

Future Search in Action: MCH and Public Health Examples November 22, 2006

During the summer of 2006, in preparation for the Maternal and Child Health Federal/State Partnership Meeting, held in October 2006, I collected information on 12 communities that have used Future Search to promote the health and well being of children and families. We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the people who kindly provided us with the information and insights on the experience and impact of Future Search in these stories.

We have also drawn extensively from the wealth of resources available through the Future Search Network (www.futuresearch.net); *Future Search in School District Change – Connection, Community, and Results* (Edited by Rita Schweitz and Kim Martens with Nancy Aronson), Scarecrow Education, Lanham, Maryland, 2005; and from *Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations and Communities*, (Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff), Second Edition, Berrertt- Koehler Publishers: San Francisco, 2000. A special thank you goes to Ali Kopelman, a pediatric resident at Maine Medical Center, for her help.

Richard A. Aronson, MD, MPH
MCH Medical Director, Maine
207 287 5345

Richard.Aronson@maine.gov
aronson@verizon.net

California – Orange County Food and Fitness

Title: A Call to Action: Fresh Ideas on Food and Fitness for Orange County Kids.

Date: December 2003

Location: Orange County, California

Purpose: To change the model of practice from care (direct service) to systemic change (advocacy and prevention – address root causes).

Sponsor: Orange County Health Partnership

Contacts: Maya Dunne, Vice President, St. Joseph Health System Foundation, mdunne@corp.stjoe.org Bonnie Olson, Emerging Design Consulting, emerging@oz.net

Facilitators: Bonnie Olson, Rigo Rodriguez

Stakeholders: Public health services, families, hospitals and physicians, associations, city staff (planning, parks, and recreation), restaurant owners, foundations, and school officials.

Special Features: The high level of interest and concern about the issue helped forge a coalition of funders (private and governmental) committed to acting on the outcomes of the process. The local public television station taped the process

and interviews with participants, and did a brief video on the conference, helping the process, according to Susan Zepeda, Orange County Future Search Coordinator, who is currently Executive Director of Healthy Kentucky.

Long term Goals:

- 1) To create child and youth environments that promote healthy food and fitness standards.
- 2) To create a community mobilized to counteract aggressive marketing of unhealthy foods to children.
- 3) A full range of needed services to overweight children, filling identified gaps.
- 4) Safe places for active play in the community.
- 5) Access to affordable, healthy foods.
- 6) Restaurants and markets that support healthy food choices.
- 7) To construct walkable communities.
- 8) To sustain health and fitness as an integral part of the school day and environment.

Outcomes - Progress Toward These Goals:

- 1) **Obtaining Grants:** Four implementation grants, and one planning grant were obtained for the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, the Mission Hospital, the City of Laguna Hills, and the Fullerton Collaborative totaling over \$300,000.
- 2) **Continued Partnerships:** Diabetes Focus - The Prevention Institute (<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/home.html>), in partnership with [Samuels & Associates](#) (S&A) and [Berkeley Media Studies Group](#) (BMSG), work with Orange County communities to support a multi-year, countywide initiative to prevent Type II Diabetes and its major risk factors among children and families. Through quarterly community meetings, Orange County stakeholders receive training about advocacy strategies, effective policies, and environmental approaches to improve opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.
- 3) **Empowering Communities:** The Community Action Partnership of Orange County (<http://www.capoc.org/>) obtained money as part of the collaborative grants. Placentia was a planning charrette for a 100-acre downtown redevelopment project. The project borders two of the five low-income neighborhoods that are part of the Community Building Initiative (CBI). Community members attended an initial meeting, followed by their own dialogue with the planning consultants to discuss, in Spanish, their concerns and issues. An additional opportunity developed when the Parks and Recreation Commission held two public hearings to get community input on the current status and future development of parks and athletic/recreation programs. The community members took advantage of the opportunity and conducted three site visits to parks in Placentia, made assessments, and together presented a report to the Commission at the

first hearing. Their request to the commission was to invest in existing parks, by installing lighting, benches and grills, and providing additional patrols to reduce drug dealing and loitering before considering building new parks. (http://www.hfpoc.org/pr_diabetes2.jsp)

- 4) **More Ripple Effects:** The Valencia Task Force, the Soccer and Scouting Program, and the City of Fullerton, have developed a low cost soccer league with 150 children participating. Parent participation is required as a way to assure family involvement. Also, the City has committed to allocate funds to light the field to allow extended hours for sports activities. Funding from the grant has been used to provide swim passes for children at the community pool and to organize dance classes.

Lessons Learned:

- 1) It is essential for the traditionally marginalized and “served” stakeholders to be involved in the process that “serves” them. Only when everyone is “onboard” can change occur.
- 2) For community-wide change to happen, the stakeholders should be as diverse as possible. In this case, they included a wide range of people from all walks of life – family members, teachers, company executives, funders, health professionals and city planners and managers. An outside institution, in this case the Prevention Institute, that helps facilitate continued meetings among stakeholders, can play an important role in helping to sustain and foster change.

California—San Gabriel Healthy Youth

Title: Healthy Youth in Healthy Families

Date: September 1999

Location: Social Hall of the Church of Our Savior, San Gabriel, California

Sponsor: San Gabriel Unified School District

Facilitators: Vera Jashni, Jean Katz

Contact: Jean Katz, Consultant. jeankatz@earthlink.net

Stakeholders: 70 stakeholders from eight groups including students, parents, teachers, administrators, health care providers, counselors, mental health providers, and government services such as police and parks and recreation.

