

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A Case Study of Community
Lifelines Program

evaluation
of nine
comprehensive
community-based
child
abuse
and neglect
prevention
programs

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PREFACE

The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) funded nine comprehensive community-based child abuse and neglect prevention projects in 1989. Through this 5-year grant program, NCCAN encouraged community groups, ranging from community-based organizations and child welfare agencies to universities and hospitals, to join together with other community forces to prevent physical child abuse and neglect. NCCAN underscored the intent that the projects were to be both community based and comprehensive—that they should network with and encourage the involvement of many community service providers.

The nine prevention projects represented diverse target communities, emphasized different objectives and approaches, and implemented different interventions in response to the NCCAN initiative. In choosing to fund such diverse projects, NCCAN sought to assess the effects of the different approaches based on the geographic, ethnic, demographic, and economic context of each community. The projects' approaches to preventing child abuse and neglect also reflected factors such as the philosophy of the project's architect, the project's history in the community, and requirements of other sources of funding. Thus, this grant program provided a singular opportunity for NCCAN and the prevention field to learn the strategies that worked best to focus community resources on preventing child maltreatment and the types of communities in which they worked best.

CSR, Incorporated, conducted a national evaluation of the nine prevention projects to document their experiences and contribute to an understanding of ways to mediate risk factors and strengthen families through solid partnerships with their

communities. The evaluation included a series of in-depth site visits to each of the nine projects; analyses of project progress, evaluation, and final reports; and analyses of process and outcome data collected by the projects. In addition, information was obtained through meetings and conversations with project staff and through project publications such as manuals, newsletters, and program logs. Results of the evaluation are reported in the following:

- A set of nine case studies that reflect the uniqueness of each project and the complexity of their individual experiences;
- A cross-site analysis of the experiences of the nine projects, incorporating data collected by both CSR and the projects and presenting policy recommendations derived from CSR's findings;
- A "lessons learned" report discussing the most important findings and experiences of the projects.

The information presented in these case studies and reports' is intended to contribute to the effectiveness of prevention programs by highlighting how these nine communities established comprehensive projects for strengthening families and focusing community resources on preventing child maltreatment and by providing an understanding of what worked in those communities and why. As the prevention field increasingly recognizes that comprehensive and communitywide efforts are required to respond to the urgent problems that lead to child maltreatment, the experience of projects such as these will provide valuable lessons on which to build in policy and program development.

¹ Note that these case studies and reports primarily cover the base period of the NCCAN demonstration grant, which was 1989 through 1994.

COMMUNITY LIFELINES PROGRAM

This report describes the Community Lifelines Program (CLP), one of nine demonstration projects funded by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect to develop community-based, collaborative models to effectively prevent child maltreatment. The CLP was developed by the Family Life Development Center of Cornell University in collaboration with the government and human service agencies of Chemung County, New York, to provide comprehensive, coordinated, and community-based prevention services that would make Chemung County an easier place in which to raise children successfully. To achieve this goal, the project implemented various activities designed to alleviate community conditions that lead to isolation, poor self-image, and economic stress among community members and parents, thereby reducing some of the underlying causes of child abuse and neglect.

Over its lifespan, the CLP was responsible for various program initiatives in the small city of Elmira and the rural Van Etten/Spencer school district, including Parent Partner Programs (PPPs), parent support groups, activities that encouraged better parent-child communication, and family support programs. The demonstration project used an emergent model to develop and refine program activities that would take advantage of the lessons learned from earlier initiatives and respond to community reactions to the activities. Schools, churches, agencies that serve youth, local businesses, and the media were enlisted to help involve parents and other residents in programs intended to strengthen families and their connection to community institutions. The CLP was based on an empowerment model that encouraged neighborhood involvement in planning and service development, thus building the neighborhood's capability for self-determination.

This report describes the community, the grantee agency, the program design and changes over time, barriers to program implementation, and strategies used to overcome these barriers. The report also

describes the program effects and efforts to institutionalize the various components of the CLP.

THE ELMIRA AND VAN ETTEN/SPENCER COMMUNITIES

Chemung County is located in the Finger Lakes/Appalachia Region of New York State, approximately 30 miles from Cornell University; it is semirural and has a population of 98,000. At the core of this county is the small city of Elmira, with a population of 35,000. The county population is approximately 94 percent white, 5 percent black, and less than 1 percent Hispanic.

In 1988 Chemung County had the second highest child abuse and neglect-reporting rate in New York (51.8 per 1,000 children). It also had high rates of out-of-home placement of children, teenage pregnancy, out-of-wedlock births, substance abuse, and unemployment. Chemung ranked second among New York counties in the rate of admissions to foster care, fourth in the number of children receiving preventive care, and first in the number of adjudicated family court petitions.

In the 1985 edition of *Places Rated Almanac* (Savageau and Boyer, 1985), Elmira was ranked 248 of 329 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in terms of economic opportunities available for individuals and families. Thirteen percent of families with children had incomes below the poverty level, and 21 percent of children enrolled in Elmira schools were recipients of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). The median annual family income was **\$17,000**. In 1980 the hamlet of Van Etten, in the northeast corner of the county, had a population of approximately 555 and a median annual family income of \$16,420. Although there is still several factories in the area, including a large railway equipment manufacturer, the majority of residents are employed in human services occupations at the community's psychiatric center, two prisons, two hospitals, and several human service agencies. Other residents work in small family-owned businesses. The high unemployment rates and constraints on community

resources accompanying these depressed conditions contribute to family dysfunction and 'child maltreatment.

Over the years, efforts have been made to reverse many of these community conditions. Efforts have included a Chemung County Task Force on Child Abuse established in 1976; an exemplary infant and prenatal home visitation program implemented in 1986; and placement of social workers in Elmira schools as a resource to students, teachers, and parents. These efforts, however, did not reduce the high rates of child maltreatment. General agreement existed among community professionals that effective countywide coordination of preventive services was lacking.

GRANTEE ORGANIZATION: CORNELL UNIVERSITY FAMILY LIFE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Family Life Development Center, housed in the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, developed the CLP. In 1974 the State of New York established the center and mandated it to develop programs for technical assistance, research, and training specifically in the field of child maltreatment and more generally in the area of family stress. In 1976 the center assisted in the establishment of the Chemung County Task Force on Child Abuse, which played an important role in the development of a State Federation of Task Forces on Child Abuse.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The overall goal of the CLP was to make Chemung County an easier place to raise children successfully. This involved changing community conditions that foster child abuse and neglect rather than responding after it occurs. The goals and objectives of the CLP are presented on the following pages. The project was developed under the following basic assumptions:

- Child abuse and neglect result in part from stress and social isolation;

- The quality of a neighborhood can either encourage or impede parenting and social integration of the families who live there;
- The quality of life in a neighborhood is influenced by both internal and external forces; and
- Any strategy for preventing child maltreatment should address both internal and external forces and should focus on strengthening at-risk families and improving at-risk neighborhoods.

In addition to these basic assumptions, the CLP was implemented using a neighborhood-based approach to test the following hypotheses:

- Child maltreatment can be reduced through a community- and neighborhood-strengthening approach that mobilizes both existing and new constituencies (e.g., schools, media, churches, and businesses) in a positive effort to encourage and support parents and improve the quality of parenting.
- Using the media to convey positive messages about parenting will increase community awareness of good childrearing practices and ultimately reduce child maltreatment.
- Schools can serve as neighborhood and community centers for disseminating parenting information as well as a base for activities that strengthen networking and improve self-esteem among parents and children. These types of school-based activities will reduce the quantity of child maltreatment among both current and future parents.
- Churches can play a vital role in supporting families and improving childrearing practices.
- A community will continue activities developed by a demonstration project financed with outside funds if the activities are small enough in scale to be consistent with the community's level of resources and community institutions are involved in their development.

Goals and Objectives of the CLP Model

A. Public Awareness

Goals

1. By the time the project ends, the Chemung County community will have consistent provision of information on positive parenting through the mass media, including promotion of a toll free telephone line that focuses on positive support for families.
2. Community Lifelines will have developed a partnership with an agency or organization in Chemung County that will be committed to taking over responsibility for this mass media program by the time federal funding has ceased.
3. By the time the project ends, a majority of parents in Chemung County who desire information about parenting will be aware of a toll free number they can call for information and referral.

