone in the family does, from grandparents to mom and dad to the kids.

And that brings me to the main topic I want to discuss in this Reflection, intergenerational leadership, which I believe is an important value to understand and to embrace in the work we do in thousands of communities in America.

Some of you know that I love Hawaii. In October, I retired from the Chinatown Community Development Center in San Francisco, and I’m planning on spending time in Hawaii. If I’m remembering it right, the Hawaiian word for elder is “*Kapuna*.” The word for adult is “*Makua*.” And the word for the younger generation is “*Opee’o*.” I guess I am at the *Kapuna* stage of my life (not to be confused with *Kahuna*, as in “boss” or *Big Kahuna*, the stage which I’m leaving).

I mention this because I’ve always been fascinated by the relationship between the generations in Hawaii and many immigrant and indigenous communities, relationships which are not as hierarchal as some might perceive. As adults we sometimes stereotype our elders as being valued for only their wisdom and our young people only for their energy. If truth be told, though, you and I know a lot of old folks who have no wisdom at all and younger folks who are simply lazy. On the other hand, I have drawn great strength from many of our seniors in Chinatown who have been energetic leaders for eight or nine decades and who are still doing it. I have also benefited from the wisdom of our youth who have the ability to cut to the chase on what needs to be done to “speak truth to power.”

When I was a young student activist, involved in the first student strike in the nation at San Francisco State University in

1969, I remember the difficult and stressful time I had talking to my parents and extended family about what I was doing. I was “embarrassing the family” by challenging authority and worst of all, it was in the newspapers and on TV! Painful times for me and them.

Not too many years later, when I was executive director of the Chinatown CDC, I remember how proud my folks were to see my picture in the paper, wearing a suit and standing next to the Mayor of San Francisco at one of our Chinatown events. It didn’t matter that my politics hadn’t changed that much. What did matter was that they understood I was an emerging leader for “their” community and I was a proud symbol of the many generations of our family in that place we call Chinatown. Place matters and family matters. And of course, cutting my hair and wearing a suit helped too.

Between graduating high school in 1966 and becoming executive director of the Chinatown CDC in 1977, I think I had something like 17 jobs. One of my favorite was as a youth worker for the Chinatown Youth Council in 1970-71. I remember one day during the Native American Occupation of Alcatraz Island, Al Miller, one of the Native American activists I had met in the San Francisco State student strike, asked if I wanted to take a group of Chinatown street kids out to Alcatraz (remember that there was selected access to the island during the more than a year and a half that the occupation lasted), I said “Wow,” and we spent the day out there.

One of my memories of that day was sitting around in a big circle right on the shore: me, a co-worker and ten Chinatown kids about 14-18 years of age. We were joined by a Native American woman, an “elder,” probably in her 80s. She talked about the struggle of her people, about the importance of her place called Alcatraz. I’ll never forget watching those kids, so quiet and rapt in attention, listening to an elder with a respect they didn’t show to their own parents or grandpar-

ents. What was also cool was that she did not just preach, but asked the youth about the struggles they were going through in their lives too, engaging them in an intergenerational sharing of story. The kids from Chinatown also really liked what she said about the “medicinal and spiritual qualities of peyote,” too.

During my 34-year tenure at the Chinatown CDC, I have seen many other examples of times where dialogue and efforts that span the generations have led to something greater than could ever have been accomplished if we had tried to keep to what might be considered more traditional roles. Our commitment to community organizing is personified by the Rev. Norman Fong, our long-time deputy director, who is now Chinatown CDC’s executive director. Norman’s vision created some of the strongest grassroots associations in San Francisco—the 800-member Community Tenants Association, the Chinatown SRO Collaborative and SRO Families United, and the Chinatown Adopt-an-Alleyway Youth Association (AAA). These voluntary associations have been strong advocates for the needs of our seniors, our immigrant families and our youth and children. And they have done so with a spirit of coalition building and mutual support between the generations.

For example, AAA middle school youth leaders lead clean-a-thons of our streets and alleyways, taught by high-school youth leaders. High-school and college-age leaders do home visits and group activities with seniors in our elderly projects. At the monthly “Super Sundays” (another program which Norman started) more than 400 seniors and families meet at a Chinatown school gymnasium to advocate for their needs with public officials while AAA youth take care of the children in the play yard. The youth leaders do this not only as “baby sitters,” but with pride that their parents and grandparents are inside the gym fighting for their community. Community does build family.

Chinatown seniors, families and youth have also worked together on many public policy issue campaigns affecting their individual and collective interests—including three dif-

ferent affordable housing bond campaigns in San Francisco, protests against cutting off permanent residents from Social Security benefits and in support of the Dream Act, as well as hundreds of demonstrations at city hall and the state capitol against devastating government budget cuts. It has been heartwarming to see our youth and seniors organizing together on such issues, conducting joint voter registration drives and sharing leadership.

It is important to integrate such intergenerational leadership into the governance of our organizations in a deliberate, structural way. For example, the Chinatown CDC board of directors has four low-income senior members and three youth/young adult members who help decide the policy positions and strategic directions of the organization.

I have been excited to see in recent years an expanded focus on generational change and the challenge and opportunity presented by the retiring baby boomer generation, including yours truly. Examples include the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development’s Next Generation leadership program, the Marguerite Casey Foundation’s “Equal Voices Campaign,” the wonderful Building Movement Project and a recent paper from Compass Point about Next Generation Organizations. They suggest a new paradigm of generational and inter-generational leadership between us as *Kapuna, Makua and Opee’o*. ■

Gordon Chin is the founder and, until this October, the executive director of the Chinatown Community Development Center, one of San Francisco’s most prominent community groups. Under his leadership, the organization has grown to serve 3,500 residents in 2,200 affordable housing units, improved parks, playgrounds and alleyways, advocated for better public transit and other municipal services, and provided social services to thousands of low-income families, youth and seniors.

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