Purpose: To develop a vision for the new Family Resource Center, determine areas of primary focus, and commit to action.

Special Features: The work of a few “champions” was able to inspire a whole community to work together. [The story goes back to 1998 when Antonia Clark, a](#)

school nurse, had a vision for the San Gabriel Healthy Start Collaborative, a concerned group of school counselors, nurses, and parents met to discuss ways to bring needed services to youth. Ms. Clark inspired a wide array of stakeholders to become involved, resulting in the Future Search and a successful planning grant from California Healthy Start (Department of Education). The school superintendent, Gary Goodson, was also instrumental in uniting and inspiring people around this effort. The Future Search also led to the start-up of the San Gabriel Family Resource Center, which uses a one-stop shop model for health, mental health, and social needs for students. It is rooted in the core assumption, expressed at the Future Search, that good health is essential to successful learning.

Outcomes

Short Term:

- 1) Start-up action to create a one-stop shop - a coordinated center that met the health, mental health, and social needs of students and families, leading to greater academic success.
- 2) Action teams to review current systems for providing services, identify untapped assets in specific areas of need, and recommend steps to address priority issues. The teams focused on teen pregnancy, health, mental health, after school services, safe neighborhoods, and academic improvement.
- 3) A group to gather demographic and resource information, ensuring extensive input from students and parents.
- 4) A vision for a new San Gabriel Community Foundation that would provide an endowment to sustain programs and services for youth.
- 5) Future Search participants committed to involve themselves on at least one action team and to recruit other parents, students, and community members.

Long Term:

- 1) **Turning a vision into reality:** Creation of the San Gabriel Healthy Start Family Resource Center (FRC) in March 2000, funded by a three year Healthy Start grant. The center provides medical care, dental referrals, free immunization clinics, Healthy Families/Medi-Cal medical insurance assistance, English as a Second Language classes, legal assistance referrals, transportation assistance, mental health services and referrals, health education classes, parent education, after-school tutoring and mentoring, and emergency food services. Collaborative partners include education, counseling, medical services, career education, recreation, law enforcement, parenting, and funding and grant writing.
- 2) **Forging new partnerships:** An expansion of mental health and safety services resulted from new partnerships inspired by the Future Search. Also, a collaboration between San Gabriel Valley Medical Center, Catholic Health Care West, Soroptomist (a community service club), and the

- California Employment Department's Career Partners created a mentoring and internship program for pregnant and at-risk teens
- 3) **Obtaining Grants:** The FRC obtained a Los Angeles Care Grant to develop a health clinic that opened in 2002.
 - 4) **Ensuring that those served were stakeholders in the process:** Basic food needs were often not met prior to the Future Search. Food donations had too often consisted of damaged and rejected goods, a situation that the recipients at the Future Search perceived as disrespectful. As a result, Roy Rossel forged connections to Dove Ministries International (DMI), a non-profit agency that provides new food and gift items. Community families received free food in a respectful manner—in return, many of the parents volunteer as warehouse packers for DMI.

Learning Points:

- 1) People will commit to change when they feel that they have a stake in the future.
- 2) Personal invitations by the Superintendent, school nurse, and others on the planning committee were instrumental in getting diverse stakeholders to the conference. All invitations were made by phone or face-to face before an invitation letter was sent. The date of the conference was set based on the availability of some key players.
- 3) The creation of action teams of committed people that can focus on specific issues and goals are crucial in creating and sustaining change.
- 4) New partnerships resulting from Future Search can foster conditions for a community to leverage new resources.
- 5) A few people with vision can serve as a catalyst for bringing a community together.
- 6) The outcomes continue to this day. Variation depends on who is the leader each year, and that has changed. It also depends on the availability of grant funding. The continuing monthly meetings of the Healthy Start Collaborative help to keep Future Search principles alive.

Wisconsin: Reducing Infant Mortality in Milwaukee

Title: Discovering Common Ground to Reduce Infant Mortality in Wisconsin

Dates: March 1994, December 2005, June 2000)

Locations: Wingspread Conference Center, Gray's Child Care Center, Milwaukee Job Center Northwest

Sponsors: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Milwaukee Healthy Women and Infants Project, Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin

Facilitators: Richard Aronson, Cynthia Bryant Pitts, Dan Holden, Terry Wallace, Debra Jack

Contact: Richard Aronson, Richard.Aronson@maine.gov.

Context

An ongoing crisis in maternal and infant health in the black community of Milwaukee stirred a diverse group of health and social service providers, community leaders, families, foundations, Health Maintenance Organizations, and State Medicaid and MCH leaders to look for new solutions to the infant mortality disparities. They called themselves Milwaukee Common Ground (MCG). In a series of three Future Searches (March 1994, December 1995, June 2000) over seven years, they built the foundation for family-centered and culturally competent strategies for addressing infant mortality.

Future Search Participants

City Hospitals, Public Health, Managed Care, Foundations, Education, Clergy, Community Leaders, Government Officials, Welfare Reform, Federal Healthy Start, and Families. Wisconsin MCH Title V played an active role from the start.

Outcomes

- The African-American infant mortality rate in Wisconsin has remained at roughly the same rate during the past 20 years, and the disparity between black and white infant mortality has increased.