Objectives

- A-1. Assist at least three media outlets in developing individualized public awareness plans for citizens on positive parenting and positive family support (Year 4).
- A-2. Promote the Parent Information Resource Center as a permanent source of information on parenting (Years 4 and 5).
- A-3. Begin institutionalizing *Lifelines* within the community (Year 4), and publish at least 3 issues of the newsletter (Year 5).
- A-4. Conduct focus groups with target audiences for the mass media campaign on a pre- and post basis by the end of 1993 (Year 4), and evaluate the public awareness efforts, particularly the radio public service announcements (PSAs) on positive parenting (Year 5).

- A-5. Link public awareness efforts to Healthy Families Initiatives (Year 5).

B. New Constituency Development

Goals

By the time the project ends, organizations and institutions which have not previously taken responsibility for preventing child maltreatment will be contributing their resources, expertise, and energy to the effort. They will have found their own way to strengthen families and neighborhoods in order to make child rearing easier.

Objectives

- B-1. Assist in the establishment of a Pastoral Resource Center (Year 4).
- B-2. Help churches to define their role in strengthening families and communities, and in relating to human service agencies (Year 4).
- B-3. Involve business in supporting an ongoing public awareness effort (Year 5).
- B-4. Work with a local agency to take leadership in coordinating and developing the public awareness program in cooperation with local media, in order to institutionalize it (Year 5).

C. Neighborhood Approaches to Child Abuse Prevention

Goals

1. By the time the project ends, there will be new mechanisms that help parents to network with each other in mutually supportive ways and encourage them to contribute to others in their neighborhood.

Goals and Objectives of the CLP Model (continued)

- 2. By the time the project ends, many neighborhood institutions, such as schools, will have developed more effective partnerships with parents in raising and educating their children than have existed in the past.
- 3. By the time the project ends there will be a greater awareness that raising children effectively is a community venture, not an individualistic one, and there will be more mechanisms to support and assist parents than exist at present.

Objectives

- C-1. Extend part-time Parent Partners or other outreach workers to three more schools/neighborhoods in Chemung County (Years 4 and 5).
- c-2. Continue to participate in the Elmira school district strategic planning process (Year 4).
- c-3. Provide at least two training sessions for Elmira school staff related to child abuse prevention and strengthening of parent involvement (Year 4).
- c-4. Provide curriculum material and presentations for school children on prevention-related topics (Year 4).
- c-5. Introduce Family Portraits **Storytelling** to at least three new schools (Year 4) and work to institutionalize this program in the schools (Year 5).
- C-6. Strengthen communication between day care centers and working parents (Years 4 and 5).

c-7. Locate funding to establish a part-time worker to operate and institutionalize the After School Program (ASP) in Spencer-Van Etten (Year 4), and assist the schools in this area to expand their role as a resource to children and families in the community (Year 5).

C-8. **Help** to develop sufficient local leadership to take over the existing self-help groups in Spencer and Van Etten (Years 4 and 5).

c-9. **Explore** the possibility of a drop-in center in Van Etten (Year 4).

C-1 0. Assist with efforts to develop a Healthy Families program (Year 5).

C-1 1. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of the Parent Partner Program and other work with schools, including community outreach in Spencer-Van Etten and the Family Portraits Storytelling (Year 5).

D. Interagency Training and Coordination

Goals

Continue to provide training sessions for multiple agencies in Chemung County (Year 5).

Objectives

D-1. **Offer** three (Year 4) or two (Year 5) training sessions for multiple agencies in Chemung County.

D-2. Facilitate the development of an interagency training team (Year 4).

D-3. **Facilitate** the development of an interdisciplinary team on substance abuse (Year 4).

The CLP was designed to serve families in both urban and rural settings. Elmira was chosen as the urban location as well as the site for the CLP headquarters, and the hamlet of Van Etten was selected as the rural area. In the first year of the project, the school superintendent and elementary school principal informed the CLP that the school could not cooperate with the program unless CLP also served neighboring Spencer because the school serves—and attempts to unite—the communities, which are separated by the county line. Spencer and Van Etten are small, neighboring villages located approximately 3 miles apart, and businesses and services in Spencer serve both communities. Because Spencer is located in Tioga County, this meant involving Tioga County in the CLP. The decision was approved by the CLP Executive Planning Committee (EPC), and community representatives were asked to bring other key individuals from the Van Etten/Spencer community together for planning meetings.

Project Staff

The key project staff from Cornell included the following:

- *Project director (50-percent full-time equivalent position [FTE]).—The project director's role was to develop the implementation strategy, supervise day-to-day project activities, and provide links to Federal and State agencies.*
- *Communications specialist (25-percent FTE).—The communications specialist was responsible for developing and implementing public awareness strategies.*

In addition, the project included a principal investigator (15-percent FTE), administrative supervisor (15-percent FTE), education specialist (10-percent FTE), accounts assistant (10-percent FTE), field researcher (5-percent FTE), executive staff assistant (5-percent FTE), accounts coordinator (5-percent FTE), administrative aide (5-percent FTE), secretary (5-percent FTE), and temporary staff (5-percent FTE).

The key CLP staff who were hired from the community included the following:

- *Community coordinator (200-percent FTE).—The community coordinator was responsible for organizing, planning, and coordinating project activities and working with selected community organizations.*
- *Prevention education coordinator (50-percent FTE).—The prevention education coordinator worked closely with schools, the Chemung County Cooperative Extension, and other organizations involved with prevention education.*
- *Van Etten/Spencer community organizer (25-percent FTE).—The community organizer was responsible for coordinating or facilitating the various activities that were initiated in the Van Etten/Spencer area.*

Project Startup

Soon after project funding, CLP staff initiated meetings with key community groups and individuals to become familiar with community resources. Although the demonstration project had a slow and prolonged startup period, CLP staff established the Speaker's Bureau; sought key project staff; provided technical assistance to elementary and Head Start schoolteachers; began efforts to mobilize new constituencies; developed public awareness campaigns; and began publishing *Lifelines*, the CLP newsletter. During Year 1, the grantee developed an EPC, which held monthly meetings to provide advice on program policy. The EPC mandated a neighborhood approach rather than a community approach and suggested that the program target one urban neighborhood and one rural neighborhood. The CLP developed a working relationship with the Chemung County Task Force on Children and Families, a coalition of more than 60 local service agency representatives that focused on the prevention of child maltreatment. The task force requested that the CLP be represented on the EPC and that the

demonstration take responsibility for new constituency development, an emerging prevention initiative.

Hiring setbacks and conflicts with other programmatic deadlines delayed **neighborhood-**based project work, and planning and organizing activities continued into Year 2. Difficulties in initial CLP efforts to develop coordinating mechanisms between Elmira's human service agencies led the Chemung County Task Force on Children and Families to establish a Workgroup that assumed the role of community advisor to the project, especially in the areas of identifying interagency training priorities **and** defining objectives for community agency cooperation. The Workgroup began meeting monthly; the EPC approved this role and reduced its own meetings to a quarterly schedule. By the end of the second year, the CLP had **focused its** efforts in the following four main areas:

- Neighborhood approaches to child abuse prevention;
- Public awareness;
- Interagency training and coordination; and
- New constituency development.

A variety of strategies were undertaken to determine community needs and interests, including a parent survey in one of **the** schools, youth focus groups, and a needs survey of businessmen who attended a local business breakfast. The CLP developed an Interfaith Task Force on Families and held a II-day workshop entitled "Partners in Healing," which was attended by 40 religious leaders. Despite the many barriers faced by the CLP during its startup years, it was able to move forward and focus on **its** goals during the final 3 years of the project. **The following** sections summarize the activities, issues, and progress in each of the CLP's major areas.

Neighborhood Approaches to Child Abuse Prevention

The CLP' operated with the following three broad goals for neighborhood approaches to prevent child abuse: (1) to develop new mechanisms to help parents network with each other and encourage them'to support and assist others in their neighborhoods; (2) to facilitate more effective **partnerships** between schools and parents in regard to raising and educating children; and (3) to promote a greater awareness that raising children effectively is a community venture, not an individualistic one, and ensure-that there will be more mechanisms to support and assist parents than exist at present.

A lack o:f progress in connecting established social services **agencies** in Elmira led the project to engage in grassroots efforts with **the** schools, which serve as community settings in which parents **and** children interact. Elmira human services **agencies** did not perceive the need to develop **interagency** teams and, therefore, resisted their **development**. Agencies preferred to receive funding to carry out their own initiatives rather than develop structures for collaboration.

