

Southside Family Nurturing Center
Presented at the Annual Meeting for Board Reports & Elections
11th June, 2007
Chair's Report

Mission:

*Together with families and community, we nurture children, build on family strengths,
and find alternatives to violence.*

Yesterday, the New York Times magazine (10th June, 2007) presented data to show in startling figures, that the poor are getting poorer and the rich richer. The families we serve often work more than one job at minimum wage, or receive TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, also known as 'welfare') while they are parenting very young children (which is classified as work for those who offer daycare) but cannot keep pace with the cost of living. At SSFNC we avoid blaming individuals and ask what in the social system is at fault. We recognize that we are in a period of economic complexity where the structure of compensation, taxation and community well-being, seems to many of us to be out of balance. SSFNC benefits from the generosity of foundations and individuals who donate to us and we are deeply grateful. We are in a climate of resistance to public funding however, that constantly puts pressure on the agency, and we know this is a pattern across Minnesota.

While I can think of no better work for the future well-being of our cities than agencies such as SSFNC, we know that the coming years are going to challenge our creativity and pose serious questions. For example, how will we maintain balanced budgets and increase staff salaries? Last year I wrote, "Together we help to provide urban environments that encourage children to find their full potential away from violence, hunger, discrimination and in the full light of our nurture and sense of responsibility across socio-economic and political lines." This year, for the first time a bright young undergraduate student at Augsburg College came to me and told me that he and his family had once benefited from SSFNC's services at a crucial time. We now have a partnership with former parent clients developing that tells us the same story—to be there when times are tough and we have the resilience to pull through; we are not 'poor' people, we are people going through economic crisis. It is a source of inspiration for the Board to work to understand the circumstances that bring people to our door and to collaborate to make change for the good of us all and I am very glad to participate in this meeting and to present this report.

Our annual meeting provides the opportunity to report on our four main programs: the Center Based; the Home Based; the Father's Program; the Phillips Program for crisis assistance (which ended 2006, replaced with the Infant Parent Program) and as importantly, to draw breath and review our strategic goals and Board committee objectives. During my third year as chair we continue to be concerned about changes in State and Federal funding streams, but our fundraising has improved and we have received some significant gifts. We are especially grateful to Barb Olson for her work in the position of Executive Director. The following brief report highlights our strategic goals and some of our work from the Board's perspective.

Strategic Goals – 5 year plan in 2000-2005
Review & Realign 2007

- *build a father's program (established and continues)*
- *explore and encourage options for parent participation on advisory and board for program planning (parents invited; keep working at this in 2007 - 08)*
- *design and implement advocacy program on micro and macro levels to help families with financial crises; housing; employment, court; (Phillips grant now replaced by Family Focus)*
- *renovate the existing facility; (progress is steady spring 2007)*
- *implement a capital campaign to support renovation (goal is to complete fundraising close to \$2 million by 2007, up from \$1.7 million due to cost increases and end the campaign at the end of 2007)*
- *explore ways to serve school-age children; (on hold until completion of capital campaign)*
- *assess current methods of evaluation and incorporate research components into Southside's work;(publication 2007 Bibus & Link, overall needs continued attention)*
- *explore collaboration and partnership with NELC and housing resources in the neighborhood; (needs update)*
- *always celebrate the opportunity to experience the growth of the children, the parents and the extended family and community that enter our doors and learn from their incredible life experiences. (excerpted from 'Futures' report and report to Greater United Way, February 2004).*

As we look down this list we see that we have *built a father's program* and achieved renewed funding for it in December 2006; we *encouraged parent participation through advisory* meetings and the 'quilt-makers' project; and we were delighted to welcome our first former parent to the Board in the fall of 2006. A brief history of our strategic planning is attached to this report to assist our new Committee for Strategic Planning. Our Executive Director will report on our current. As a Board we are deeply involved in the goal to *renovate the existing facility*, and this has been a pre-occupation that we will be glad to emerge from.

There is a new roof and guttering shining across Little Earth, and the work is complete on the beautifully renovated third level. The corridor for the shaft and the elevator are planned for summer and fall of 2007. We have *implemented a capital campaign to support the renovation* and we hope to complete the campaign in 2007. We have put on hold the goal to *explore ways to serve school-age children*. Our Executive Director and Family Program Coordinator are addressing *current methods of evaluation* and we have completed a research project together with Augsburg College and parent voluntary focus groups, to identify the impact of welfare reform legislation. We will discuss the resources available to *explore collaboration and partnership with housing resources in the neighborhood; and* we have taken up the challenge from our founding directors to: *always celebrate the opportunity to experience the growth of the children, the parents and the extended family and community that enter our doors and learn from their incredible life experiences.*

Management Team Transition Complete

This education year, 2006-07 we have experienced a more settled time and the agency has regained its equilibrium following many changes in prior years. In June 2004 the Board appointed a transition team as two founding directors retired after 30 years. With the help of two consultants, we worked hard to have honest conversations, to identify a succession policy and to find ways to build more

infrastructures for the incoming executive team. This year, we see a settled organization chart and a continuing team of one Executive Director, a Family Programs Coordinator, a Business Manager and a new Development Director. The Board congratulates the Executive Director on her work in developing this capable team and we look forward to the appointment of a Children's Program Director (see organization chart attached).