“The black infant mortality problem is complex and requires an intense multifaceted approach, of which Future Search must be a part. We are up against decades of economic, racial and ethnic disparity and have been able to tap into the true richness of Milwaukee’s residents, but the actions have not reached the point of shaking the IM rate. We know that Future Search has already equipped about 200 people with the tools to address not just infant mortality, but also a wide array of other public health issues. “

--Richard Aronson, MD, Former Chief Medical Officer for Family and Community Health, Wisconsin Division of Public Health.

- Common Ground became a key forum in which people felt relatively safe in discussing sensitive and divisive issues. Successive meetings included youth, the public school system and Hispanic and Hmong communities.
- Increased involvement of families and community members in shaping state policy in programs such as the Prenatal Care Coordination Medicaid Benefit.
- Families from the two Federal Healthy Start sites in Wisconsin – Milwaukee Healthy Beginnings and Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council – organized and ran a series of annual Family Gatherings, “Families Helping Families and Infants through Healthy Start Projects”, grounded in Future Search principles.

- Milwaukee Fetal Infant Mortality Review Program (FIMR) created a community-rooted approach to the review of infant deaths.
- The Milwaukee Healthy Beginnings Project, the Federal Healthy Start Program housed in the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin (which evaluated the first Future Search in 1994), offered funding, staff support, and facilitator training for the third Future Search in 2000.
- Milwaukee Common Ground fostered the conditions that made it possible for community-rooted organizations such as Milwaukee Healthy Women and Infants and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin to receive the Federal Healthy Start funding. Both organizations were key partners and leaders in Future Search.
- “Future Search conferences are very positive in getting institutions to open their minds to the fact that affected communities have answers as well as needs. Most of the health care and other institutions have been very receptive to becoming active members of the Milwaukee Healthy Beginnings Project and have provided resources to us. This would have not been possible without a number of these same institutions attending the conferences.” --Patricia McManus, Executive Director, Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin

Further Impact

“I believe that Future Search was the womb and birth place for many of the progressive ways that services are delivered to families.

-- Mary Musk, parent, Former Co-Chair of the State MCH Program Advisory Committee, previous Chair of HealthWatch and an active member of Milwaukee Common Ground all the way through.

“FIMR (Fetal Infant Mortality Review) would not have been possible without the first Future Search. That meeting led to an airing of many sensitive concerns and a great respect for finding models and approaches for reducing infant deaths.”

--Jennifer Hammel, Former Project Coordinator, Fetal Infant Mortality Review Project.

“Milwaukee has multiple problems around racial disharmony and many of our problems are related to our lack of interaction with different cultures. Future Search is the place where we left titles, differences, fears, superiority, and denial at the door. It helped us achieve cultural education, cultural values and common sense.”

--Jestene McCord, Former Director of Urban Affairs for Aurora HealthCare.

The Medicaid Managed Care Program in Wisconsin involved Common Ground participants in a process to make access into the HMO system simpler and more responsive to the unique needs and strengths of women, children and families.

PrimeCare, the largest HMO in Wisconsin, has engaged in outreach efforts in partnership with community-based organizations. “My experience was very, very positive in that it opened up significant new channels of communication among people and enabled me to be part of several outreach efforts, one example being Milwaukee Healthy Women and Infants Program.”

--Larry Rambo, Former CEO of PrimeCare, the largest HMO in Wisconsin.

Maine I – Early Childhood Systems

Title: Moving Forward Together: Building a Future for the Children of Maine

Date: January 2005

Location: Maple Hill Farm, Hallowell, Maine

Sponsor: Maine Early Childhood Initiative (ECCS), Children’s Cabinet Task Force on Early Childhood

Facilitators: Donna Singer, Cynthia Bryant Pitts

Contact: Sheryl Peavey, Sheryl.peavey@maine.gov or Richard Aronson, Richard.aronson@maine.gov

Stakeholders: 75 stakeholders comprised of representatives from parents, guardians, families; children and youth; state, local and federal government; investors (business, philanthropy, health insurance); education (primary-graduate); early care and education providers; health care providers; community organizations, leaders, clergy and advocates.

Purpose: Discover our common ground for the future of Maine’s children and determine and initiate action for creating that future. In short, create a working plan for Maine’s early childhood systems.

Outcomes (in the words of participants)

Short Term:

- 1) “Increased public awareness of the connections and relationships between child and family serving programs that span public health, education, labor, economics, environment and corrections.”
- 2) “Our commitment to building capacity through our Communities for Children and Youth Americorps VISTA Project...”
- 3) “Early Learning Guidelines were printed, trainings piloted and then established training through MRTQ [Maine Roads to Quality Early Care and Education Professional Development Lattice]”
- 4) “Having our state's Attorney General be a super-active advocate for Early Childhood services and now going out regularly throughout the state to Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and other general public-type organizations about why it is important that Maine "Invests Early" in its children is a critical and valuable addition to our work.”