Elmira Programs

The programs conducted in urban Elmira included the PPP, family support activities in Hathom Court public housing development, parent-caregiver communication sessions, Healthy Families Program, Master Teacher Program, and Ernie Davis Community Center PPP.

Parent Partner Program

The PPP was designed to increase parents' **involvement** in the schools and with their children and other parents. In Year 3, the CLP developed a collaborative arrangement with the Chemung County Cooperative Extension to employ parents as Parent Partners (**PPs**); their job was to operate as liaisons between families and schools. The Extension provided direct supervision and support for the **PPs**, while the CLP provided funding. By

the end of the demonstration period, PPPs were established in five schools and constituted the major activity of the CLP in the Elmira area. PPs were neighborhood residents; they were recruited to work 10 hours per week and were responsible for involving parents with the school and with each other in positive ways. These positions did not require any special educational qualifications and were designed to encourage parents to contribute their energies and resources to the schools their children attended. PPs welcomed parents into the school, organized activities that involved parents, and helped parents relate to school personnel. They also encouraged parents to share ideas for improving parenting skills and for making their community a better place to raise children.

PPP organizers identified the overall goals of their programs but left implementation of those goals up to the PPs. The PPs and their supervisor met regularly to discuss what strategies were working and what the PPs had learned about their school communities. Overall, the PPs were engaged in the following types of activities:

- Parents' complaints about sexual harassment on the school playground by older children led to the creation of an alternative playground for first and second graders. Parents collaborated with the school to supervise this play area, located in an enclosed courtyard. As many as 28 parents volunteered on a regular basis.
- One school faced with the perennial problem of low kindergarten registration got a boost from a PP, who dramatically increased the turnout for early registration and orientation by personally contacting parents of kindergarten-age children in the community.
- The prospect of a new neighborhood supermarket led one PP to arrange a job training program for parents in her community. She set up a 12-week training program through the local Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to teach job entry skills to parents.

- All PPs were able to involve parents who previously had been detached from the school in social and school events by providing an ice cream social, class trips, and other activities that fostered parent involvement. Involvement was ongoing, with new parents volunteering and attending activities on a regular basis, such as lunchtime meetings during which parents talked about their concerns. A number of parents went on to join the school's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

Over the course of this program, the PPs involved at least 100 parents as volunteers for various activities. This effort to strengthen community support systems was initiated as one antidote to the isolation and distrust often felt in high-risk communities and among abusive and neglectful parents. After the first trial year, the schools assumed the full cost of this program.

Activities in Hathorn Court

The CLP focused some of its efforts on providing family support to the residents of Hathorn Court, a 300-unit public housing development. CLP staff collaborated with a Housing Authority social worker to support the annual Tenants' Association/Housing Authority picnic during Year 2, which was attended by 125 families and community agency representatives. During Year 3, CLP staff surveyed residents to identify their family support needs. Efforts in this area were ultimately focused on providing support by working through and with the schools.

Parents-Caregiver Communication Sessions

The CLP fostered a five-session workshop series on effective communication as a way of strengthening communication between day care centers and working mothers. These workshops were organized by a team of community professionals from Chemung County Cooperative Extension, Head Start, the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), and the Chemung County Child Care Council. The first series was

attended by 12 caregivers and 6 parents, and the second series was attended by 20 caregivers and 1 parent.

Healthy families Program

In response to representatives of the human services community, the CLP implemented a Healthy Families Program, a home visitation model promoted by the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse (NCPCA), as one of its primary strategies during the last year of the demonstration period. The Healthy Families Program provided positive support to families coping with the special stresses that accompany the arrival of a newborn. New mothers were visited in the hospital by a nurse from Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Services (CIDS) and visited again by a Healthy Families support worker within a few days of returning home. The mothers' needs were assessed using a family stress index and input from family members. Families showing the potential for substantial stress were offered home visitation services, during which a home visitor provided support, advocacy, and empathy while also encouraging family self-sufficiency.

The Healthy Families Program was implemented as an alternative to filling the vacated community coordinator's position late in the demonstration period and was developed in collaboration with the Elmira Junior League. The CLP hired two 50-percent FTE home visitors to provide family support services, and a visiting nurse was provided through a subcontract with CIDS; home visitation began in April 1994. Because the number of babies in the target area increased more slowly than anticipated, the CLP expanded the program to include families living in the Riverside School area. By the end of the demonstration period, the program was serving 15 families, and positive results with the first group of families were already indicated. One family was taken off welfare, and medical attention was provided for a child whose family had been distrustful of doctors. A mother was helped to use birth control and improve her parenting skills.

The Healthy Families Program was part of a statewide initiative implemented by the New York State chapter of the NCPCA. Similar pilot programs were being implemented in four other areas of the State when the CLP became involved in Elmira's initiative.

Master Teacher Program

Near the end of the demonstration period, the CLP initiated a short-term Master Teacher Program in collaboration with the Chemung County Cooperative Extension. The program was developed by hiring a community worker focused on the Dewittsburgh Housing Project, which exhibited serious drug-related problems. The course taught community residents how to function as natural helpers for their neighbors and helped them connect with various community resources as well as with each other. Three of the five people who began the course completed it and began working with their neighbors on a volunteer basis. The CLP sponsored this program until December 1994, at which time it received a 2-year grant from the US. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Elmira Housing Authority.

Ernie Davis Parent Partner Program

The CLP initiated a PPP at the Ernie Davis Community Center, located near a low-income housing area. A PP was hired to engage parents in a variety of activities, such as family picnics and evening open forums. Although the community center was not able to assume financial responsibility for the PP at the end of the demonstration period, five parents continued the activities on their own, volunteering regularly.

Van Etten/Spencer Programs

Several initiatives were carried out by the CLP in the rural neighborhood of Van Etten/Spencer through the use of a grassroots organizing model. During Year 2, the CLP organized a meeting of key community members, and three specific needs were identified that would make the community a

better place to raise children: adult-supervised afterschool activities, a community center, and onsite counseling services. In response, the CLP developed a variety of afterschool activities and the Family Connections Room (FCR), which served some functions of a community center. Inspired in part by the needs expressed to the CLP, the school system initiated a school-based mental health counseling program in the summer of 1994.

The CLP Van **Etten/Spencer** community organizer helped to develop and facilitate a variety of family support activities, which are described below. After they were initiated, some activities continued without help from the CLP, and the community organizer's role and/or salary were assumed by other organizations or the school system.

After School Program

In response to the community's concern over a lack of planned afterschool activities, the CLP formed a committee of parent and youth volunteers that began meeting regularly. The youth on this committee surveyed other students to determine the types of afterschool activities they wanted and then organized several of these activities. Volunteers from the community assisted in implementing the activities, which were open to all students in the fifth through ninth grades. Based on the research literature, which indicates that there is a positive correlation between feeling connected to school and academic success and that connectedness can be measured by extracurricular involvement, a primary goal of the After School Program (ASP) was to involve students who had no involvement with school outside the classroom.

The first afterschool activities were offered in Year 3. Every adult who was approached to lead an activity agreed to participate, and every activity was fully subscribed. Positive feedback was received from both parents and children, and activities continued throughout the year. Two outside organizations provided financial support for the buses needed for fieldtrips.

In Year 4, an ASP Committee was formed with 12 to 15 student volunteers. The committee met monthly and focused on identifying, planning, and publicizing program activities. Students were recommended for membership on the committee by school staff members who noted which students were not involved in afterschool activities and who would benefit the most from involvement in the activities. Activities included swimming, bowling, tours of Cornell University and its Ornithology Laboratory, and a dance. During the 1993-94 school year, the ASP expanded and offered more and different programs, with adult volunteers from the community providing skills training and supervision. The school ran a late bus 3 days per week to facilitate student involvement in ASP activities and employed a third part-time worker to coordinate volunteers. It was estimated that approximately 200 different students participated in at least 1 activity during the year.

In the final year, a creative and cooperative effort between ASP and another CLP activity, the Parents of Children with Special Needs Support Group (PCSNSG), resulted in the offering of an 8-week course entitled "Special Sitters Training." This course was provided for young adults interested in caring for special needs children. Eight young people received certificates for completing this training.

Although the salary for the community organizer who facilitated this program was originally covered by the CLP, other agencies gradually assumed financial responsibility for this work. Near the end of the first year, the Van **Etten/Spencer** school system began paying half the cost of this position, and the staffperson's responsibilities were expanded to include school system objectives for at-risk children.