Staffing & Board

It was with pleasure that the Board offered the position of Executive Director to Barbara Olson in March, 2005. Barb has now completed her second full year and the Board welcomes her report to this meeting and is pleased to affirm Barb in this leadership role (see job description). The particular areas to celebrate with Barb include her efficient hiring of her team and replacement of our development associate; nurture and supervision of staff; clarification of the organization chart; review of job descriptions and staff policies. Barb has self-assessed areas for development including executive training on the most current methods of budget and fiscal management and increased publicity for the agency, including a published annual report for 2007-08. Her draft "executive development" plan is attached to the letter of re-appointment. Overall, the Board extends deep appreciation on successful completion of the second year as Executive Director.

The Board and Executive Director had an excellent and productive retreat with Ellen Hart Shaegos in April 2007, in particular to discuss Board roles and relationships. Our goal is to move from a "living room" to a more "governance based" organization. This umbrella goal led to a set of objectives including: a review of agency affirmative action, conflict of interest and personnel policies; the building of an archive and a new focus on strategic planning. The Annual Meeting will review the list of our planned actions for 2007-08 and document progress in our minutes in September and October, 2007. This work is assisted by the Realignment and Strategic Planning Committee, and the new Personnel Committee. At our Annual Meeting in June, we will review the charter and goals of all our committees:

Finance & Building Committee (also folded in the work of the 2003-05 Capital Campaign Committee)

Development Committee

Realignment & Strategic Planning Committee (new)

Personnel Committee (new)

Fiscal responsibility

SSFNC has expanded in the last five years and the layers of complexity added by the Capital Campaign were inevitable but challenging. In the past two years a number of elements to the Board's fiscal oversight have been added: our Vice Chair agreed to work with the Business Manager through the transition of executive directors and we thank Gary Graczyk (Board) and Bruce Alexander (staff) for their dedication to this work. We are also delighted that Scott Moore agreed to join the board as Treasurer in the fall of 2006. Together with our new Treasurer's support, our Executive Director agrees to present regular financials, timely budget planning and audit reports to the Board. This work is openly discussed and our goal is to be

transparent and timely. As the capital campaign draws to a close, we hope to focus on increasing our operating budget to allow a review of staff salaries in 2007-2008.

Capital campaign and renovation

The capital campaign has met considerable success – reaching the initial goal of \$1.2 million in winter 2006 for the planned renovations of roof and third floor and elevator corridor, but discovering expanding costs for the full goal of elevator, disability access and fire tower. Therefore the campaign continues and a new goal of \$1.9 million has been set. Between 2005 and 2007 we are relieved to have received funding from the Bush Foundation and several other substantial grants toward this goal. We plan to end the Campaign by December 2007. All Board members are committed to this plan and contribute as they can to both operating and capital campaign fund-raising and site visits of foundations and potential funders. We expressed special appreciation to Marty and Linda Haugen at our January Board meeting, to thank them for their concert and financial support. We are delighted that Marty Haugen will be offering a concert fund-raiser again this November, 2007.

Research and programs

The chapter written by Bibus, Link, O’Neal that summarizes the results of our research into the impact of welfare reform on families was published in 2006. Thank you to SSFNC for seeing the importance of a research agenda for the agency and for inviting Augsburg College to participate in this small part of it. Evaluation of programs and ongoing research continues to be a goal for the future. Research and data gathering is a way to ground our services; to share our work with potential funders and policy makers; and to ensure that we are responding to service user and community needs.

Summary

Congratulations to the Board and the Agency of Southside Family Nurturing Center for a year of hard and fruitful work. We are in a strong place: we have great people, our programs are thriving, our capital campaign is nearly over and our building is looking so much better. As we renew our goals, we still have the concerns and areas for growth that follow in the wake of public funding restrictions and building renovation, but we do this work in an atmosphere of energy, commitment and realistic optimism. We have a devoted and talented staff, and families who flourish as a result of our walking together and learning from one another. Thank you for everyone’s work to fulfill our mission.

Rosemary Link
SSFNC Board chair.