- 5) "Cross disciplinary training being shared between Home Visitors and Early Head Start."
- 6) "The Maine Children's Congress around Community Approaches to Four Year Olds"

Long Term Outcomes:

- 1) "The creation, finally, of a Division of Early Childhood [within the reorganized Maine Department of Health and Human Services] is a huge step forward and was a major accomplishment..."
- 2) "The expanding focus on the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences, starting with infants, by committing resources to building resiliency in parents and others through home visiting, family networks, community support, and sensitive caring as they cope with recovery from their own Adverse Childhood Experiences."
- 3) Completion, sharing and use of our comprehensive state plan, *Invest Early in Maine: A Working Plan for Humane Early Childhood Systems (2006)*

Learning Points:

"Maine's Early Childhood Future Search process heightened my personal understanding of cultural competency ... Spending three intense and productive days with a group of amazingly diverse people (chronologically, racially, socio-economically, and professionally diverse) forced me to experience how differently we all "name" and label" our priorities through our communication styles, challenges, strengths, and humor, as we collectively sought a common outcome for Maine's youngest citizens. Knowing this, I better understand the lengths to which we will need to go to ensure we get the message of our comprehensive humane plan out to the people of Maine."

Maine II – Family Centered Service Systems for Children

Title: Creating Family Centered Practice for Maine's Children

Date: September 2006

Location: Harraseeket Inn, Freeport, Maine

Sponsor: Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services

Facilitators: Tony Morrison, Sheryl Peavey, Richard Aronson (Coach, Mentor)

Contact: Sheryl Peavey, Sheryl.peavey@maine.gov or Richard Aronson, Richard.aronson@maine.gov

Stakeholders: 88 stakeholder representatives from youth, young adults, parents, home visitors, child welfare services, juvenile justice, corrections, substance abuse providers, family advocates, early care and education providers,

therapeutic foster care and residential treatment centers, health care providers, mental health providers and government services including senior management.

Purpose: To create a solid foundation of understanding and begin the important work of changing how we work with and support families in philosophy, policy and practice. To ensure the right services at the right time for the right duration for every family.

Special Features: The voice of youth and families who have experienced both the helpful and the dysfunctional attributes of the “system” generated a much higher level of awareness and commitment to changing the way the state and community providers do business. Youth expressed pride in being part of the solution the future search is creating.

Outcomes

Goals:

- 1) Realize that active listening and understanding and respectful relationships are as important as services and practice models, not only in our work with families but also with each other.
- 2) Understand the barriers that prevent access to services and work to create a family-friendly enrollment process that helps clarify silo/funding-driven eligibility requirements.
- 3) Agreement that language terminology often inhibits understanding and collaboration. District based groups will work on creating functional definitions of *normalization, evidence based, strengths-based, permanency, cultural competency*.
- 4) Establish better lines of communication to share work that is being done at the state level and ensure it represents real-time work done out in the local communities; develop a Common Ground Web Page as a forum to post updates.
- 5) Incorporate as practice an annual “town meeting” with leadership from all state departments that gives families a forum for expression and suggestion.

Learning Points:

- 1) The commitment of state agencies to participate in a three-day event and provide the support for ongoing partnership work is crucial to conveying the message that the time investment will generate a powerful return for all participants.
- 2) Accountability must be held by every one of us, at every level, with every family.
- 3) Communities want the authority to begin working together in a way that respects their unique needs and resources.
- 4) Sustainable change is possible only when all voices are heard and heeded.

Minnesota – Healthy Learners in Minneapolis

Title: Creating a Community for Healthy Learners in Minneapolis, Minnesota

Date: February 1996

Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota

Purpose: Focus on the future of health care for school-aged children and the roles of the school and community in helping them.

Sponsor: Allina Foundation, Catherine Perme, and Sara Mullett.

Contact: Sara Mullett, smullett1@earthlink.net

Stakeholders: Minneapolis Health Related Services staff, paraprofessional union members, health care providers, government agencies, school administrators, private foundations and community activists

Special Features: Very diverse and often contentious groups were brought together under one roof so that all voices were heard—common goals and visions were then able to be shared and unify the groups.

Goals:

- 1) To have a clear mission for promoting the health of school children
- 2) To create a broad definition of health
- 3) To forge a partnership between public health services and community health care organizations and providers
- 4) To set up accountability and outcome measures for evaluating student health and its impact on learning
- 5) To focus on prevention and early intervention.

Long Term Accomplishments:

- 1) Connecting students with their medical homes.
- 2) Improved immunization rates through the “No shots, no school” campaign.
- 3) Healthy Learners Asthma Initiative has reduced absentee rates.
- 4) A collaborative of 28 local decision makers called The Healthy Learners Board and Partnership to sustain the energy of Future Search Work. This was a volunteer board that worked until 2004 to sustain the Future Search goals, and provided the foundation for ongoing partnerships after it ceased operating.
- 5) Continued work on mental health issues using the model created by the Healthy Learners Asthma Initiative.
- 6) “This work did not happen overnight and in fact will never be done. But in the 12 years I was with the District, amazing things were accomplished. We were successful in defining clear roles for the different levels of health staff and in developing partnerships with families, the community, and health care providers to improve health of students. Improved communication between the various players was a result that played a huge role in promoting healthier students. Student health services

became part of the team rather than marginalized and working in isolation. Providers had more awareness of the health needs of students and the impact on learning while school administrators had more understanding of the health care system and its importance for student success. And even with significant school district budget cuts, health services particularly nursing services have been sustained.” Sara Mullett, [Director of Health Related Services \(includes school nursing among other health related programs\)](#), and Future Search Coordinator.

Important Lessons:

- 1) It is crucial to give all the stakeholders a voice in the process, acknowledging fears and uncertainties. Although people might feel isolated in their concerns—open discussion can often pave the way to assurance that they’re not alone and thus allow for change to happen.
- 2) The creation of infrastructure to sustain and unify plans for change is crucial. The Healthy Learning Board formed out of 70 volunteers who were inspired to make the community’s vision a reality. Although the Board ceased functioning in 2004, its members have continued to practice Future Search principles.
- 3) Programs are so often dictated by the grant funding available. With the creation of clear goals, grants can indeed help support the work rather than direct it.