During Year 4, CLP staff coordinated a landmark meeting of three key constituencies involved with the ASP—the Van **Etten/Spencer** superintendent of schools, Youth Board directors from Chemung and Tioga Counties, and town and village officials from both Van Etten and Spencer. As a result of this meeting, funding was made available for

afterschool activities and for a part-time worker (in addition to the CLP community organizer) to coordinate the ASP for 8 hours per week. Additional funding came from Van Etten tax revenues and from the Eastern Star (an organization for families of deceased World War II soldiers), while the PTA provided insurance coverage for the afterschool activities. Program funding and salary money for a 20-percent FTE coordinator were developed by these constituencies during Year 5, making the program viable in a tight fiscal climate.

Family Portraits

This storytelling program brought volunteer parents and school personnel into elementary school classrooms one morning each month to tell stories drawn from their own personal histories. The purpose of Family Portraits was to help children and parents better relate to one another and to build intergenerational understanding. This activity gave children an opportunity to see their parents in a positive light and to be proud of them. Storytelling began in both Elmira and Van Etten/Spencer after the CLP provided training in the schools. CLP staff implemented this program in collaboration with BOCES and the Van Etten/Spencer school district.

The initial program was focused on first and second graders in three schools in Van Etten. By the beginning of Year 5, it had expanded to 14 classrooms and centers and was being used by prekindergarten through fourth-grade classes. After the CLP implemented Family Portraits, the school's volunteer coordinator assumed responsibility for the program, including recruiting volunteers for the storytelling activity. From 2 to 15 volunteers were involved each month.

Playgroup

The Playgroup was started during the summer of Year 2 after a mother asked the community organizer, "Where do mothers of small children go to get together?" The Playgroup began meeting once per month in space provided by a church in

Spencer. The Playgroup supported parents living in a rural area by providing them opportunities to share experiences, information, and resources. After trying various formats and schedules, the group settled on a 2-hour weekly meeting. The group required that a parent accompany and stay with a child throughout the session. Parents and community groups donated toys. Approximately eight parents met on a regular basis, and the group served primarily those who were at home with small children.

In the early stages, the CLP community organizer helped organize the Playgroup. After the group became better established, leadership rotated among the parents, who volunteered to take responsibility for opening the church and bringing snacks. Another parent was responsible for publicity and served as a contact person for those interested in joining. The group met year round, alternating meeting locations between a church in Van Etten and one in Spencer. No financial support was required to operate this group.

Parent Lifelines

The Parent Lifelines program began as an information and support group for parents whose teenagers had alcohol and drug problems. In Year 3, the CLP community organizer learned that at least 12 parents had requested help from human service agencies in dealing with their children's alcohol problems. A volunteer and a human service agency staff person agreed to co-lead a parents' group that the following had two purposes: (1) to provide support for parents who had teenagers with alcohol problems and (2) to develop an educational forum that would bring in speakers to discuss issues surrounding parent-teenager relationships, substance abuse, and other pertinent subjects. The group also wanted to create activities that did not include alcohol consumption on prom and graduation nights.

Parent Lifelines began meeting twice per month in the junior-senior high school library but later reduced the number of meetings to one per month. A core group of five to six parents consistently

attended the meetings, and the group designed and produced a brochure describing their goals and accomplishments. In Year 4, tension developed within the group because there was not always time to address both the interactive support element and the educational element in the same meetings. In addition, discussions frequently were dominated by the same members, and parents found it difficult to both participate in the discussions and act as facilitator. To resolve these tensions, the members decided to hire a paid group facilitator using funds from the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities State Grants Program.

Near the end of the demonstration period, Parent Lifelines disbanded. Interest in the group had decreased, and tensions between the supporters of the two original purposes of the group had not been resolved. The disbanding of the group was not viewed as a failure but as part of a natural evolutionary dynamic. Several of the barriers that inhibited wider participation in this group included (1) a lack of faith that the confidentiality of personal matters would be respected, (2) a group process that limited meaningful participation by everyone, (3) the shift in focus from doing something that met the needs of the individuals who organized the group to a focus on doing things for others, and (4) lack of transportation as well as other involvements and needs of parents that prevented them from attending the meetings.

Food Stamp Outreach

During Year 3, five local volunteers recruited by the CLP community organizer were trained and certified by staff from the **Chemung** County Department of Social Services to provide confidential **prescreening** and assistance with the food stamp application process. This assistance helped families by allowing the preliminary application to be filled out in Van Etten and thus eliminated families' first of two trips to Elmira to apply for food stamps. Because many families did not have transportation and a lengthy roundtrip bus ride was a barrier to accessing these services, the project also secured volunteers to provide

transportation for the 25-mile trip to Elmira so that applicants could complete the application process.

When the program began, volunteers were available at the town hall 2 days per month and made home visits as needed. In time the program was scaled back because the number of people using the service did not warrant having volunteers available 2 days per month. Instead, volunteers served as contacts, received requests for assistance via telephone, and continued to make home visits upon request.

Parents of Children with Special Needs Support Group

Research has shown that children with special needs are at greater risk of abuse and neglect than other children. In Year 4, CLP staff brought together a support group of parents who had children with special needs to form a support group. The support group met one evening per month in the Van **Etten/Spencer** High School library and included open discussion and guest speakers. The PCSNSG identified the following primary goals: (1) training students and others to provide adequate child care for special needs children, (2) developing behavior management alternatives to spanking, and (3) collecting and disseminating information on financial resources available for families with children with special needs. The group continued meeting throughout the life of the demonstration project and until the group disbanded in June 1995.

The core group consisted of four to five parents. Like several other activities developed through the CLP, this program did **not** need financial support to continue. Initially, the CLP community organizer provided ideas and guidance on arranging speakers and attended every month to help with startup. After the group was well established, her leadership decreased as parents began assuming these roles.

The PCSNSG collaborated with the ASP and the CRAIG Developmentally Disabled Service Office in Elmira to offer special skills training for babysitters working with special needs children

(described above in the section on Van Etten/Spencer's programs.) The group was sensitive to the need for confidentiality but found ways to reach out to each family in the school district with a special needs child.

Family Connections Room

The FCR, opened in the Van Etten Elementary School during the final year of the demonstration project, was created to provide a meeting and waiting space for parents and children and to facilitate access to a range of information and resources in the community. The room was open for 2½ hours one morning, one afternoon, and one evening each week.

The room was set up by parent volunteers, the CLP community organizer, and school staff. The CLP underwrote the purchase of some of the items maintained in the room. Volunteers gathered other resources, including books; a tide **signup** board, a calendar of community events, free used clothing, and a list of local and area **services**. The room had a play section for children, a **conversation** area with a couch and chairs, and an **expandable** table and chairs for use with meetings. Refreshments were available when the FCR was open, and six volunteers were trained to welcome **visitors**, answer questions, and otherwise **staff** the room. The FCR represented partial **fulfillment** of the community's desire for a family **resource** center.

Other Activities in Van Etten/Spencer

Several other short-term programs were implemented during the project's **no-cost** extension period from September through December 1994. These included the following:

- *Parenting* classes.—The CLP funded 10 parenting classes, which were **held** in the Van Etten/Spencer Elementary School;
- *Parent Volunteerism Workshop*.—The CLP co-sponsored this workshop with **BOCES**; and

- *Volunteer resource bank*.—CLP staff worked with the volunteer coordinator to develop a volunteer resource bank consisting of the names of 150 volunteers.

Public Awareness Campaign

Through focus groups and key informant interviews during project startup, CLP found that (1) there was no consistent, reliable source of information about positive parenting in the mass media serving Chemung County and (2) many parents were not aware of a safe and reliable telephone number that they could call for parenting information and support. For parents in rural Van Etten, long-distance telephone charges also were a major **deterrent**. The CLP developed radio public service announcements (**PSAs**) and a newsletter to address these gaps.

Radio Public Service Announcements

During the last 3 years of the project, CLP staff developed a series of **PSAs**, an activity strongly endorsed by local media and advertisers. CLP staff approached radio stations about broadcasting the **PSAs**, gathered information for the messages, and then developed the **PSAs**. Targeted to different age groups, the **PSAs** were less than 1 minute long and conveyed positive tips to citizens, community leaders, and organizations about **how** they could more effectively support parents and families. Over the implementation period, the number of **PSAs** broadcasted increased from 96 per month from 2 stations to 300 per month from 10 stations.