Montana: 4-H

Title: Montana 4-H Future Search: Making the Best Better

Date: April 2004

Location: Red Lodge, Montana

Purpose: To create a vision for youth and families in Montana and the role that Montana 4-H should play in that future.

Sponsor: Montana State University President Geoff Gamble, Montana 4-H

Contact: Dr. Kirk Astroth, Director 4-H Center for Youth Development
kastroth@montana.edu

Stakeholders: 4-H youth, 4-H adult volunteers, donors and alumni, local elected officials and policy makers, 4-H Center for Youth Development staff, county extension agents, educators and campus faculty, tribes, communications and media, commodity groups, fair boards and other special interest group representatives.

Special Features: Included Montana youth in the process to help plan their futures. Jo Ann Dotson, Bureau Chief of Montana Maternal and Child Health Department, is aware and supportive of this effort. This Future Search was one of 11 that have been held in Montana since 2000.

Key Outcomes:

Short Term: Work groups formed to build alumni associations, improve 4-H marketing locally and regionally, to increase leader and member enrollment, to evaluate existing programs, to increase youth involvement and to increase school and 4-H relationships.

Long Term Accomplishments:

- Alumni Association established to cultivate a long-term support base from previous members.
- State marketing campaign in place to promote 4-H and change the public's image of 4-H as something more than "cows & cooking."
- Utilization of a compressed video system to conduct training around the state.
- Have increased youth participation in governance roles, primarily through the establishment of a 16 member all-youth Montana 4-H Youth Cabinet to advise and give counsel to the Montana 4-H program. Have also added more youth representatives to the Montana 4-H Council and the Montana 4-H Foundation.
- Expanded volunteer leader training through the 4-H Leaders' College curriculum.
- Secured a grant to deliver an educational program aimed at middle school youth called "Media Smart Youth" that teaches media literacy, nutrition and exercise.

Main Learning Point: It is crucial to include all stakeholders in creating a vision. The youth who are being served can and should be included in the planning and executive processes. Inclusion of all voices ensures that a shared vision is created and that everyone involved commits to a stake in the future.

Montana – Early Childhood

Title: Montana Early Childhood Future Search

Date: April 12-14, 2000

Location: Grouse Mountain Lodge, Whitehall, Montana

Sponsor: Montana Head Start/State Collaboration Office and the Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network and Montana Dept. of Public Health and Human Services

Facilitators: Susan Rohrbough, Kirk Astroth and Libby Hancock

Contact: Mary Jane Standaert, mjstandaert@mt.gov

Stakeholders: Business owners/managers, organized labor, parents and workers, education professionals, human service professionals, child care providers and preschool teachers, federal and state department staff, state and local government representatives and tribes.

Purpose: To develop a vision and action plan for Early Childhood in Montana.

Action Plan:

- To create universal access to quality early care and education for 3-5 year olds
- To direct public policy development regarding early childhood issues by establishing a central office of early childhood.'
- To ensure health and safety of young children by improving regulatory enforcement.
- To encourage employer support of workers' child care needs by creating meaningful tax incentives for family friendly businesses.
- To link families with available community resources by improving collaboration between services and supporting community-level Future Search processes.
- To increase public awareness regarding early childhood issues and their impact on Montana families and businesses.

Accomplishments: All six action steps have been addressed, altered as time changed the environment and stakeholders, but the most important accomplishment was raised awareness, inclusion of early childhood in many more state discussions and decisions and the community teams and activities that followed with small community grants to nine different communities. In addition, early childhood people began to work as a team with one voice, which had been splintered and chaotic previously.

Learning Points: (Quote from a participant) – “All too often government officials gather to solve societal problems without including those who have a personal stake in the issues. Future Search gave a voice to young mothers and child care providers. The dividend is an excellent plan for a Montana child care system.”

Contact: Mary Jane Standaert, Montana Head Start/State Collaboration Office, PO Box 202925, Helena, MT 59620 –2925, Phone: 406-444-0589, Fax: 406-444-2547, Email: mjstandaert@mt.gov

Nebraska – North Platte

Title: The Coming Together Conference: Action Planning for Assuring the Continued Quality of Life in Lincoln County

Date: November 1997

Location: North Platte, Nebraska

Purpose: Develop common plan for future needs of families and youth; to insure that Lincoln County continues to be a community that promotes, for all its citizens, the highest quality of life through integrated health services, quality education, and economic opportunity.

Sponsor: Connections

Contact: Kathy Seacrest, kseacrest@yahoo.com

Facilitators: Rita Schweitz, Ken Seeley

Stakeholders: members of business, education, health, human services, government, community volunteers, criminal justice, and youth

Special Features: A sense of community pride and a willingness to work together, including youth involvement. “The key to getting key people to come was personal invitation. Making this event a priority for a few of us helped initiate the energy that led to participation by many. Leadership and a sense of purpose were critical ingredients. While we had great leadership from the schools, the heart of the success is that leadership came from schools, agencies, government and business. All the entities were willing to put forth people and time” Kathy Seacrest, Future Search coordinator.