One goal of the **PSAs** was to provide information about a toll-free "warm" line. The Parenting Information Resource Center (PIRC) was operated by the New York State chapter of the NCPA supported the warm line, and each radio PSA that was **aired** ended with this toll-free number. The PIRC tracked the number of calls coming from Chemung County and determined the radio stations to which respondents were listening. In Year 5, the CLP **sought** outside consultation to reassess their **strategy** because the number of calls to the

PIRC had not significantly increased during the previous year. New messages were designed specifically to encourage listeners to call the warm line and to be more seasonally appropriate.

This public awareness strategy was conducted at minimal cost because the **PSAs** were produced in the local radio stations' studios. More than 20 local businesses supported this project by paying advertising fees, which resulted in 30 **PSAs** per week being broadcast on **WELM-WLVY**, a local radio station. Covering some of the costs of broadcasting the **PSAs** made it possible to broadcast them during regular and peak listening times. During Year 5, the major radio-business partnership in the area committed to a second year of selling advertising time to pay for the **PSAs** and extended the media campaign to three more stations. Although broadcast of **PSAs** decreased during the summer months because of increased sales to conventional **advertisers**, the station remained committed to this endeavor throughout the year.

Focus groups were conducted in 1990, 1992, and 1993 to evaluate the impact of the radio **PSAs**, and changes were made in response to focus group suggestions. For example, new messages were designed to garner more attention and use more personal monologues.

Newsletter and Other Print Media

Public awareness of child abuse prevention was promoted through the print media by several methods, the most important of which was the production of the ***Lifelines*** newsletter. ***Lifelines*** was initiated in Year 1 and was disseminated to more than 1,000 professionals and concerned citizens throughout the demonstration period. The bimonthly newsletter focused on current issues and events pertaining to the prevention of child maltreatment. Each issue focused on one of the following specific topics: (1) the affects of characteristics of a rural community on the delivery of human services, (2) adolescent maltreatment, (3) the school as a community partner, (4) neighborhood approaches to the prevention of

child maltreatment, and (5) the Healthy Families Program.

Although the newsletter was produced throughout the demonstration period, the number of issues produced varied considerably. The project hired a freelance writer to assist in gathering material for stories and editing; although the addition of professional writers helped speed the process, the CLP continued to find it difficult to publish the newsletter, and the decision was made to scale back the frequency of publication to quarterly.

The CLP also used printed materials related to parenting and family and work issues in an effort to reach members of the business community. An article on the "10,000 Promises for Parents" Campaign, a project promoted by the New York State chapter of the NCPCA, was sent to 22 local businesses for their **newsletters**. The purpose of the campaign was to encourage people to do something to help relieve stress for one or more families.

Other Public Awareness Activities

CLP staff compiled a list of experts in parenting and child maltreatment issues for use by the media and collaborated with the media to develop programming related to the prevention of child maltreatment. For example, when a public television station produced a **1½-hour** special on child maltreatment, CLP staff provided information for and appeared in the show. CLP staff also provided technical assistance to local libraries on obtaining and using parenting education materials.

Because many children are abused at report card time for not earning good grades, the demonstration project piloted a "Report Card Reflex" program. This effort offered training for teachers to assist them in using techniques during parent-teacher conferences that would encourage parents to avoid abusing their children. Although training was scheduled for Elmira elementary schools during Year 3, it did not occur because of significant changes in key positions in the school district; plans were revised to work with the new

school personnel. Despite interest from the schools, implementing initiatives involving teachers became impossible because of a teachers' bargaining dispute.

Interagency Training and Coordination

The CLP's goal to implement multidisciplinary training programs for community professionals was given high priority by the Chemung County Task Force on Children and Families. Three multidisciplinary training events were conducted in Year 3 for human services workers in various community agencies, including a training session on working with drug-affected families, which was attended by 60 community agency staff members; a training session on communication strategies for dealing with families, which was attended by 45 community agency staff members; and a 2-day training session on rural poverty and networking between human service agencies, which was attended by 35 community agency staff members from Chemung and surrounding counties.

Although plans were made for several other multidisciplinary training sessions, few programs were offered during the remainder of the grant period. This resulted from several factors, including denial of funding proposals, low registrations, organizational mixups, and the resignation of the community coordinator. Work on developing interagency training teams ceased because many agency representatives believed that teams of this nature had been working effectively in Elmira for many years and that new collaborative structures were not needed. Therefore, the CLP shifted its focus to areas in which more significant contributions could be made. The new emphasis was on supporting the Healthy Families initiative in Elmira.

During the last year of the project, two training courses were offered, including a half-day session entitled, "Looking for Solutions: When the Adolescent Is the Identified Problem in the Family," which was attended by 39 agency representatives, and a half-day workshop for the staff of Summer Cohesion, a summer program for

school-age children sponsored by 25 agencies and school districts in Chemung County.

Approximately 70 persons participated in this training. Training also was provided for some Healthy Families staff and for several PPs. The training provided for the PPs led to CLP's funding of the Master Teacher Program.

New Constituency Development

One of the CLP's goals was to encourage organizations and institutions that had not previously taken responsibility for preventing child maltreatment in contributing their resources, expertise, and energy and involving these organizations to find ways to strengthen families and neighborhoods to make childrearing easier. The CLP planned to work with the following five constituencies in pursuing this goal: clergy, elected officials, business, labor, and the media. The following sections describe the efforts to work with the clergy, businesses, and elected officials. Work with the media is described in the above section on the CLP's public awareness campaign and in the section on the CLP's new constituency development within the business community.

Clergy

The primary goals in CLP's work with the clergy were to establish a Pastoral Resource Center (PRC) and to assist churches and synagogues in defining their role in strengthening families and communities and in relating to human service agencies. To accomplish these goals, the CLP helped to develop a Chemung County Interfaith Task Force and conduct forums for clergy, including one focused specifically on child maltreatment. The task force sought to establish a PRC that would have the following two major purposes: (1) to develop a formal system of education, training, and technical assistance for clergy and staff to increase their ability to respond to families under stress, with particular emphasis on the prevention of child maltreatment, and (2) to create and expand partnerships linking the pastoral and human service communities.

The CLP community coordinator worked with staff from the Office of Social Ministry (OSM), a nondenominational social action agency that operates under the auspices of the Catholic Church. The OSM assumed primary responsibility for developing a proposal for the establishment of the PRC and for obtaining funding for its implementation. The CLP supported the OSM with both staff time and a small grant, which was matched by the OSM. CLP and OSM staff met with the clergy of 12 congregations to focus on increasing the sensitivity of clergy to their role in supporting families **and** to garner support for the PRC.

The CLP planned to develop the PRC as a pilot project in Elmira. However, after 2 years of working toward the PRC, the CLP ceased efforts in this direction based on several factors. These included the following factors: (1) the CLP staff member who had worked to develop these efforts **and** had special expertise in this field left the project; (2) some felt that the initiative was too specialized and not enough people would benefit from a PRC that served only the religious community in Elmira; and (3) the CLP staff perceived only limited success from the initiative and believed that greater benefits would come from using resources in other areas.

Under another CLP initiative involving the clergy called Covenant-to-Care, a church adopted a caseworker and provided support to both the worker and his or her clients. Plans to implement this project were thwarted when Glove House, the local agency that was to sponsor this project, lost its funding and the rabbi who was to have started the program was transferred to another community.

Business Community

CLP's work with the media helped to involve the business community in child abuse prevention efforts. More than 20 local employers supported the cost of the radio **PSAs** by paying advertising fees, which resulted in 30 **PSAs** per week being broadcast on WELM-WLVY, a local radio station. Obtaining advertising fees for the **PSAs** ensured

that these messages would be broadcast during regular and peak listening times.

In another effort, CLP staff met with board members and staff of the Elmira Economic Development Zone, a group concerned with the impact of dysfunctional families on the city and 'employment patterns. The group was interested in developing ways to strengthen families in the community. Discussions resulted in a visit to Diven School, located in one of the neediest areas in the zone. The school requested a PPP, which was implemented in Year 4.

Elected Officials

One constituency the CLP initially hoped to reach was elected officials. The intent was to keep this group informed **about** legislative and policy issues regarding children and families through mailings, meetings, newsletters, and workshops. In Year 3, CLP staff participated **in** a "legislative breakfast" given by the Chemung County Task Force on Children and Families. Little additional activity took place with this constituency.

Technical Assistance

Four site visits were conducted during the course of the project. The **first** visit by NCPA staff, near the end of Year 1, was intended to determine the projects' technical assistance needs. Three subsequent visits were conducted by staff of CSR, Incorporated. The first CSR visit, which took place early in Year 4, focused on helping staff develop the most effective program evaluation methods. Two additional CSR staff visits during the Year 4 focused on developing a specific evaluation plan by obtaining an understanding of the goals and activities of the project through interviews with staff, parents, and community representatives.

CSR's technical assistance, designed to meet project needs, emphasized development of appropriate research questions, commencement of systematic documentation by staff of key program variables, and definition of successful outcomes.

Future site visits were planned to assist project staff with the evaluation efforts and to interview community leaders and agency personnel regarding community interest in or resistance to addressing child abuse and neglect. CSR's final contact with the CLP involved followup telephone calls with the CLP project director.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES

The primary purpose of the CLP was to collaborate with Chemung County in the development, planning, and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and community-based model for the prevention of child maltreatment. The initial proposal was supported by all the key agencies in the county, and evidence existed of a strong relationship between the CLP and the Chemung County Task Force on Children and Families throughout the life of the project. The CLP was represented on the task force's Executive Committee, and the task force eventually assumed a community advisory role for the CLP. Specific project strategies involved working with several committees of the task force, including public relations and education committees.

Throughout the demonstration period, the CLP explored and initiated collaborations with other community agencies. The project director held meetings with representatives of many community agencies to hear their views and obtain their support. In addition, new ventures undertaken by the CLP (e.g., the Healthy Families initiative) were subject to community support. The CLP's philosophy was to keep initiatives small enough that they could be sustained by community agencies after the project ended.

Most of the CLP's efforts involved collaborative partnerships with other community agencies. In Elmira the CLP's most significant collaborative involvement was with the Elmira school system, especially with regard to implementation of the PPP. All the PPs had informal relationships with the school principals and met regularly with them. In addition, several CLP staff were asked to participate in Strategic Action Planning Teams

sponsored by the Elmira school district throughout the demonstration period. The CLP's primary collaboration in Van Etten/Spencer also was with the school system.

Cooperative involvements with community groups in Elmira included efforts with the Hathorn Court Tenants Association, subcontracts with Chemung County Child Care Connection, and efforts with CIDS with regard to the Healthy Families Program. A few links were established with the Elmira Economic Development Zone staff and with elected officials. CLP staff also worked with library staff in an effort to make parenting materials more readily available to the community.

CLP staff worked closely with radio, television, and print media to broadcast PSAs and with the PIRC, which operated the toll-free warm line under the auspices of the New York State chapter of the NCPA. A working relationship also was established with the Parent Support Network, a group of county educators and parent education providers who provided focus group feedback on the radio PSAs. Indirectly, CLP activities resulted in cooperation with the business community through advertisers who agreed to fund the PSAs; written materials provided by the CLP also were included in newsletters distributed to the business community.

In an effort to develop new constituencies, the CLP collaborated with the Interfaith Task Force and the OSM. This work helped to establish links between the task force and several local congregations.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The CLP evaluation was accomplished through a subcontract with the Finger Lakes Law and Social Policy Center, which used a stakeholder evaluation model to (1) ensure that the evaluation addressed questions of interest and importance to project participants, (2) ensure compatibility with and make a contribution to the community development and empowerment focus of CLP activities, and (3) enhance the likelihood that the evaluation

results would be useful for future community and program development.

The evaluators met twice with members of the EPC and four times with evaluation committees formed in both Elmira and Van **Etten/Spencer**. The evaluation committees helped develop and prioritize the questions that their respective evaluations addressed. After data were collected on activities in both communities and on the radio **PSAs**, the evaluators developed a *Briefing Book* for each evaluation committee. The books contained samples of the raw data and examples of the range of responses to the questions of interest. Each committee reviewed its *Briefing Book* as well as the draft CLP evaluation report and provided feedback.

The evaluation focused primarily on program processes by using qualitative, ethnographic, or case study techniques. This approach was recommended by CSR technical assistance staff because of the emergent nature of the CLP activities. Information about CLP activities in each community was collected from CLP staff; program organizers, program staff, and/or volunteer facilitators; and three types of program participants-repeat users, one-time users, and nonusers. Similar methods of information gathering were used to evaluate the radio **PSAs**. Where possible, evaluators observed program activities and reviewed relevant meeting and program documents.

CLP staff decided that the evaluation would cover the unique aspects of the CLP and those that were deemed to be of special interest; thus, project activities during the first 3 years were not covered. The evaluation primarily focused on the neighborhood approaches to the prevention of child abuse and the public awareness campaign. The *Lifelines* newsletter, interagency training and coordination, and new constituency development components were not covered by the outside evaluation.

The evaluation was limited in several additional ways. First, because quantitative data on

participation rates and participant characteristics were not available for any program activities except the ASP, it could not be used to supplement the qualitative data. Furthermore, project's grassroots nature and flexible action orientation made it difficult to maintain detailed records. Therefore, the evaluation focused on accomplishments of the PPP rather than attempting to document its effectiveness.

The evaluators 'found that name recognition was an issue in both the PPP and the neighborhood development activities. For example, program participants and some teachers did not recognize that "Parent Partner" was the name of the school-based program. This meant that there was no allegiance to the program, except from the individuals who served as **PPs**, and no constituency outside the school administration and the PPP to support its continued funding. The lack of name recognition, however, did not hamper continued funding of the PPP. In addition, evaluators found that CLP staff had not informed the school administration or the **PPs** that the primary goal of the program was child abuse prevention.

Original plans to interview parents engaged in the **PPPs** in their homes were changed because the **PPs** were concerned that in-home interviews with parents could be threatening and that such visits might weaken the relationships already developed with parents. Therefore, the evaluator used shorter, less-intensive interviews that could be conducted in public places. **PP** events were used to introduce the interviewers and the purpose of the evaluation whenever possible.

In the Van **Etten/Spencer** area, few respondents were aware that CLP activities were part of a prevention program, and few had heard of the CLP. This was not viewed as an issue, however, because the intent of the demonstration project was for community institutions to adopt the activities but not necessarily the CLP name. In Van **Etten/Spencer**, it was difficult to obtain names of people who had not participated in CLP activities; thus, the evaluators were not able to fully address

questions posed by the Evaluation Committee regarding reasons for nonparticipation.

Gathering information about the radio PSAs was problematic. Evaluators found it useful to help people recognize the messages by playing a portion of one of the spots. However., this was difficult for several reasons; no one spot was heard repeatedly over a long period of time, and it was not known which spots had been broadcast the most. In addition, the most involved station stopped broadcasting the PSAs 1 month before respondents were interviewed.

FINDINGS

This section discusses evaluation findings regarding neighborhood approaches to child abuse prevention in both Elmira and Van Etten/Spencer and the CLP's public awareness campaign.

Neighborhood Approaches to Child Abuse Prevention in Elmira

The PPP was the only program in Elmira for which there were findings. The PPP was very successful in the four Elmira elementary schools in which it operated in achieving its three goals to (1) increase parents' involvement in the schools, (2) increase parents' involvement with each other, and (3) increase parents' involvement with their children. The program was particularly successful in reaching parents not previously involved in school activities, which were the target group of this program as well as those who were educationally limited; no data are available, however, on the number of participants. The following three strengths were identified as central to the program's accomplishments:

- Flexibility that enabled the PP to adapt the program to the individual school and neighborhood;
- The PPs' success in identifying what parents wanted; and

- The PPs' ability to find creative ways to respond directly to the parents' needs.

All respondents wanted this program to continue. The evaluation report notes that the challenge in the future will be to maintain these strengths as the program becomes institutionalized.

The evaluation findings suggested that children, parents, and school personnel received positive benefits from the PPP. Teachers mentioned the beneficial effect the program had on children's performance and behavior and commented that bringing parents into the school helped provide quality interaction between adults and children during the day. Respondents singled out the alternative playground as having exceptionally positive effects on the children.

School personnel found parents who were involved in the program to be less defensive and better able to engage in problemsolving, more willing to receive support during periods of family crisis, and willing to be involved in volunteer opportunities at the school. Teachers' attitudes toward parents also underwent a positive change, enabling teachers to get to know children and families on a more personal level. Finally, the PPs were able to persuade the schools to try new things, such as involving; teachers in kindergarten registration, which was a successful venture.