Outcomes

Short Term:

- 1) The Connections coordinating team applied for and received a \$100,000 grant from the Nebraska Foundation for Families and Children.
- 2) Connections—now known as Community Connections—expanded and is now an umbrella organization that facilitates communication, cooperation and coordination among more than 70 participating organizations and numerous at-large members, with over 260 Lincoln county resident volunteers and more than 615 families receiving direct assistance.

Long Term Accomplishments:

- 1) Creation of a “schools-as-centers” program, a model to combine a range of education, health, and social services to ensure that children would be ready and able -socially, physically and emotionally - to learn. “Schools as Centers came from a dream, from a skit at the Future Search. And now it’s fabulous.” Lois Brooks (community activist and Future Search participant),
- 2) Increased youth involvement and acknowledgement of youth as an untapped resource. One nonvoting youth was added to the school board.
- 3) K.I.D.S. (Kids involved in Dynamic Stuff) Klub was developed to establish a convenient and safe location for parents to leave their children (eliminating the latchkey problem) that was well-supervised, involved in fun activities and expanded learning beyond the classroom. Under the aegis of Community Connections, it obtained the 21st Century Community Learning Center 1.2 million grant to expand before-school, after-school and summer programs.

- 4) Formation of many other community programs, including the Youth Asset Building Program, the Lincoln County Tobacco Coalition Program, the High Expectations Mentoring Program and the SWAT (Services with Activities for Teens) Team. Many of these programs have youth as leaders and active participants, as well as goals of serving the youth and community.

Learning Points:

- 1) Social capital - rooted in tapping into the cooperative human impulses that represent a powerful resource for positive change - is an intrinsic cornerstone of Future Search. Although the idea of “social capital” had not been named when this Future Search occurred, the conference resulted in the creation of relevant programs because a community looked within to its own resources to take responsibility for change.
- 2) Creating and/or expanding on infrastructure to coordinate projects is crucial—it ensures that movements can be sustained even when staff changes.
- 3) Having planning committees continue to meet once or twice a year, reflecting upon what has been accomplished and continuing to assess community voices for need, helps sustain vision over time.

New Hampshire and Vermont – Health Care Access

Title: One Hundred Percent Access to Health Care: Can We Afford to Have It? Can We Not Afford to Have It?

Date: November 2000

Location: Brownsville, Vermont

Purpose: To examine access to healthcare and (hopefully) plan for 100% access.

Sponsor: Bi-State Primary Care Association

Facilitators: Donna Singer, Richard Aronson, Bill Elmore, Bonnie Sontag.

Contact: Donna Singer, donna@donnasingerconsulting.com

Stakeholders: Foundations, providers, advocates, legislative, insurers, consumers, educators, state government, and faith-based groups.

Special Features: Two concurrent side-by-side Future Searches for two states

Key Outcomes:

Goals:

VERMONT – To develop broad-based public dialogue, to create a paperless system, to help 100% of Vermont providers access a central information site, to expand access and use of telemedicine, to initiate state-wide health care planning using common data, to promote culturally competent care, to support employers in promoting healthy lifestyles and to develop a "reasonable costs" system.

NEW HAMPSHIRE – To develop a broad-based public dialogue, to engage missing voices, to build community-based health care systems, to develop health insurance options, to promote existing access points, to develop wellness programs for seniors, to define basic care and fund resources to sustain this effort.

Long Term Accomplishments:

- 1) Catamount Health – Legislation enacted in 2006 to guarantee health insurance coverage for all Vermonters (Tess Stack Kuenning, Executive Director).
- 2) Creation of Shared Perspectives: The benefit was getting a diverse group of people together... providing an opportunity to build a cohesive force, leading to more discussions and strategies on how to obtain an integrated healthcare system. Even though many of the people already knew the issues and each other, they were able to take the energy and momentum from the Future Search and keep it alive after the meeting. (Donna Singer)
- 2) Creation of New Initiatives: It helped to motivate a lot of activity; one of the pearls in the string of pearls. It supported a momentum of discussion to think through how we could work toward a gradual systemic change in the health care system in our states. For example, advocates have been successful to raise Medicaid fee for service rates for all providers for medical and dental care, which could be a major ripple from this event. (Donna Singer)
- 3) Specific Outcomes: Energy from the FS carried over where Anthem Blue Cross picked up the ball with two significant events that perhaps wouldn't have happened in the same way had the meeting not taken place first. People came to those Anthem Blue Cross events with a stronger agenda, stronger voice, and higher level of expectation probably because of the future search. (Donna Singer)
- 4) Ripple Effects: It increased the stature of Bi-State Primary Care Association, with an increased understanding of synergies throughout the state(s).

Lessons Learned:

- 1) Future Search is one tool that can help bring diverse voices together.
- 2) The ripple effects from a Future Search conference are not always apparent at first, but often can be related to long-term effects.

New Mexico - Department of Public Health

Title: Managing Change: Working together to Achieve Health for All
Date: April 1997
Location: Cloudcroft, New Mexico
Purpose: To improve the health of all people living in southwestern New Mexico.
Sponsor: New Mexico Department of Public Health, District III

Facilitators: Richard Aronson, Cynthia Bryant Pitts, Bruce Schooling
Contact: Chris Roesel, croesel@hotmail.com; Esther Devall, PhD, Family and Consumer Sciences Department, New Mexico State University, edevall@nmsu.edu);

Stakeholders: District service teams, statewide service team, public health nursing, social services, advocates, Families First, Private providers, WIC.

Special Focus: The planning for the conference was strong, with a committed planning group led by Chris Roesel of the New Mexico Public Health Department. The conference participants reflected the remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity of New Mexico.

Key Outcomes:

Short term: Work groups that formed at the end of the conference focused on school and community partnerships; one-stop shopping; alliance with providers; parents' promise group; non-violence; activating youth; and an environmental action group.

Long term Accomplishments:

- 1) Creation of Shared Perspective: "It got us to think in a "broader scope", a global perspective. Future Search is one of those "rivulets to the sea, pathways up the mountain" on the quest for people to realize and live in a way that is true to our inter-connectedness, and to the need for global moral leadership. " (Paul Lang)

- 2) Creation of Goal-Focused Organizations: It, in part, gave rise to The Wellness Coalition (TWC), (<http://www.wellnesscoalition.org/index.html>), a regional, independent non-profit organization working in four remote and rural southwestern New Mexico counties, that continues to thrive today. Working with Health Councils in each county, the Coalition identifies health and wellness needs of each population, gaps in services and planning priorities. In each county, many important programs have been initiated, such as the public transportation

system and the Family Support Program in Grant County and the youth program in Catron County. TWC provides a forum for learning lessons from each other, identifying common priorities, and regionalizing some of the great county programs. TWC applies for funding sources that would be difficult to obtain for just one county or one service provider alone, such as the Healthy Community Access Program. (Louis Luna)

- 4) Creation of New Initiatives: Led, in part, to a significant expansion of the Full House Child Development Center, with national accreditation by NAYEC, the agency that certifies child care centers. The Center, housed in a new building, includes infants and toddlers. A pre-kindergarten initiative began in August 2006. Also, led by Jack Meyer, the Full House Center received funding from an El Paso foundation in August 2006 to serve pregnant women and children from birth to three, not covered by existing programs. (Jack Meyer, jsmeyer@hotmail.com)
- 5) Ripple Effects: The Cloudcroft Future Search led to a second Future Search Conference in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Sixty two parents, agency personnel, educators, university professors, church leaders, and aides of elected officials attended. An end result was the establishment of a Parenting Task Force. Under the direction of Esther Devall and Chris Roesel, the Parenting Task Force applied for and received two major grants: (a) a one-year Success by 6 grant of \$160,000 from United Way of America and the Bank of America in 1998 to establish parenting resource centers in Dona Ana County; and (b) a two-year Family Strengthening grant of \$200,000 from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in 1999 to provide parenting education to low-income parents at WIC clinics in Las Cruces, New Mexico.
- 6) New Funding: Based on the success of these grants, Esther Devall achieved the following three grants: (a) a three-year grant of \$500,000 from USDA in 2003 to provide parenting education to parents at WIC clinics in Dona Ana County, New Mexico and to train WIC staff across the state in parenting and child development; (b) a four-year grant of \$3.2 million from the New Mexico Human Services Department in 2003 to provide parenting education to high-risk families in 17 counties in New Mexico; and (c) a one-year grant of \$240,000 from Value Options New Mexico in 2006 to provide parenting education to underserved audiences in New Mexico, including rural families and Native American families.

Lessons Learned

1. When communities come together to take ownership of their past and present before creating a shared vision and common ground, they are more likely to achieve the results attained in this case.

2. Rural and diverse communities can be brought together—differences acknowledged and common aspirations enunciated. Group resources can then be maximized to serve the whole community.
3. The ripple effects of Future Search often take years to manifest themselves. Continued meetings and additional Future Searches can renew a vision of change, sustain action, and reinvigorate a community.

Oklahoma – Birth Outcome and Infant Mortality Disparities

The Tulsa Area Coalition on Perinatal Care organized and held a Future Search Conference in August 2001 entitled, "Blueprint for Change: Addressing Racial and Economic Disparities", with the purpose of strengthening community integrated services to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality and morbidity.

The Coalition had been instrumental in obtaining the Healthy Start Grant for Tulsa, and was active in several other endeavors including Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR). Sensing the need for stronger systems integration, and in concert with Oklahoma Title V, they obtained a Community Integrated Service Systems (CISS) Grant from the MCH Bureau...and, as part of that grant, held a series of four meetings on cultural and linguistic competence, which preceded the Future Search Conference. Both John Snow and Health Systems Research were also involved in sponsoring the conference.

The conference took place on a college campus that sits right on the sight of the the Tulsa Race Riots of the early 1920's, an event that assumed highly significant importance during the "Exploration of the Past" component of the Future Search Conference. The entire area was destroyed as a result of this tragic event, with the only structure left being the church where African Americans worshipped.

In addition, the large room where the FS took place had a beautiful photographic exhibit in place at the time of the conference. The exhibit highlighted Oklahoma African Americans and Native Americans who demonstrated extraordinary resiliency and leadership and had made major contributions to the well being of the state. The exhibit was very much in synch with the celebration and pride in past and present accomplishments that happens at a FS Conference. I mention this because the physical setting for a Future Search Conference is an important condition for success.

Follow-Up: In a conversation in June 2006, Jan Figart, who was the CISS Project Director, provided her perspective on the Tulsa Future Search five years earlier. She and her organization, the Community Services Council of Greater Tulsa, were instrumental in planning the Future Search Conference, and remain very

active. From her perspective looking back five years, she identified as a learning from the conference the vital importance of patience and tenacity in taking one action step at a time toward integrated systems change.