The evaluation suggested that the PPs flourished under a flexible, indirect style of supervision; however, it also was noted that insufficient time may have been spent in developing program guidelines. Greater attention to program development was suggested to maintain the program's independence in the future. It also was suggested that PPs receive supervisory support to reaffirm their status as nonschool employees whose work is primarily focused on parent, not school, priorities. The concern was that if the program does not do this for itself, the schools will determine the priorities of the PPP according to their own needs.

The PPP initiative in a rural elementary school in nearby Horseheads, New York, was less successful in achieving its goals. Administrators in Horseheads, which is located in a different school district, did not have input into the development of the program, as did Elmira school administrators. This initiative would have benefited from more communication about the program among school personnel and more supervisory guidance for the PPs. Because the program began late in Year 5, it did not have a chance to prove itself by the end of the demonstration period. Low parent participation may have resulted from the fact that few parents lived within walking distance of the school and, therefore, were not readily available for interaction.

The CLP evaluation report identified several barriers faced by the PPP. Institutional barriers included lack of a welcoming atmosphere in the schools, lack of space in the schools for parents to meet, and inadequate privacy for PPs to engage in face-to-face and telephone conversations with other parents. Programmatic barriers included inadequate time and salary for the PP (PPs were paid for 10 hours per week but many worked additional hours), inadequate program structure, top-down versus bottom-up tensions between school professionals and parents, and the problem of doing things *for* others instead of with them. In addition, the program experienced barriers in involving parents who worked outside the home, parents who needed preschool child care, and single parents.

Neighborhood Approaches to Child Abuse Prevention in Van Etten/Spencer

The CLP made a significant impact in the Van Etten/Spencer area. One of the project's major strengths was that it did not create a new agency but successfully provided the skills, knowledge, and support to generate a variety of beneficial activities. The community activities as well as the personal approaches that were used succeeded in involving all segments of the community, thus decreasing the isolation of many individuals. As a result of the CLP's influence, the Board of Education began focusing on making the schools'

more proactive and in developing networks with community agencies.

Several respondents felt they had developed better self-esteem as a result of participating in these activities; however, evaluation data are less clear about the CLP's impact on the community's ability to make raising families easier in the long term. One of the CLP's most significant successes was getting three key constituencies—the Van Etten/Spencer superintendent of schools, the Youth Bureau directors from Chemung and Tioga Counties, and town and village officials from Van Etten and Spencer—to cooperate and provide resources to continue the ASP.

It is important to note that the CLP program data were confounded by the fact that the schools initiated a new community-school approach to education at the same time the CLP was being implemented. The evaluation points out that while the two initiatives worked in tandem and had a synergistic effect, many accomplishments identified in the evaluation study cannot be attributed solely to the efforts of one program or the other. The following sections present key findings pertaining to Parent Lifelines, ASP, the Playgroup, Family Portraits, FCR, and Food Stamp Outreach.

Parent Lifelines

Parent Lifelines responded to a definite need for a parent support group in the community; the program was successful in supporting parents who were having difficulty raising their teenagers. However, the evaluation suggested that if the group planned to continue, it needed to clarify its goals and identity whether the group would have presentations by expert speakers or be focused on providing support therapy.

After School Program

The ASP was uniformly applauded. The result of a participant survey show that almost all the respondents in both 1993 and 1994 enjoyed the activities (approximately 28 percent of participants responded each year). The majority of teacher

who responded to the survey in both years noted an improvement in student attitudes as a result of their participation in ASP activities. School administrators, teachers, and community members acknowledged that membership on the ASP Planning Committee gave young people an opportunity to develop leadership skills and to be recognized by other students and the faculty. Approximately 50 percent of ASP participants were students who generally were not involved in other afterschool sports or activities. Although the coordinator suggested that approximately 50 to 70 percent of those on the Planning Committee and 60 to 70 percent of participating students were at risk, this program was not tied directly to preventing child abuse and neglect. Rather, it sought to improve the self-image of participants, thereby helping to reduce their high school dropout rate. This represents a long-term strategy that may help to prevent these students from becoming future abusive parents.

Transportation was noted as a barrier to ASP participation because students either had to make their own transportation arrangements or rely on the late school bus. Because the bus operated only on certain days, it limited the number of afternoons the ASP could be provided. In addition, some teachers failed to inform students about ASP activities soon enough for them to obtain the required permission form signed by a parent.

Playgroup

The Playgroup successfully appealed to parents from a wide range of backgrounds. This activity had a direct connection to the prevention of child maltreatment because it met some of the social needs of parents who were new to the area and who did not have a local support network of family or friends. The primary benefit of this program was a reduction in the parents' real and perceived sense of isolation. Participants also benefited from opportunities to learn new child management methods, exchange children's clothing, learn about other activities and resources for children in the area, and connect with other parents outside the group. The barriers to

participation included lack of publicity, lack of transportation, and parents' work schedules.

Family Portraits

Both the children and adults who participated in the Family Portraits component enjoyed the activity very much; however, its impact on at-risk children, or on the parents of these children, was reported to be minimal because it primarily involved parents who were already very connected with the school. The primary barrier to the success of this program was teachers' lack of commitment to and interest in the program. It was not clear whether funding for the volunteer coordinator who was arranging this activity would continue; it was felt that a paid employee was needed to locate, organize, and train volunteers if this activity was to continue.

Family Connections Room

Because the FCR opened late in the final year of the demonstration period, it was not in operation long enough to assess its impact. The evaluators found that only a limited number of community members knew the FCR was available. The FCR's hours of operation were not clear and may have been insufficient for some people.

Food Stamp Outreach

The evaluation showed that the Food Stamp Outreach program had very little impact. Although the program was successful in training a group of volunteers to provide a service, few community members took advantage of the assistance. Thus, additional methods of communicating the availability of this service were considered necessary for this effort to continue.

Public Awareness Campaign

Although *Lifelines* was not evaluated by the third-party evaluators, a readership survey was conducted following the publication of the fourth issue, in May 1991 (Year 2). The survey was mailed to 220 of the 1,047 names on the mailing

list; 103 responses were received—a response rate of 46.8 percent. The findings indicated that overall, 97 percent of readers were either satisfied or very satisfied; 89 percent said they had read the newsletter; 79 percent said the content was informative; and 57 percent found the content useful. The respondents stated that on average, 3.6 other individuals besides themselves read their copy of *Lifelines*. Fourteen percent of respondents wished that the newsletter was published more frequently, and 22 percent had no opinion.

A total of 269 radio listeners were interviewed to determine the effectiveness of the **PSAs**. Of these respondents, 6 percent recalled having heard one of the radio **PSAs** with no prompting from the interviewer, and almost 11 percent thought they remembered hearing one of the radio **PSAs** after being prompted by a replay of one of the messages. Thus, 17 percent recalled having heard one of the messages. In addition to general listeners, 26 human service professionals and school administrators also were interviewed regarding the **PSAs**; none of the 23 respondents who had listened to the radio stations involved could recall hearing the messages.

It was not possible for the evaluators to determine whether the CLP was successful in making PIRC, the toll-free warm line, known to the Chemung County parents who needed information; the use of this number, however, did not increase following the **PSAs**. Eight of the 105 Chemung County residents who called the toll-free number during the year the PSA messages were broadcast stated that they had heard about it on the radio.

Researchers could not reach a conclusion about the effectiveness or overall impact of the radio messages in preventing child maltreatment even though they determined that the theory supporting the public awareness campaign and the way it was implemented were solid.

Issues Impeding the CLP Startup Phase

An array of internal and external factors contributed to a prolonged startup period for the

CLP. These factors—external, program, and community related—delayed the CLP’s ability to implement community-based program strategies.

External Factors

External factors that impeded the startup of the CLP included a statewide fiscal crisis that resulted in budget cuts among State and county human services agencies. The statewide recession was especially acute in Chemung County, and the budget cuts came at the same time that the need for services increased dramatically.

In addition, Chemung County experienced a major political shift between CLP proposal development and program funding, which meant that many people who had participated in developing the proposed design were no longer in office to assist with program implementation.

Program Factors

Program factors that impeded the development of the CLP included the top-down, interagency coordination of the project under the leadership of the EPC, which was composed of political leaders, human services administrators, and school administrators. This approach added a bureaucratic element to the program’s decisionmaking process and precluded the grantee from working directly with potential clients and frontline service providers.