Based on the kind of systems change that the participants had envisioned for 10 years from the date of the conference (August 2011), within the context of having earlier explored the past and present and before moving on to the common ground and action parts of the FS, it became evident that one of the common ground themes - family-centered systems of care and family involvement from start to finish - would not happen overnight. Through the Future Search, it became clear to her that true family involvement is, indeed, the kind of challenge that requires the energy and unity and commitment of multiple stakeholders (including State Title V) over a long period of time, and maximizing limited resources through stronger collaboration. The key is to stay with the effort, including the inevitable bumps, in trying to create such a change. And she then spoke of some of the concrete ways that families have, indeed, become more involved as equal partners in perinatal services and systems, with Healthy Start of course playing a key role.

Contact: Jan Figart, MS, RN, Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Inc. 16 East 16th Street, Ste 200, Tulsa, OK 74119, Phone: 918-585-5551 ext 237, Fax: 918-585-3285, email: jfigart@csctulsa.org, web: www.csctulsa.org

Pennsylvania – Lehigh Valley Family Medicine Practice

Location: Allentown, Pennsylvania

Facilitators: Liz Alperin Solms, Loretta Raider

Sponsor: Department of Family Practice, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network.

Purpose: Develop a direction for the Department that builds upon its common ground as a community of healing while acknowledging the many forces that have an impact on its resources.

Contact: Julie Dostal Julie.dostal@lvh.com

Stakeholder Groups: Network administrators, community/patients/family, family practice staff, faculty, residents, and administration.

Special Features: Turtle Craft, the name that the Department uses for its principles for practice, are synchronous with Future Search principles. Examples of such Turtle Craft principles include personal courage, collaboration, patience, communication, wholeness, and transformation.

Key Outcomes:

1. Space: making it better meet the Department's needs.
2. Flexibility in meeting patient, resident, and staff needs.

3. Technology: reliability.
4. Meeting needs of diverse patients and staff.
5. Educating to competency: residents and staff.
6. Innovative clinical care: collaboration with the community.

Broader Context: The Family Practice Department embraced and took on the Principles of Future Search and [put them into action in myriad ways](#). [The hospital now employs Future Search in a regular way with its own in-house facilitators](#). The hospital system routinely uses multi-stakeholder dialogue in its strategy building and operations.

Nevada – Public Health

In April 1996, the Nevada State Board of Health issued a special report to Governor Bob Miller based on the outcomes of the February 1996 Nevada Future Search Conference: "Creating a Healthier Tomorrow: Building a Shared Health Agenda for Nevada."

The common ground of the conference was that Nevada must make fundamental structural and philosophical changes in its health system in order to meet the health needs of its diverse and growing population. Nevada's health system must be viewed from a global perspective as an integration of environmental health, health care, and health education/promotion. Prevention of disease and disability must become the overriding priority of every component of the health system.

Recommendations to the Governor of Nevada included:

- Nevada must develop a system of health care where services provided in communities are accessible to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, personal resources, or disability, and are available according to need throughout an individual's life span.
- Nevada needs to develop new and innovative systems to better respond to health needs.
- Nevada must establish statewide information systems that enhance patient care and can rapidly identify and detect emerging health problems. Nevada must protect the environment and improve quality of life.

The closing paragraph conveyed the feeling of urgency to seize the present opportunity:

"The changing needs of Nevada's population have brought about profound changes in the health system. These changes offer a historic opportunity to improve Nevada's health. In order to use this opportunity to its full advantage, new partnerships must be formed and new, dynamic public policy must be

developed. This opportunity cannot be lost. The health of current and future generations requires brave, innovative action today."

The Future Search established the Nevada Public Health Foundation, which continues to the present as a powerful public health presence in the state.

Contact: Judy Wright, jwright@nvhd.state.nv.us

Parent Leadership Academies - Philadelphia

Sponsor: Philadelphia School System

Facilitators: Dean Michelson, Marie McCormick, Gabrielle Wanamaker, Bob McCrumb, Sandra Janoff and Liz Alperin Solms

Conference: Three parallel Future Searches in the Philadelphia schools.

Purpose: To develop an implementation plan for the Parent Leadership Academies of the Philadelphia schools, an initiative designed by a group of 20 parents.

Outcome: It resulted in triple the funding from a combination of the foundation that offered the challenge and the school district. The purpose was to create a mechanism to teach parents how to advocate for their children, to navigate the school system, to build their own employment skills and education, and to connect parents with the district in a positive way. School connectedness is a proven measure that correlates with health.

We are pleased to announce that the archive of the 2006 Federal/State Partnership Meeting is now available at the MCHCOM.COM web site, <http://www.mchcom.com>. Other archived meetings and presentations are also available at MCHCOM.COM. You can directly link to the site at <http://www.cademedial.com/archives/mchb/partnership2006/>

The following people contributed to this compilation: Rita Schweitz, Sarah Mullett, Cathy Perme, Jean Katz, Bonnie Olson, Donna Singer, Liz Alperin Solms, Sheryl Peavey, Chris Roesel, Jan Figart, Kirk Astroth, Mary Jane Standaert, Susan Zepeda, Tess Kuenning, Esther Devall, Jake Meyer, Jane Peacock, Louis Luna, Paul Lang, Mary Stoecker, Judy Wright, Kathy Seacrest, Jan Jernell, Renea Butler-King, Ali Kopelman, Sandra Janoff, Marvin Weisbord.