Another structural problem was the fact that many CLP staff were not employed full time; some were university employees, and some were not. This created some fragmentation among the staff. In addition, the Family Life Development Center at Cornell University was experienced with providing technical assistance to community agencies but had never implemented a direct service community project. This led the CLP to subcontract the implementation of some of its initiatives to the Chemung County Cooperative Extension, to take advantage of its staff and experience of working directly with community members.

There also were concerns about project management. Some project staff may not have had the experience and/or expertise necessary to implement some aspects of this community-based project, which slowed the implementation of neighborhood initiatives. Deadlines often were not met, the hiring process for the community coordinator was lengthy, and there were procedural delays related to the involvement of the EPC in the search process. With the appointment of the second director early in Year 3, program energies were refocused on a ground-up approach (i.e., wherein ideas were being generated by parents and community members rather than by professionals), and the program began to focus on more specific goals.

Lack of program focus also was a problem. Although the CLP held many meetings, the lack of progress made between meetings meant that many of the same concerns were rehashed. The overall direction of the project was not clear, which led to some criticism from the community. Federal staff raised the concern that the goals of some of the activities were not well thought out and encouraged the CLP to focus more on the things that worked and cut back on the other activities.

Community Factors

Initially, the CLP had the acceptance of the community through EPC representation at CLP meetings; however, the lack of project accomplishments led many EPC members to become critical of the grantee, and they stopped attending meetings. There was some feeling in the community that having Cornell University as the grantee was too costly and that community agencies could spend this money in better ways. Although community leaders originally agreed on the need for this project and were eager to cooperate, there was ongoing ambivalence among some segments of the community regarding the lack of community control and limited participation in the project's decisionmaking process.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

CLP project staff worked hard to ensure that various CLP activities would continue after Federal funding ceased, and most key activities did continue after the end of the demonstration period. The Horseheads and the Ernie Davis PPPs, both of which had been in existence for less than 1 year, were closed due to lack of funding.

Neighborhood Approaches to Child Abuse Prevention in Elmira

At the time this case study was written, the following key activities were continuing in Elmira:

- *PPP.*—By the end of the project, the Elmira school district committed to maintaining the PPPs on a cost-sharing basis with the individual schools. The Elmira schools received a School Safety/Violence Prevention grant, part of which provided funding not only to continue the program but also to expand it to the five remaining elementary schools; further continuation depends on whether this grant is renewed. The PPP is administered by Cooperative Extension staff, the program expansion is administered by the school district, and programmatic decisions are made by the individual school principals. In addition, the PPP manual developed by the CLP was distributed to Elmira schools and to interested cooperative extension agencies, the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, and the NCPCA, as well as in response to 17 requests received by counties from around the State.
- *Parents-caregiver communication sessions.*—The parents-caregiver communication sessions continue as a result of a grant provided by the Chemung County Task Force on Children and Families. These workshops will be offered at least once per year and possibly more often.
- *Healthy Families.*—The CLP's contribution to this initiative was instrumental in convincing the State to continue funding not only this

activity but similar pilots around the State. Subsequently, the State awarded the Healthy Families program a major 5-year expansion grant using Federal Family Preservation/Family Support funds.

- *Master Teacher Program.*--This program continues through the Chemung County Cooperative Extension with a 2-year grant from HUD. Additional funding from several other sources helped to expand the program to include low-income neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Approaches to Child Abuse Prevention in Van Etten/Spencer

At the time this case study was written, all activities developed in the Van Etten/Spencer area, except one, were expected to continue. Many of them are volunteer activities that require little or no funding other than the part-time salaries of workers employed by the school to replace and supplement CLP staff. Schools in the Van Etten/Spencer area assumed total responsibility for operating the activities initiated by the CLP, although the nature of these programs changed somewhat to represent a more formalized, school-based program rather than a more informal, community-based program. These actions enhanced the program's capacity to build ownership for a number of activities within the school community. More formalized connections to the schools are expected to help overcome the CLP's failure to engage most of the teachers and will allow people to be more actively engaged in purposeful activities that directly contribute to the educational achievement of their children.

The following key activities currently are continuing:

- *After School Program.*—The ASP continues with funds from the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Grants Program of Chemung and Tioga Counties, County Youth, and local sources. The program employs a coordinator who works 10 hours per week as

well as volunteers. The program is expected to continue reaching at-risk children.

- *Family Portraits.*—This volunteer program continues in Van Etten/Spencer but not in Elmira. Family Portraits programs take place once per month in prekindergarten through second-grade classrooms.
- *FCR.*—The space provided for the FCR continues to be used for meetings of various school and community groups involving parents that deal with such topics as Head Start, literacy, and art. Although it remains open two mornings per week as a drop-in center for parents, it has not worked well for this purpose and is available for other projects on other mornings.
- *Parents of Children with Special Needs Support Group.*—This group continues with a membership of six to eight parents who succeeded in creating a support network to assist special needs children and their families. School personnel consider the PCSNSG a tremendous resource and often refer parents to it. Group members support one another in various ways, such as providing babysitting. This group requires no financial support to continue.

Public Awareness Campaign

At the end of the demonstration period, staff from the Chemung County Cooperative Extension assumed responsibility for the public awareness program. The messages from radio PSAs and the CLP newsletter were merged to create a broader newsletter that would include all of their organization's family and community efforts. Five radio stations committed to another year of involvement with the PSAs. CLP staff produced a manual to help the Chemung County Cooperative Extension implement the PSAs as well as provided its mailing list for the expanded newsletter. At the time this case study was written, it appeared that the PSAs continued only for 1 year. Although incorporation of a child maltreatment prevention

emphasis into the Cooperative Extension newsletter was not as extensive as had been planned, the information continues to be distributed to community leaders through this vehicle.

CONCLUSION

The evaluators made the following recommendations regarding the CLP's child abuse prevention activities:

- Mechanisms must be established in both Elmira and Van Etten/Spencer to ensure that activities and programming ideas continue to be generated by the parents and community members, rather than coming from agency and school professionals.
- New and continuing outreach activities are needed to broaden and diversify the impact of the initiatives and to sustain the vitality of the (activities. These efforts need to expand beyond written materials. In Van Etten, mechanisms must be developed to identify anti empower new leaders from all segments of the community.
- If the schools are committed to the PPP, school policies and procedures must be examined and amended to ensure that parents feel welcome in the school building and that there is space in the building for parents to meet and have private conversations with the PP. Schools must allow preschoolers to accompany their parents, schedule events when child care is available to parents at home, or provide child care. Schools and PPs should make every effort to schedule activities so that working parents have an opportunity to become involved. Transportation barriers should be removed to the extent possible.
- Attention must be paid to the details of the PPP program development so that the PPs continue to have programmatic support and can maintain their ability to define program priorities and parameters. Budget planning for the PP should be based on 20 hours per week, and funding

should be sufficient to allow the PPs to fulfill job expectations. Funding must be adequate to maintain the program's independence and the worker's ability to remain responsive to parents and community members.

- The community should give careful consideration to whether continuation of the radio PSA campaign is the most effective use of scarce resources. Some evidence exists to suggest that this initiative might have an impact over the long term; however, these efforts make sense: only if they can be continued with relatively low cost and effort.

The CLP project director made the following recommendations:

- The strategy of using small amounts of money to promote community initiatives enables the community to sustain these programs after the demonstration project ends. Furthermore, these small initiatives can have major impacts on a community.
- Staff who are hired to work in communities need to have people skills and the appropriate personality for the job. They also must enjoy the type of person-to-person contact that is so vital for human service work. These attributes may be more important than an individual's educational achievements.

CSR staff made the following recommendations based on analysis of the CLP experience:

- Evaluators should be involved with grantees from the beginning of the grant so that communication about the evaluation with the staff and the community can be ongoing. With the CLP, the evaluator did not become involved until Year 5, and there was a clear lack of communication between the CLP and the evaluator as well as between the CLP and all those being evaluated. These problems resulted in the evaluator having to change data collection strategies to ones that limited the quality of data that could be gathered.

- Baseline quantitative data and regular recordkeeping of activities should be required for a complete and accurate evaluation. With CLP, neither quantitative data nor careful records were kept of its activities. This resulted in a less complete evaluation than would have been possible with basic quantitative data about participation rates, participant characteristics, and the process of implementing the CLP activities.

REFERENCES

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